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Feminist foreign policy to achieve
the Sustainable Development Goals

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List of acronyms

AFAWA : African Women's Finance Initiative

AFD : French Development Agency

ODA : Official Development Assistance

ASEAN : Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AWID : Association for Women's Rights in Development

ECLAC : Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ICPD : International Conference on Population and Development

COP : Conference of the Parties

DESI : Digital Economy and Society Index

FGEF : French Global Environment Facility

UNFPA : United Nations Population Fund

FPHN : High Level Political Forum

FSOF : Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes (Support Fund for Women's Organisations)

HCE : High Council for Equality

G7 : Group of Seven

LGBTQI+ : : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex

LOP-DSLIM : Loi de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales

MACF : Carbon adjustment mechanism at the borders

MEAE : Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

MDGs : Sustainable Development Goals

OIF : Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

MDGs : Millennium Development Goals

WHO : World Health Organisation

NGO : Non-Governmental Organisation

UN : United Nations

CSO : Civil Society Organisation

CEO : Chief Executive Officer

CFSP : Common Foreign and Security Policy

PPI : Small Initiatives Programme

PSVI : UK Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative

SDSN : Sustainable Development Solutions Network

SEAE : European External Action Service

SDSN : Sustainable Development Solutions Network SEAE: European External Action Service TIAN: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

EU : European Union

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

HIV : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

W7 : Women 7

Introduction

The recent succession of the global crisis has revealed the fragility of progress in terms of human rights and sustainable development. Albeit the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the devastating impact of the climate crisis in South-East Asia and the Pacific Island territories, or the food crisis in the Sahel, each has gender-specific consequences. Women and gender minorities are more vulnerable and are more affected by the impact of those global perturbations. The increase in insecurity, the impoverishment of populations leading to a rebound in the number of marriages of girls¹, and the rising in sexual violence and human trafficking during migratory journeys continue to widen the gap in gender equality. Furthermore, women are at the forefront of suffering from armed conflicts², which are significantly increasing for multiple reasons, such as climate change.

We are currently witnessing a concerning setback in terms of women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights. It is the case in the United States, where a significant number of states ban or restrict the use of abortion. Women's fundamental rights are also under attack in Iran, where anti-government protests have been underway since mid-September 2022, and in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have banned women from studying at university. This violence is also present in cyberspace, where misogynistic comments and threats against women users are thriving. In addition, there has been an increase in anti-LGBTQI+ discourses in some European countries, such as Italy or Hungary, as well as numerous human rights cases of abuse of the LGBTQI+ population around the world, such as in Indonesia, Kenya and Russia.

In such context and for International Women's Rights Day, the Gender Institute in Geopolitics wishes to highlight the transformative and active capacity of feminist foreign policy. This concept, developed on the initiative of former Swedish Prime Minister Margot Wallström in 2014, is based on the conviction that gender equality and equitable participation in political and public life are essential for international peace and security³.

Since then, several countries have declared that they have adopted such a policy, such as Canada (2017), France (2019), Mexico (2020), Spain, Luxembourg and Germany (2021), and more recently, Chile (2022). Countries with a feminist foreign policy build on international

1 Dix millions de filles supplémentaires risquent d'être mariées durant leur enfance à cause de la Covid-19. (2022, 8 mars). ONU Info, available at : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2021/03/1091152>

2 Les droits des femmes, premières victimes des conflits. (2022, 25 mai). Oxfam International, accessible sur : <https://www.oxfam.org/fr/les-droits-des-femmes-premieres-victimes-des-conflits>

3 Intégrer au lieu d'exclure : qu'est-ce qu'une politique étrangère féministe ? (2022, mai 9), available at : <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/fr/newsroom/-/2525840>

agreements and conventions such as the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 UN Resolution 1325⁴.

A country's feminist foreign policy embodies its commitment to gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls as primary goals internationally. These actions are carried out in bilateral and multilateral frameworks, with political commitment and funding through international programmes for the reduction of inequalities, sustainable development, peace, security, the defence and promotion of fundamental rights and climate, cultural and economic issues. Nonetheless, there is no international consensus on the definition of foreign feminist policy, making joint action between countries particularly difficult.

Yet, achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only result from collaboration between governments, private and public sectors and civil society organisations. Designed to promote a more equitable and sustainable form of development, achieving the SDGs requires urgent, targeted and integrated action for both the long and short term. Unfortunately, the transformative framework needed for the 2030 Agenda fulfilment is not yet established, and some countries are falling behind. In the European Union, for example, progress on the climate, biodiversity, production and agriculture and sustainable consumption SDGs is particularly slow. According to the 2022 Europe SDG Index, France scores 73/100, slightly above the European Union average of 72/100⁵. In view of the imminence of the next SDG Summit in September 2023, which will be the occasion for a mid-term review, the time has come to step up efforts by focusing on solutions with a strong transformative impact.

4 Thompson, L. & Clement, R. (2019). DÉFINIR UNE POLITIQUE ÉTRANGÈRE FÉMINISTE. ICRW. ORG, available at: <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Defining-Feminist-Foreign-Policy-Brief-French.pdf>

5 Alvarez, C. (2022, décembre 5), ODD : La France, parmi les bons élèves européens, doit néanmoins progresser sur l'esclavage moderne dans le secteur des minerais, Novethic, available at: <https://www.novethic.fr/actualite/social/conditions-de-travail/isr-rse/odd-la-france-parmi-les-bons-eleves-europeens-doit-progresser-sur-l-esclavage-moderne-dans-le-secteur-des-minerais-151219.html>

Hence, how can feminist foreign policy be an indispensable tool for achieving the SDGs while responding to multiple global crises in an inclusive manner? How can feminist foreign policy, once reframed to be as inclusive and holistic as possible, achieve structural changes? This report demonstrates the intersectionality of gender and the interdependency between human rights and sustainable development goals. It argues for an intersectional approach to feminist foreign policy to make the social and environmental transition beneficial for all. Throughout this report, the Gender in Geopolitics Institute presents recommendations and ways to improve the current France's feminist foreign policy so that it fully employs its transformative potential.

This report is intended for all individuals and organisations, agents of change committed to the advent of a world respectful of human rights and the environment.

Part I. French feminist foreign policy: strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities at national and international level.

A. An official conceptualisation for a legitimate feminist foreign policy

Since 2017, President Emmanuel Macron's five-year mandate is centred upon equality between men and women, hence the creation of a State Secretariat for Equality between Women and Men. French feminist foreign policy, led by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), has a specific approach and its own tools for integrating gender into its diplomatic relations and external action.

France's International Strategy for Equality between Women and Men, produced by the MEAE for 2018 to 2022, lays the groundwork for a feminist foreign policy. In an international context where the rights of girls and women are threatened and discriminated against, France has chosen to make equality between women and men a priority. The French strategy focuses primarily on sexual and reproductive health and rights, alongside key areas on education, employment and working and living conditions, justice, access, participation, representation and inclusion in the economy, politics and peace processes. Thus, gender must be integrated into "all French diplomatic priority and all political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, educational and development cooperation actions."⁶

It was at a forum on 8 March 2019 that the Secretary of State for Equality between Women and Men, then Marlène Schiappa, and the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, then Jean-Yves Le Drian, announced that France's foreign policy is feminist⁷. Since then, the French government has claimed it without defining it officially. The latter remains the case today, despite the establishment of lines of action and principles and the rhetorical use of the term feminist diplomacy.

6 Thompson, L., Ahmed, S. & Khokhar, T. (2021). DÉFINIR UNE POLITIQUE ÉTRANGÈRE FÉMINISTE : MISE AU POINT EN 2021. ICRW.ORG, available at: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FFP-2021Update_v4-fre.pdf

7 Libération, « Pour une diplomatie féministe » – Tribune conjointe de Jean-Yves Le Drian et Marlène Schiappa, 8 mars 2019, available at: « [Pour une diplomatie féministe](#) » - Tribune conjointe de Jean-Yves Le Drian et Marlène Schiappa (08.03.19) - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères

During the 65th Commission on the Status of Women in 2021, France stated its willingness to clarify the definition, goals and approaches of its feminist foreign policy by announcing a white paper, following the Canadian and Swedish model. Since then, despite the promotion of gender equality, the fight against violence against women and the economic empowerment of women as priorities during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union from January to July 2022⁸, this manual has not seen the light of day⁹.

However, it is possible to draw a picture of French feminist foreign policy based on various official speeches and actions that have been implemented since then. It aims to be comprehensive and equal, based on the normative and regulatory integration of human rights into humanitarian and development policies particularly. It ensures gender equality and women's rights in all areas of policymaking processes, at all levels and by all actors in the administration.

France advocates for the absence of a clear theoretical framework for its feminist foreign policy in order to remain pragmatic and evolutive. Yet, an explicit definition would legitimise the French feminist foreign policy internationally and allow for better monitoring of its agenda.

8 Programme du trio - Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne 2022. (s. d.). Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne, available at: <https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/fr/programme-du-trio-francais-facile/>

9 Thompson, L., Ahmed, S. & Khokhar, T. (2021) DÉFINIR UNE POLITIQUE ÉTRANGÈRE FÉMINISTE : MISE AU POINT EN 2021. ICRW.ORG, available at: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FFP-2021Update_v4-fre.pdf

Like the feminist foreign policies of Northern countries, France's focuses on improving women's rights through the market and the capitalist economic system. This liberal feminism¹⁰ advocates the improvement of gender equality by promoting economic empowerment, equal opportunities through gender-neutral education and women's participation in the economic sphere. French feminist foreign policy would benefit from transforming its approach by promoting intersectional feminism¹¹, which deconstructs power relations rooted in patriarchy and fights against all forms of discrimination. In that regard, the definition of a foreign policy must include the rights and needs of women in their diversity: they are not a homogenous whole. The notion of intersectionality in this sense allows for the needs and recognition of traditionally marginalised groups, such as LGBTQI+ individuals and non-white women, an approach more prominent in Southern countries feminist foreign policy, such as Mexico.

For these reasons, France is obliged to have a global and comprehensive vision for its feminist foreign policy, emphasising human rights and considering the different approaches to feminisms between the between Northern and Southern countries. French feminist foreign policy must be holistic, humanist, intersectional and transversal.

B. Internal challenges to French feminist foreign policy

Human and financial resources to promote women's rights and gender equality internationally remain limited, and there is a lack of training and awareness of these issues among government actors. According to Jean-Marc Berthon, ambassador for the rights of LGBT+ people, the French diplomatic staff are well aware of and informed on the issues

10 Another branch of feminism whose aim is the pursuit of women's emancipation and liberation to end discrimination (also called egalitarian feminism). Discrimination is found in the social construction of gender stereotypes and the lack of political and civil rights. Liberalism (as an economic, ideological and political current) supports equality and individual free choice, so institutional reforms, free competition and gender-neutral education can liberate women, and therefore men, from their injunctions. On the other hand, it does not question systemic discrimination, stemming from a patriarchal system of oppression, which must be changed. COTTAIS, C, (2020). "Le féminisme libéral", Institut du Genre en Géopolitique, available at: <https://igg-geo.org/?p=2346>

11 The most inclusive branch of the feminism movement, it fights against all forms of discrimination by taking into account all particularities. Defined and used by its pioneer Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw as "racial, social, sexual and spiritual characteristics that make her accumulate several social handicaps and make her the victim of different forms of discrimination." » Lucille ~ ComprendreLeFeminisme.fr. (2022, 1 novembre). Le féminisme intersectionnel. Comprendre le féminisme, available at: <https://www.comprendrelefeminisme.fr/feminisme-intersectionnel/>

concerning homosexuality¹². They are less aware regarding transgender people because it is an emerging issue. The vocabulary used and the often-complex realities it covers would benefit from being better known.

Feminist foreign policy must be based on a cross-cutting, diffuse, integrated approach applied to all areas of foreign policy and strengthen funding, advocacy and training capacity¹³.

Nowadays, the French diplomatic corps remain predominantly male. In 2021, the MEAE was composed of only 28% female ambassadors, and about 30% of the consuls general were women¹⁴. These percentages are increasing every year, although they remain below equality, despite the efforts and measures of the Ministry that earned it the "gender equality" label in 2017¹⁵.

Internal training exists to raise awareness and support MEAE staff, known as "initial training¹⁶". However, schools and competitions for future young diplomats invest less in gender awareness. To send a strong and clear message, all areas of foreign policy must be concerned with gender equality and women's rights, including defence, security and trade policies, which are highly influential and still male-dominated. An effective feminist foreign policy requires the involvement of all ministries related to French foreign action to have a diversity of views, approaches, and methods of action.

In terms of fundings, the 2021 bill "Solidarity Development and fight against global inequalities Planning Law"¹⁷ establishes that bilateral official development assistance devoted to gender equality must reach 75% by 2025 for main and/or significant objectives,

12 Interview led the 2nd of February 2023 with avec Jean-Marc Berthon, MEAE ambassador for the rights of LGBT+ people.

13 Grésy B., Stormi M., Le Cardeur C., Real C., Schimberg A. (2020, novembre) La diplomatie féministe. D'un slogan mobilisateur à une véritable dynamique de changement ? Haut conseil à l'Égalité, available at: https://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport-diplomatie_feministe-v4.pdf

14 L'égalité femmes - hommes au ministère. (2022, mai) Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, available at: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/l-egalite-femmes-hommes-au-ministere/>

15 Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. (2022, octobre). LES MÉTIERS DU MINISTÈRE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES. diplomatie.gouv.fr, available at: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a5_metiers-meae_2022.12.19_cle41d2b1.pdf

16 L'égalité femmes - hommes au ministère. (2022, mai). Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, available at: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/l-egalite-femmes-hommes-au-ministere/>

17 Loi de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales (LOP-DSLIM)

including 20% for main objectives¹⁸. By comparison, France allocated 44% of its aid in 2020 to primary and-or significant objectives, of which 3% was for primary goals¹⁹. France applies most of its feminist foreign policy in the official development assistance (ODA) field, which increased bilateral ODA between 2018 and 2022 from 30% to 50%²⁰. However, by comparison, France's core spending on gendered ODA is less than 5%, while Sweden and Canada spend between 10% and 20%²¹.

Furthermore, French feminist foreign policy cannot be limited only to development aid and humanitarian programmes, at the risk of limiting its field of action to emergency issues or being considered secondary.

France must invest more financial resources to achieve its sustainable development goals, especially in terms of contributions to its external actions and international initiatives, which fall behind some other countries. France is out of the top 20 contributors to UN Women in 2019, with \$3,608,280, while Sweden ranks second with \$56,140,931²². The same applies to contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)²³, where France is not among the top 15 contributors. In 2018, France contributed 5 million dollars to the Fund, while Canada, the second largest contributor, contributed just over \$125 million²⁴. An increase in funding would enhance France's legitimacy in terms of feminist foreign policy and gender equality and would accompany its rhetoric with tangible actions.

It is also important to mention the lack of accountability and transparency of French

18 Equipop.org. (2022, 6 avril). Adopter des politiques étrangères féministes pour répondre aux défis mondiaux du XXI^e siècle. EQUIPOP.ORG, available at: <https://equipop.org/politique-etrangere-feministe-quinquennat-2022-2027/>

A quelle hauteur la France financera-t-elle l'égalité des genres en 2026 ? (2022, 23 mai). Focus 2030, available at: <https://focus2030.org/A-quelle-hauteur-la-France-financera-t-elle-l-egalite-des-genres-en-2026>

19 Ibid.

20 Thompson, L. & Clement, R. (2019) DÉFINIR UNE POLITIQUE ÉTRANGÈRE FÉMINISTE. ICRW.ORG, available at: <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Defining-Feminist-Foreign-Policy-Brief-French.pdf>

21 Ibid.

22 2019 total contributions to UN Women. (s. d.). ONU Femmes, available at : <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/partnerships/donor-countries/contribution-trends>

23 Fonds des Nations unies pour la Population.

Grésy B., Stormi M., Le Cardeur C., Real C., Schimberg A. (2020, novembre) La diplomatie féministe. D'un slogan mobilisateur à une véritable dynamique de changement ? Haut conseil à l'Égalité, available at: https://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport-diplomatie_feministe-v4.pdf

24 France. (s. d.). Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population, available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/fr/donor/france>

financial resources paid to programmes through international organisations, a finding highlighted by the High Council for Equality (HCE)²⁵. Uncertainty remains about whether ODA should be allocated to a general budget rather than to specific equality programmes. In addition to the governmental focus on ODA use, better monitoring and control of the management of financial resources for equality programmes should be put in place to ensure greater clarity and transparency.

Lastly, many detractors also criticise France for continuing to export weapons to non-democratic countries that do not respect women's rights, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines or Chad²⁶. France's egalitarian, non-discriminatory and human rights defender discourse must be consistent with its actions. France should thus limit arms exports to countries that scorn freedoms and fundamental rights.

C. The claims of French feminist foreign policy at the international level

French presidency promotes feminist diplomacy at international events and forums. For instance, at the 2019 G7 in Biarritz, the French presidency insisted upon feminist policies. France declares to make "the fight against inequalities the top priority of its presidency and [insists] on the overriding importance of achieving gender equality through, among other things, feminist policies to address this challenge²⁷." On the recommendations of French and international feminist associations, gathered in the framework of the Women 7 (W7), two levers of action are defended by the government: the increase of financial resources and the increased participation of women in political decisions.

During the Presidential speech to the UN General Assembly on equality in 2019, funding for initiatives such as AFAWA and MUKWEGE²⁸, the fight against discrimination, sexual violence and femicides were mentioned. The President also advocates principles

25 Grésy B., Stormi M., Le Cardeur C., Real C., Schimberg A. (2020, novembre). La diplomatie féministe. D'un slogan mobilisateur à une véritable dynamique de changement ? Haut conseil à l'Egalité, available at: https://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport-diplomatie_feministe-v4.pdf

26 Thompson L. & Clement R. (2019). DÉFINIR UNE POLITIQUE ÉTRANGÈRE FÉMINISTE. ICRW. ORG, available at: <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Defining-Feminist-Foreign-Policy-Brief-French.pdf>

27 ONU Femmes France (2019, 14 septembre). Sommet Women 7, pour un G7 féministe. Medium, available at: <https://medium.com/ONU-femmes-france/sommet-women-7-pour-un-g7-f%C3%A9ministe-8bc380589a34>

28 AFAWA is an initiative to support women entrepreneurs in Africa, led by Angélique Kidjo. MUKWEGE is a fund to support the protection of victims of sexual violence, launched by Dr Denis Mukwege.

of action to "empower, protect and ensure real equality²⁹". Nevertheless, Mr Emmanuel Macron does not explicitly mention the feminist foreign policy state in which equality must be embedded.

This was also the case during the opening speech of the Generation Equality Forum in 2020, which was a missed opportunity for the French President to promote feminist foreign policy to an audience gathering governments, as well as the private sector and civil society. He nevertheless spoke of the impoverishment of women, the urgency of the challenges in an international context that threatens women's rights and the method to use: "that of concrete universalism and multilateralism in action³⁰."

France's initiatives and organisation of international events demonstrate the strength of French leadership in supporting women's rights and gender equality. However, it is not reflected in an explicitly feminist foreign policy with a systematic approach.

Yet, a strong political leadership of feminist foreign policy would guarantee its visibility and influence on the international scene. Having an official definition of French feminist foreign policy would allow France to legitimise its feminist and humanist claims, particularly at summits and in international forums.

D. The lack of homogeneity on the concept of feminist foreign policy internationally

In order to build its feminist foreign policy, export it and answer global challenges, France has a multilateral approach. It is therefore required to work in cooperation with other countries, including those with a feminist foreign policy. However, this approach can run into difficulties insofar as there is no international consensus on a common definition of feminist foreign policy, what it should entail and what it should achieve, among the countries that claim to have one. This heterogeneity in the approaches and aims of different feminist foreign policies is explained by the fact that they represent each country's own vision of what feminism is, the objectives and priorities of foreign policy and the fight against gender inequality, and the means to act.

29 Discours du Président Emmanuel Macron à la tribune de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU. (2019, 24 septembre). elysee.fr, available at: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/09/24/discours-du-president-emmanuel-macron-a-la-tribune-de-lassemblee-generale-onu>

30 Déclaration de M. Emmanuel Macron, président de la République, sur la mobilisation internationale en faveur de l'égalité femmes-hommes, à Paris le 30 juin 2021. (2021, 6 octobre) vie-publique.fr, available at: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/280665-emmanuel-macron-30062021-egalite-femmes-hommes>

There are other differences. French feminist foreign policy relies on the role of the market to counter gender inequalities, whereas Sweden focused on social policies³¹. However, Sweden is the only country to monitor and evaluate its actions³². The reports issued on the evolution of French feminist foreign policy show the willingness of the state to make public its interventions in terms of gender equality and women's rights.

Like Canada's feminist foreign policy, French feminist foreign policy focuses on development aid and emphasises sexual and reproductive health and rights, combating sexual and gender-based violence, girls' education, and women's economic empowerment³³. Unlike Sweden and Canada, the MEAE does not have a dedicated feminist foreign policy department, and France does not include a gender equality focus on its trade policies³⁴. Sweden focused its feminist foreign policy on three axes: rights, representation, and resources. Mexico, for example, pursues a strategy of a structural change such as poverty reduction, addressing systemic economic barriers, micro-financing, and international loans for women.

La Suède orientait sa politique étrangère féministe sur trois axes : les droits, la représentation et les ressources allouées. Le Mexique, par exemple, poursuit une stratégie qui s'articule autour d'une volonté de changement structurel comme la réduction de la pauvreté, la lutte contre les obstacles économiques systémiques, les micros financements et les prêts pour les femmes à l'échelle internationale.

Through its rhetoric and involvement in gender equality and women's rights, France has the opportunity to become an international leader. The multilateralism advocated and supported by France is the key to using feminist foreign policy as an instrument to achieve gender equality at the national and international level.

31 Zhukova E., Sundström M. R. & Elgström O. (2021, 28 juillet). Feminist foreign policies (FFPs) as strategic narratives : Norm translation in Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico. Cambridge University Press | Review of International Studies, available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/feminist-foreign-policies-ffps-as-strategic-narratives-norm-translation-in-sweden-canada-france-and-mexico/AB4704BB59AC904F4FE0989049D19FEC>

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Moscovenko, L. R. (2020, 24 novembre). Diplomatie féministe, enjeu de communication ou réel axe de politique étrangère ? www.euractiv.fr, available at: <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/l-europe-dans-le-monde/news/diplomatie-feministe-enjeu-de-communication-ou-reel-axe-de-politique-etrangere/>

Grésy B., Stormi M., Le Cardeur C., Real C., Schimberg A. (2020, novembre). La diplomatie féministe. D'un slogan mobilisateur à une véritable dynamique de changement ? Haut Conseil à l'Egalité, available at: https://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport-diplomatie_feministe-v4.pdf

Part II. The Sustainable Development Goals, an international framework in response to international issues and challenges

A. Definition of the Sustainable Development Goals and origins of the 2030 Agenda

In 2000, around 189 leaders of the Millennium Declaration met at the United Nations headquarters in New York to define the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved fifteen years later³⁵. At the close of this plan in 2015, Member States pursued their goals. In September 2015, states came together to establish 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that cover the main aspects of sustainable development. While the MDGs were more focused on progress in so-called “developing” countries, the SDGs are more inclusive in that they are present at both the local and international levels, in countries of the Global South and the Global North. They encompass environmental issues, health, poverty eradication, but also gender equality. This has given rise to the 2030 Agenda, the international strategic framework for a fair, prosperous, environmentally sound and sustainable world by 2030.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is an annual multi-stakeholder meeting which monitors progress on the implementation of the SDGs at national and international levels³⁶. Indicators have also been created by the UN for regional and national monitoring³⁷, although it is difficult to say whether they are actually being taken into account in the achievement of the SDGs.

35 Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement. (s. d.), accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/fr/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

36 HCDH | Forum politique de haut niveau sur le développement durable. (s. d.). OHCHR, accessible sur : <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/sdgs/high-level-political-forum-on-sustainable-development>

37 SDG Indicators—SDG Indicators. (s. d.). accessible sur : <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

The 17 SDGs to be achieved by 2030³⁸ are as follows:



Recently, the Covid-19 crisis, which hit the world in 2020, has significantly slowed down or even reversed the progress that had been made on all the SDGs³⁹. The primary consequence of this pandemic is global health, a challenge that relates to SDG 3, with more than 4.7 million deaths⁴⁰, plus deaths indirectly related to Covid-19 due to overcrowded health facilities and delays in the treatment of serious diseases⁴¹. Nearly two billion people⁴² have been directly impacted by the economic downturn, with many losing their jobs, causing poverty to soar (SDG 1).

38 Nations Unies. Les Objectifs de développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/objectifs-de-developpement-durable/>

39 Les conséquences de la pandémie de Covid-19 sur les 17 Objectifs de développement durable. (2022, février 24). Focus 2030, accessible sur : <https://focus2030.org/Les-consequences-de-la-pandemie-de-Covid-19-sur-les-17-Objectifs-de>

40 Ibid.

41 Covid-19 : La pandémie a causé la mort « de 13,3 millions à 16,6 millions » de personnes jusqu'à la fin de l'année 2021, reconnaît l'OMS. (2022, mai 5). Le Monde.fr, accessible sur : https://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2022/05/05/la-pandemie-de-covid-19-a-cause-entre-13-et-17-millions-de-morts-dans-le-monde-entre-janvier-2020-et-la-fin-de-2021-selon-l-oms_6124877_3244.html

42 Les conséquences de la pandémie de Covid-19 sur les 17 Objectifs de développement durable. (2022, février 24). Focus 2030, accessible sur : <https://focus2030.org/Les-consequences-de-la-pandemie-de-Covid-19-sur-les-17-Objectifs-de>

The 2020 epidemic has also led to an increase in hunger (SDG 2), child labour (SDG 16), with an increase of 8.4 million children in child labour between 2016 and 2021⁴³, and gender inequality (SDG 5), with women being more affected by the multiple consequences of Covid-19. These impacts reinforced the need for joint work multilaterally, but also at regional, national and local levels due to the interconnectedness of the issues.

B. What place does gender occupy in the Sustainable Development Goals?

SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda is specifically about gender equality. It consists of six targets, broken down into nine points, starting with ending discrimination against women and girls, through to “women’s full and effective participation and equal access to leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”⁴⁴ and sexual and reproductive health and rights. According to the UN, gender equality is a fundamental right and a necessary principle “for a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world”⁴⁵.

However, the notion of gender must be integrated into all 17 SDGs because of their interdependence. This is one of the major difficulties in framing and defining the SDGs as a whole. For example, women and men are not equal when facing climate change. Women are generally more affected for economic, social and cultural reasons⁴⁶. Indeed, women working in agriculture may lose their jobs in the event of severe droughts or floods, are therefore in precarious situations, facing extreme poverty, and are more exposed to gender-based violence⁴⁷. Moreover, although they contribute to between 50% and 80% of the world’s food production, they own less than 10% of the arable land⁴⁸. Furthermore, their exclusion from decision-making bodies in climate governance contributes to the invisibility of their experiences and their voices⁴⁹.

43 Giove F. (2021, juin 9). Le travail des enfants en hausse pour la 1ère fois depuis 20 ans. UNICEF France, accessible sur : <https://www.unicef.fr/article/le-travail-des-enfants-en-hausse-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-20-ans/>

44 Bodiguel, J. (s. d.). Objectif de Développement Durable : Égalité des sexes. Objectifs de Développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/gender-equality/>

45 Bodiguel, J. (s. d.). Objectif de Développement Durable : Égalité des sexes. Objectifs de Développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/gender-equality/>

46 Osman-Elasha, B. (s. d.). Les femmes . . . dans le contexte des changements climatiques. www.un.org. <https://www.un.org/fr/chronicle/article/le-femmes-dans-le-contexte-des-changements-climatiques>

47 Confronting the gendered impact of climate-induced displacement. (2020). Care, accessible sur : <https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CARE-Climate-Migration-Report-v0.4.pdf>

48 Osman-Elasha, B. (s. d.). Les femmes . . . dans le contexte des changements climatiques. www.un.org. <https://www.un.org/fr/chronicle/article/le-femmes-dans-le-contexte-des-changements-climatiques>

49 Ibid.

The number of women in delegations of international climate conferences (COPs) is still very low: in 2019, only “5 out of 15 constituted bodies had a female representation of more than 38%”⁵⁰. In 2022, out of some 110 leaders present at COP 27, only 7 were women, or 6.36%⁵¹. It is therefore necessary to have a holistic view of each SDG.

Within the framework of SDG 5, there does not seem to be an intersectional view of the gender needs of girls and women, even though these groups of people are not homogeneous. The definition of the goal refers to “women and girls in the world”⁵², however these people face different realities from each other due to their social class, potential religious affiliation, sexual orientation and ethnic background. For these reasons, the definition of the key terms in SDG 5 lacks clear and assertive notions of inclusiveness and intersectionality.

In addition, SDG 5 does not clearly mention LGBTQI+ communities. The notion of gender equality must include the whole spectrum of gender and diversity. Mainstreaming the needs and experiences of LGBTQI+ people is a human rights issue, thus a cross-cutting issue for all the SDGs. Leaning towards this, the Danish Institute for Human Rights published a report in 2020 on the importance of including LGBTQI+ communities in the SDGs⁵³. LGBTQI+ communities face human rights violations that could be addressed if the 2030 Agenda delivers on its commitment to “leave no one behind”⁵⁴.

Although SDG 5 aims to “ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care for all”, it does not mention the right to control one’s own body free of coercion, discrimination, and violence⁵⁵. Recent setbacks in this area around the world demonstrate the urgency of conveying a common committed dialogue to the international arena. The framework for

50 Les femmes sont toujours sous-représentées dans la prise de décision sur les questions climatiques sous l’égide de l’ONU | CCNUCC. (s. d.), accessible sur : <https://unfccc.int/fr/news/les-femmes-sont-toujours-sous-representees-dans-la-prise-de-decision-sur-les-questions-climatiques>

51 Belmir, M. (2022, novembre 18). Où sont les femmes à la COP27? 24 heures, accessible sur : <https://www.24heures.ca/2022/11/18/ou-sont-les-femmes-a-la-cop27>

52 Bodiguel, J. (s. d.). Objectif de Développement Durable : Égalité des sexes. Objectifs de développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/gender-equality/>

53 Grzywnowicz, M., Dahlbeck, A., & König-Reis, S. (2020). Utiliser les droits de l’Homme et l’Agenda 2030 pour promouvoir les droits LGBTI (p. 52). Institut Danois des droits de l’Homme, accessible sur : https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/Leveraging%20Human%20Rights_FRENCH_web.pdf

54 Ibid.

55 Elveren D. (2018). Chapitre 9. Analyse critique de l’ODD 5 : Entre ambitions d’égalité et réalité politique. In P. Caron & J.-M. Châtaigner (Éds.), Un défi pour la planète : Les Objectifs de développement durable en débat (p. 135-146). IRD Éditions, accessible sur : <http://books.openedition.org/irdeditions/21564>

the 2030 Agenda must demonstrate a clear and unwavering commitment to these issues in order to set the course for a fair, equitable and sustainable world.

Furthermore, the post-development movement questions the coherence between the economic system on which the SDGs are based, and the SDGs themselves. The capitalist system is hardly compatible with the notion of sustainable development for two main reasons. Firstly, the stated objective of capitalism is the valuation of profit and not that of human needs⁵⁶, which is the objective of sustainable development. Moreover, even if the aim of the SDGs is not degrowth, it is relevant to underline that our production system pollutes enormously, and that the products of this system are often wasted when not sold. This waste and lack of redistribution in the name of profit supports an ever more frenzied system of consumption that is incompatible with the fight against deforestation and desertification (SDG 15)⁵⁷. In 2022, the day of overshoot occurred on 28 July. This means that on this day, humanity had used all the resources that the Earth can replenish in a year⁵⁸. Women and all minorities are the most affected by the negative externalities of the capitalist system. A majority of women are involved in informal work, and there are more women than men living on less than \$1.90 a day according to UN Women⁵⁹. By the end of 2022, an estimated 383 million women and girls lived in extreme poverty compared to 368 million men and boys⁶⁰.

Secondly, there is an inconsistency in “inter-temporal equity⁶¹”, i.e. between the notion of sustainable development towards which the SDGs aim and the capitalist system on which the goals are based, insofar as sustainable development is applied over a long period of time, while capitalism supports short or medium-term profits, at least, shorter than those of sustainable development.

56 Zuindeau B. (2006). Le développement durable est-il soluble dans le capitalisme ? Territoire en mouvement Revue de géographie et aménagement. Territory in movement Journal of geography and planning, 4, Art. 4, accessible sur : <https://doi.org/10.4000/tem.430>

57 Bodiguel, J. (s. d.). Objectif de Développement Durable—Forêts, désertification et biodiversité.

Développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/biodiversity/>

58 28 juillet : Jour du dépassement 2022. (s. d.). WWF France, accessible sur : <https://www.wwf.fr/jour-du-depassement>

59 ODD 1 : Éliminer la pauvreté sous toutes ses formes et partout dans le monde. (s. d.). ONU Femmes, accessible sur : <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-1-no-poverty>

60 Il faudra encore des siècles pour parvenir à l'égalité des sexes, prévient l'ONU dans un nouveau rapport | ONU Info. (2022, septembre 7). Nations Unies, accessible sur : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2022/09/1126601>

61 Elveren, D. (2018). Chapitre 9. Analyse critique de l'ODD 5 : Entre ambitions d'égalité et réalité politique. In P. Caron & J.-M. Châtaigner (Éds.), Un défi pour la planète : Les Objectifs de développement durable en débat (p. 135-146). IRD Éditions, accessible sur : <http://books.openedition.org/irdeditions/21564>

Additionally, it is also important to emphasise the interconnectedness and interdependence of the SDGs within themselves. For example, the goals of education (4), health (3), labour (8), climate change (13), peace and justice (16) are also correlated with improving gender equality (5). This finding is progressively being integrated into the responses to gender equality and the protection of women's rights, as the commitments made at the Generation Equality Forum in 2021 can attest.

This event revives large-scale multilateral action after a long period of silence. It is the first event of this magnitude on the subject since the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, twenty-six years later. The Generation Equality Forum brought together state and government representatives, leaders of non-governmental organisations, civil society activists and business leaders to build momentum for gender equality and to address the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on women and girls⁶². The Forum saw the launch of a Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality⁶³ which aims to establish concrete commitments on the implementation and financing of MDG 5 from 2021 to 2026 with a cross-cutting approach. More than 2,000 commitments have been made in the sectors of the economy, environment and health, and \$40 billion in new investments are planned from the public, private and philanthropic sectors.

In addition, at the Generation Equality Forum, an agreement was made between UN Women and the entire UN system for the period 2021-2026 regarding Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action, aimed at developing monitoring, accountability, coordination and funding for these issues⁶⁴. The agreement will focus on the following five priority areas: funding for the Women, Peace and Security agenda and gender equality in humanitarian programming; women's meaningful participation in peace processes; women's economic security, access to resources and other essential services; women's leadership and action in peace, security and humanitarian assistance; and the protection of women in conflict and crisis contexts, including women human rights defenders⁶⁵.

62 Des chefs d'État, des dirigeants et des militants prennent des mesures ambitieuses pour accélérer la réalisation de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et traiter les conséquences de la COVID-19 pour les femmes et les filles. (s. d.). ONU Femmes, accessible sur : <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/news/stories/2021/6/press-release-generation-equality-forum-leads-bold-action-to-accelerate-gender-equality>

63 Generation Equality Forum. (2021). Action Coalitions. Global acceleration plan (p. 88). UN WOMEN, accessible sur : <https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/UNW%20-%20GAP%20Report%20-%20EN.pdf>

64 Pacte sur les femmes, la paix, la sécurité et l'action humanitaire (FPS-AH). (s. d.). Forum Génération Égalité, accessible sur : <https://forum.generationequality.org/index.php/fr/pacte-sur-les-femmes-la-paix-la-securite-et-laction-humanitaire-fps-ah>

65 Ibid.

C. France's actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

What is France doing to achieve the SDGs by 2030? At the national level, the Parliament, Ministries, local authorities, associations, companies, trade unions and the research field took part from 2016 to 2019 in the development of a roadmap, a national strategic tool for sustainable development⁶⁶. This roadmap is structured around six priority issues⁶⁷.

As a follow-up to the roadmap, the French government published in September 2019 a list of experiments and projects to be carried out by groups of actors⁶⁸. This list includes, among other things, strengthening the action of parliamentarians in favour of the SDGs, and better integration of the processes and levers for integrating the SDGs into the State's action by mobilising the "Exemplary Public Service" plan and the FDA budget of almost 10% of the "CSO (Civil Society Organisation) Initiative"⁶⁹.

France is committed to monitoring and reporting on its targets to all actors working on the SDGs. The French government has instituted a principle of accountability through an internal self-assessment led by the MEFA (NDL: Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs) on all relevant institutions, and an external evaluation led by the HCE (NDL: High Council for Gender Equality).

There are also many organisations that report on France's progress on the SDGs, including the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies⁷⁰.

France has shown its commitment to the achievement of the SDGs through several actions and events. Regarding SDG 1, official development assistance for the eradication

66 Les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD). (s. d.). [notre-environnement.gouv.fr](https://www.notre-environnement.gouv.fr/themes/evaluation/article/les-objectifs-de-developpement-durable-odd), accessible sur: <https://www.notre-environnement.gouv.fr/themes/evaluation/article/les-objectifs-de-developpement-durable-odd>

67 Ibid.

68 Propositions de chantiers et d'expérimentations à mener. L'Agenda 2030 en France. (2019, septembre 25), accessible sur : <https://www.agenda-2030.fr/feuille-de-route-de-la-france-pour-l-agenda-2030/des-modes-d-action-renouveles/article/propositions-de-chantiers-et-d-experimentations-a-mener>

69 Ibid.

70 INSEE. (2022). Indicateurs pour le suivi national des Objectifs de développement durable, accessible sur : <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2654964>

of extreme poverty amounted to 8,150,000,000 euros in 2015⁷¹. More recent data is not available. In 2016, the French Development Agency invested 1.6 billion euros towards the Global South⁷². One of the measures put in place for SDG 16 on peace, justice and effective institutions is the adoption by the FDA in November 2016 of a fund amounting to 100 million euros aimed at vulnerability mitigation and crisis response⁷³. In 2022, France ranked 11th out of 34 countries assessed by the SDO Index for Europe⁷⁴.

Two thirds of the goals are expected to be achieved by 2030, including the goal on poverty (goal 1) and industry, innovation and infrastructure (goal 9). This is according to a report published in December 2022 by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) on the achievement of the SDGs in Europe⁷⁵. On the other hand, goals 12, 13, 14 and 15 are more difficult to achieve because of the impacts generated abroad through domestic consumption in France⁷⁶.

Regarding France's action for SDG 5, measures are integrated in its external action. In October 2016, 150 sexual and reproductive health and rights defenders gathered in Paris for the EuroNGOs Conference with the aim of coordinating actions to collectively get "a good start"⁷⁷ on the race to achieve the SDGs. However, to date, there is no way to

71 Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. (s. d.). Objectif de développement durable n°1 : Éliminer l'extrême pauvreté et la faim. France Diplomatie - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, accessible sur : <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/developpement/l-agenda-2030-du-developpement/article/objectif-de-developpement-durable-no1-eliminer-l-extreme-pauvrete-et-la-faim>

72 Lutte contre les inégalités | AFD - Agence Française de Développement. (s. d.), accessible sur : <https://www.afd.fr/fr/page-thematique-axe/lutte-contre-les-inegalites>

73 Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. (s. d.). Objectif de développement durable n°16 : Paix, justice et institutions efficaces. France Diplomatie - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, accessible sur : <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/developpement/l-agenda-2030-du-developpement/article/objectif-de-developpement-durable-no16-paix-justice-et-institutions-efficaces>

74 Alvarez, C. (2022, décembre 5). ODD : La France, parmi les bons élèves européens, doit néanmoins progresser sur l'esclavage moderne dans le secteur des minerais. Novethic, accessible sur : <https://www.novethic.fr/actualite/social/conditions-de-travail/isr-rse/odd-la-france-parmi-les-bons-eleves-europeens-doit-progresser-sur-l-esclavage-moderne-dans-le-secteur-des-minerais-151219.html>

75 SDSN. (2022). Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022. Achieving the SDG's: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World. United Nations, accessible sur : <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopmentreport/2022/europe-sustainable-development-report-2022.pdf>

76 Alvarez, C. (2022, décembre 5). ODD : La France, parmi les bons élèves européens, doit néanmoins progresser sur l'esclavage moderne dans le secteur des minerais. Novethic, accessible sur : <https://www.novethic.fr/actualite/social/conditions-de-travail/isr-rse/odd-la-france-parmi-les-bons-eleves-europeens-doit-progresser-sur-l-esclavage-moderne-dans-le-secteur-des-minerais-151219.html>

77 Conférence EuroNGOs : En route vers 2030 ! (2016, octobre 3). Equipop, accessible sur : <https://equipop.org/conference-eurongos-route-vers-2030/>

track whether the race to achieve the SDGs is on track or whether the effects of this seven-year-old conference are positive.

The orientation law on solidarity development and the fight against global inequalities promulgated on 4 August 2021 places France's official development assistance within the framework of the SDGs and makes gender equality a cross-cutting priority of this policy, according to Caroline de Cremoux, in charge of the gender equality programme at Focus 2030⁷⁸. According to the annual report on France's official development assistance, in 2021, 672,986 euros of the 2020 amounts were allocated to SDG 5⁷⁹. However, achieving the SDGs depends mainly on financing development policies. A variety of funding sources are needed to reach the SDGs. But again, the issues are complex.

Now, the problematic is how to link the implementation of a feminist foreign policy with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

78 Entretien mené le 24 janvier 2023 avec Caroline de Crémoux, chargée du programme égalité femmes-hommes à Focus 2030.

79 L'aide publique au développement des collectivités territoriales (p. 63). (2020). [Rapport annuel].

Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, accessible sur :

https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_apd_2021_sur_montants_2020__cle0e9ac1.pdf

Part III. Gender equality as a global and sustainable common good: the need to reform the French feminist foreign policy and improve its international reach

A. The need for an intersectional and inclusive feminist foreign policy in the face of rising conservatism

France distinguishes itself by an evolutive and pragmatic approach to its feminist foreign policy. Although a clear and explicit definition is necessary, this approach must be preserved. Given the instability of the international stage, it allows France to continually adapt, while upholding key axes. At present, France's feminist foreign policy focuses primarily on international assistance. However, for postcolonial motives as well as questions of relevance, it is necessary for this kind of policy to be transversal. Implemented wisely, the feminist foreign policy may prove a useful tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, France should develop new lines of action and strategies to ensure a more holistic approach.

• Intersectionality and postcolonialism

Intersectionality is a concept that permits to reveal the plurality of discriminations that one individual may suffer. Discriminations that can be based on class, gender, race, or sexual orientation for example. In France, it is more common to talk about "multiple discrimination". However, this term tends to consider oppressions in a compartmentalised manner and study them separately. By contrast, intersectionality acknowledges how social differentiations overlap.

Within the framework of the feminist foreign policy, the notion of feminism needs to be rethought. In France, the scene has mostly been dominated by a liberal feminism supported by a privileged elite class. Disregarding class and race relations, liberal feminism is based on the premise that white women's experience of gender inequalities is universal. Furthermore, this feminism understands women as a uniform group.

When France implements its feminist foreign policy, it must consider the origins of the views it supports and interrogate the rightness and legitimacy of its actions in relation to the persons they are targeted at. To this end, adopting a postcolonial stance seems to be the most appropriate attitude. Under such an approach, the dominant Western narratives detrimental to other cultures are questioned⁸⁰.

As is neo-colonialism, that is the maintaining of a colonial domination under various guises such as culture, or social and economic influence. In the face of the increasingly present anti-French sentiment in Africa, in particular Western Africa, France must detach itself from its old colonial bias.

To this end, funding procedures must be simplified. Indeed, local feminist associations do not always have the possibility to access them on their own. Although an intermediary is sometimes necessary to counter the power relations between a funder and an association, they should nonetheless have the possibility to do without one for some fundings⁸¹. Also, some NGOs are not able to understand all the vocabulary that may be used by those who enforce the feminist foreign policy. Training them and popularizing feminist foreign policy concepts are starting points for this policy to be intersectional.

France is already on the right way thanks to the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations “aimed at supporting feminist civil society organisations operating in partner countries of France’s development and international solidarity policy⁸²”. As pointed out by Mar Merita Blat, project-manager – gender expert for the AFD (the French Development Agency), the associations are in touch with the local civil society, not the AFD⁸³. Hence, it is the civil society that refinances and redistributes considering their knowledge of the feminist organisations on the ground. Local realities are thus taken into account in the development and execution of this kind of projects.

80 Lüthi, J. (2013, août 12). *Le post-colonialisme* – Projet BaSES, <https://wp.unil.ch/bases/2013/08/post-colonialisme/>

81 Interview held on January 27th, 2023 with Nicolas Rainaud, France and international Advocacy Manager for Equipop, member of the French High Council for Equality and of the gender commission at Coordination Sud.

82 *Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes* (FSOF) (2021, juin). AFD - Agence Française de Développement, <https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/fonds-de-soutien-aux-organisations-feministes-brochure>

83 Interview held on January 27th, 2023 with Mar Merita Blat, project-manager – gender expert for the AFD (the French Development Agency).

According to Nicolas Rainaud, France and international Advocacy Manager for Equipop and member of the French High Council for Equality, development assistance and decolonialism are an oxymoron⁸⁴. Indeed, the partnership is not an egalitarian one. Therefore, France must continue to develop strategies in order to reduce the neo-colonial dimension of this assistance. Mr. Rainaud stresses that the difficulty for France is that, in many States, French interventions are associated with a westernized version of feminism whereas Africa has its own feminist currents⁸⁵. A paradigm shift therefore is essential and will necessarily involve an intersectional and decolonial approach.

• Human rights and LGBTQI+ persons

Taking an intersectional approach to the definition of the feminist foreign policy also means developing strategies and actions targeted at LGBTQI+ persons. Although France has an LGBTQI+ Plan guiding its national action, LGBTQI+ persons and their experiences are not mentioned in its feminist foreign policy. For Mr. Berthon, Ambassador for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, women's and LGBTQI's persons' situations are distinct⁸⁶. The mechanisms of repression are very different between on the one hand, half of humanity that the other half tries to dominate, and on the other hand a minority denied in many countries the mere right to exist and exposed to hatred comparable to racial or religious hatred. But the struggle for feminism must not be opposed to commitment for LGBTQI+ persons' rights. We must fight on both fronts. They are two aspects of progress towards a democratic society based on the respect of the equal liberty of all persons.

A dedicated LGBTQI+ strategy is crucial and a strong political leadership from the French government in multilateral fora for the decriminalisation of homosexuality and the fight against homophobic and transphobic prejudice and violence is an indispensable step towards a holistic and committed feminist foreign policy.

Feminist foreign policy aims to fight for gender equality, and to defend the rights of women, which include lesbian, bisexual and transgender women as well as intersexual persons assigned female. These women are more likely to suffer from gender-based and sexual discrimination and violence: it is therefore necessary to pay special attention to

84 Interview held on January 27th, 2023 with Nicolas Rainaud, France and international Advocacy Manager for Equipop, member of the French High Council for Equality and of the gender commission at Coordination Sud.

85 Ibid.

86 Interview held on February 2nd, 2023, Ambassador for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

LGBTQI+ issues. Also, the structural cause of these violences, prejudices and inequalities remains the same: a patriarchal system burdening all societies. While it is crucial to dismantle these power structures to advance women's empowerment and guarantee their safety, emancipation from arbitrary gender norms and stereotypes would also benefit men in all their diversity.

Moreover, LGBTQI+ persons' rights and sustainable development are interwoven. Sexual and gender minorities suffer disproportionately from poverty and natural catastrophes⁸⁷. Doomed to experience clandestinity, discriminations, violence, and harassment, they are at greater risk to suffer from lower levels of education than the rest of the population, higher rates of unemployment, and greater food insecurity, as well as restricted access to housing, health care and financial services⁸⁸.

A catalyst for conflicts, social insecurity, violence and poverty, climate change generates significant migratory flows and an increased number of climate refugees, making access to health care and services difficult. LGBTQI+ people are disproportionately affected. The lack of legal framework, of legal protection and of inclusion in the response programmes to natural catastrophes increase their vulnerability, including in shelters and refuges. For example, in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, transgender persons have been the victims of corrective rape and gender-based violence⁸⁹ in the emergency shelters.

In the face of such challenges, France, along with Mexico and Luxembourg, could be one of the leading countries in the defence of LGBTQI+ persons' rights. Beyond simply including them in the definition of the feminist foreign policy, France could support its commitment with concrete actions.

Numerous actions are possible, such as systematically considering the specific situation of LGBTQI+ persons when devising response programmes to natural catastrophes

87 Bhardwaj V. (2023, 2 février). Queering Disasters In Light Of the Climate Crisis. Gender Institute in Geopolitics, <https://igg-geo.org/?p=10929&lang=en>

88 *Orientation sexuelle et identité de genre*. (s. d.). World Bank, <https://www.banquemonddiale.org/fr/topic/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

89 Iglesias Luis and Hollands Ruth, *Pourquoi le changement climatique concerne la communauté LGBTQIA+?*, Climate C. A, 12 mars 2021. EmpoderaClima, <https://www.empoderaclima.org/fr/base-de-donnees/articles/changement-climatique-et-la-communaut-lgbtqia>

or conflicts. Another example could be establishing a dedicated network for psychological help and care, for transgender persons having started a transition and who find themselves unable to access their treatment during their migratory journey. Moreover, legal capacity building in the States penalizing LGBTQI+ persons is essential. It could take the form of continued support to lawyers defending these rights, or by guaranteeing an access to justice. Indeed, one way to advance LGBTQI+ rights is to win strategic cases⁹⁰. Furthermore, France could provide trans-identity training to its diplomatic personnel.

While it is easier for the European Union to encourage its Member States and Candidate Countries to conform to the core European values, France could adopt a proactive position on the issue of LGBTQI+ persons' rights at the international level. Already advertising its willingness to fight for these rights, it could do more, in particular through the promotion of a binding legal instrument to protect LGBTQI+ persons' rights.

B. Gender inequalities, a global issue requiring a multilateral solution

Multilateralism, as a concrete instrument of peace, prevention, and protection, is of interest for all stakeholders in every sphere where the goal is to deal with global issues. The French feminist foreign policy, with the help of multilateralism, of the international organizations and fora, and of the European framework, could achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address global challenges. Moreover, France must be at the heart of discussions and cooperation to improve its perception of gender equality and promote it.

• Participation in the international bodies

France is represented in 190 international organisations and therefore has undeniable influence on their functioning and developments⁹¹. As it holds a permanent seat in the Security Council, its role within the United Nations is decisive, in particular when decisions are being made and UN resolutions being adopted. This position also grants France diplomatic leverage crucial to advocate for a future European feminist foreign policy. Through a strong feminist foreign policy, its humanist values and its international influence, France can position itself as a leader. And it can influence other countries to initiate progressive resolutions and

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères. Les Français dans les organisations internationales. Infographie. (s. d.-b), <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/emplois-stages-concours/travailler-dans-les-organisations-internationales/etre-ou-devenir-fonctionnaire-international/infographie-les-francais-dans-les-organisations-internationales/>

encourage them to respect human rights and promote gender equality, thereby contributing to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through international feminist advocacy, France must initiate international projects and programmes, and be the main supporter of systematic gender-specific impact assessment. While at the Climate Change Conferences, discussions increasingly incorporate a gender perspective, a gender day will not suffice. Same is true about Women 7 summits in the margins of the G7. Every matter discussed has a gendered impact and externalities must be constantly assessed. France must systematically incorporate a gender and human rights component to its actions, speeches, programmes and to the agreements it ratifies.

Based in Paris, the UNESCO is one of the main arenas for international cooperation which promotes peace, democracy, and human rights. The French delegations and representations contribute to the promotion of the French feminist foreign policy in the fields of education, science, and culture, to raise awareness on gender equality issues and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4. As a reminder, in 2021, only 2% of women and girls living in the poorest countries complete upper secondary school⁹². Education is a key solution to guarantee a more inclusive future, and France must therefore continue to support ambitious and inclusive educational programmes.

Furthermore, through its culture and language, French being the official language in 32 countries, France enjoys undeniable influence. The International Organisation for Francophonie, composed of 88 States and governments, appears to be the ideal arena for cooperation and homogenization of the terms and definitions regarding equality, women and girls' rights, and LGBTQI+ issues.

• Trade and economy

Resorting to multilateralism, based on information flows, is pragmatic for France to support other countries, to create joint programmes that aim at achieving gender equality and promoting human rights. Initiatives such as AFAWA, launched by the French presidency of the G7 in 2019 to promote access to financing for African women entrepreneurs⁹³, or the announcement in 2019 of the launch of the Fund to support women's organisations in

92 ONU Femmes. (2021, octobre). Connaître les faits : Les femmes et les filles rurales. ONU Femmes, <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/digital-library/multimedia/2018/2/infographic-rural-women>

93 African Development Bank Group. (2022, 23 novembre). Initiative pour favoriser l'accès des femmes au financement en. Banque africaine de développement - Bâtir aujourd'hui, une meilleure Afrique demain, accessible sur : <https://www.afdb.org/fr/themes-et-secteurs/initiatives-et-partenariats/initiative-pour-favoriser-lacces-des-femmes-au-financement-en-afrique-afawa>

countries partnering with France's development policy⁹⁴, illustrate this already.

The French feminist foreign policy must guarantee women's economic participation and equal rights in the working world to demonstrate that a sustainable and fair economy based on respect for human rights can only be developed with women. This entails support for micro-credit banks and loans for financing in countries where micro-credit is developed. However, feminist foreign policy must be attentive to debt and business development in the informal sector which continue to generate poverty, especially for women⁹⁵. "Micro-credit would be nothing more and nothing less than a depoliticisation of development used to convert poor women into instruments of the liberal agenda, negating any questioning of the structural factors of women's oppression, whether economic, ideological, cultural, social or political."⁹⁶ Therefore, French feminist foreign policy should not focus on the emancipation of women through liberal and market-based feminism but rather through implementing social policies and intersectional feminism.

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment must be promoted in the field of international trade through targeted trade policies and initiatives supporting women-owned businesses and gender-sensitive trade agreements⁹⁷.

Following the example of the European model with its "new generation" trade and association agreements⁹⁸ with New Zealand and Chile⁹⁹, France can introduce binding clauses in its bilateral trade agreements in favour of gender equality, sustainable development, human rights, labour standards and compliance with climate agreements.

94 Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes (FSOF). (s. d.). AFD - Agence Française de Développement, accessible sur : <https://www.afd.fr/fr/fonds-de-soutien-aux-organisations-feministes-fsof>

95 *La dette privée illégitime au Sud de la planète : le cas du microcrédit*. (2022, 28 octobre). CADTM.org, accessible sur : <http://www.cadtm.org/La-dette-privee-illegitime-au-Sud-de-la-planete-le-cas-du-microcredit>

96 Guérin I. (2011). Les effets insoupçonnés de la microfinance. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, 25, 61-79, accessible sur : <https://doi.org/10.3917/tgs.025.0061>

97 Coup de projecteur sur L'ACTION DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE EN FAVEUR DES FEMMES, accessible sur : <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/factsheets/women/fr/>

98 Meyer K. de. (2022, 30 juin). *L'Europe et la Nouvelle-Zélande concluent un nouvel accord commercial*. Les Echos, accessible sur : <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/leurope-et-la-nouvelle-zelande-concluent-un-nouvel-accord-commercial-1732560>

99 Mortier M. (2018, 20 février). L'UE et le Chili à la recherche de l'accord parfait. www.euractiv.fr, accessible sur : <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/commerce-industrie/news/lue-et-le-chili-a-la-recherche-de-laccord-parfait/>

Meyer K. de. (2022, 30 juin). *L'Europe et la Nouvelle-Zélande concluent un nouvel accord commercial*. Les Echos, accessible sur : <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/leurope-et-la-nouvelle-zelande-concluent-un-nouvel-accord-commercial-1732560>

This would push the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and include a cross-cutting perspective between foreign trade and gender equality in French feminist foreign policy.

- **Conflict, peace, security, and disarmament**

From Tigray to Ukraine, through the Sahel, women are the first victims of conflict and insecurity. Kidnapped, raped, and violated, they are reduced to the rank of objects, and their bodies are deemed a battlefield. In the face of the current succession of global crises and Russia's recent threats to use nuclear weapons, women's contribution is essential to building peace and maintaining security.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Recognising that the majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict are women and children, this resolution affirms the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding¹⁰⁰. It has been proven that when women participate in peacekeeping operations, there is improved mission efficiency and better access to local communities. This results in better promotion of human rights and more active participation of women in peace processes and political decision-making¹⁰¹. In turn, women's contribution to negotiations allows for a more inclusive and sustainable peace. Furthermore, when women are official signatories to peace agreements, they are more likely to be implemented¹⁰².

More than twenty years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, the results do not match what was anticipated. Although passed unanimously, the resolution's implementation is proving complicated.

Faced with the threat of new conflicts caused by the effects of climate change¹⁰³, France could, through its feminist foreign policy, instigate political and financial mobilisation. For instance, France could increase funding for the training of women likely to participate in

100 Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies, Résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité, S/RES/1325, 31 octobre 2000, accessible sur : <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/S-RES-1325%282000%29-F.pdf>

101 ONU France. (2022, mars 17) Les femmes dans le maintien de la paix, accessible sur : <https://onu.delegfrance.org/les-femmes-dans-le-maintien-de-la-paix>

102 Ibid

103 Werrell Caitlin E. et Femia Francesco. (2018, 8 mai). Avec le changement climatique, la menace de nouveaux conflits. UNESCO, accessible sur : <https://fr.unesco.org/courier/2018-2/changement-climatique-menace-nouveaux-conflits>

peace negotiations and peacekeeping operations, for the reintegration of abused women into post-conflict societies, and for medical and psychiatric care. Two good examples of such efforts are the UK's PSVI initiative to combat impunity for sexual violence related to conflict and the Global Survivors Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, launched by Nobel Peace Prize winners Dr Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad in 2019¹⁰⁴ and supported by France during its presidency of the G7 in the same year.

Rape and sexual violence are used as weapons of war in all contemporary armed conflicts¹⁰⁵, both by armed forces and private militias¹⁰⁶. Although rape is recognised as a war crime and a crime against humanity, it remains largely unpunished. The victims obtain neither justice nor reparation, and most perpetrators are not prosecuted. When they are, it is many years later, hindering the possibilities of reconstruction for the victims and the affected communities. As a threat to international peace and security, sexual violence is not addressed in peace negotiations¹⁰⁷, especially since women are side-lined from them¹⁰⁸.

Therefore, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda must become a priority for action in France's feminist foreign policy through the financing of measures to give women and girls access to education and training in public speaking and leadership. Moreover, France could advocate for adopting quotas in the bodies negotiating and signing peace agreements to achieve parity. Considering the conservatism of some leaders, a position of solidarity in favour of women's involvement and intolerance for the violation of their rights is required.

Women are also involved in demilitarisation and anti-nuclear fights. This commitment has been translated into the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

104 Entretien mené le 24 janvier 2023 avec Delphine O, ambassadrice au MEAE et secrétaire générale du Forum Génération Égalité.

105 *Le viol de guerre, un crime largement impuni* - Fondation Hirondelle - Media for Peace and Human Dignity - Hirondelle.org. (s. d.), accessible sur : <https://www.hirondelle.org/fr/nos-medias/425-le-viol-de-guerre-un-crime-largement-impuni>

106 Mali : des experts réclament une enquête sur d'éventuels crimes commis par les forces maliennes et Wagner. (2023, 31 janvier). ONU Info, accessible sur : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2023/01/1131847>

107 UNIFEM. Le viol comme tactique de guerre. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Media/Publications/UNIFEM/EVAWkit_06_Fact-sheet_ConflictAndPostConflict_fr.pdf

108 Bell C. (2013, 13 mars). Women and peace processes, negotiations, and agreements : operational opportunities and challenges. NOREF, accessible sur : <https://noref.no/Publications/Themes/Peacebuilding-and-mediation/Women-and-peace-processes-negotiations-and-agreements-operational-opportunities-and-challenges>

Weapons (TPNW), the first legally binding instrument to prohibit the bomb¹⁰⁹.

The Treaty recalls the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls and the necessity of their integral and effective participation in nuclear disarmament¹¹⁰. Unfortunately, along with the other nuclear powers, France has not yet signed the Treaty, preferring stage-by-stage disarmament¹¹¹ which, according to the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, is the realistic approach to adopt and which was renewed on 24 January 2023 by Ambassador Camille Petit, Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament.

Furthermore, France needs to consider local stakes to adapt to the specificities of societies, as in the Sahel region in Africa. Women and feminist associations in the region have already succeeded in resolving conflicts between military forces and rebel groups to secure areas, release humanitarian aid, and rebuild a post-conflict society¹¹². Their knowledge and experience must be duly drawn upon. Hence, France must be vigilant about its role in conflict mediation.

France's foreign action would benefit from being based on a collaborative effort and support for local grassroots organisations, such as the FemWise-Africa network¹¹³, which defend human rights and participate in building a society where peace and equality are the cornerstones. These are necessary conditions for establishing positive peace¹¹⁴. This concept refers to creating positive externalities at the end of a conflict, beyond the absence of violence, through perpetuating inclusive and parity-based governance, access to food, water and education, and protection from physical violence. France would thus promote a

109 Zubek I. (2019, 12 mars). Les femmes contre la bombe : le désarmement nucléaire et l'égalité de genre. ICAN France, accessible sur : <http://icanfrance.org/les-femmes-contre-la-bombe-le-desarmement-nucleaire-et-egalite-de-genre/>

110 Traité sur l'interdiction des armes nucléaires, (2017, 7 juillet), New York, Nations unies, accessible sur : https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XXVI9&chapter=26&clang=_fr

111 Ratification par la France du traité sur l'interdiction des armes nucléaires, (2021, janvier 21) JO Sénat - page 321, Sénat, accessible sur : <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2021/qSEQ210120205.html>

112 Jorge M. (2013, octobre). UNION AFRICAINE ET MÉDIATION, OÙ SONT LES FEMMES ? thinkingafrica.org, accessible sur : http://www.thinkingafrica.org/V2/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/TA_NO_-N-1_les-femmes-dans-les-mediations-africaines.pdf

113 FemWise-Africa. GLOBAL WOMEN MEDIATORS, accessible sur : <https://www.globalwomenmediators.org/femwise-africa/>

114 Mahmoud, Y. (2018, 7 juin). Le réseau FemWise-Africa peut-il rendre la médiation opérante pour pérenniser la paix ? IPI Global Observatory, accessible sur : <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/06/le-reseau-femwise-africa-peut-il-rendre-la-mediation-operante-pour-perenniser-la-paix/>

feminist foreign policy rooted in cooperative governance that provides responses adapted to the needs of populations while keeping the goal of achieving the SDGs in mind.

• Migration

In 2022, 100 million people were forced to leave their homes to escape conflict, persecution, human rights violations and poverty. This is 10 million more than in 2021 due to increased violence and prolonged conflict in several world regions¹¹⁵. Women account for 51% of these migration flows¹¹⁶. Some of them are fleeing domestic violence, forced marriages or genital mutilation and find themselves victims of such violence, during their migratory journey. According to a survey by the Women's Refugee Commission, 90% of women and girls who took the Mediterranean route in 2019 were victims of rape during their path. Moreover, 90% of the sexual violence is committed by smugglers who force women into sexual slavery or prostitution to pay for their passage¹¹⁷.

Women play a crucial role in rebuilding their communities¹¹⁸, whether on the move or in camps. Yet they face many difficulties, particularly extreme poverty, one of the main hardships encountered. They are confined to domestic chores and childcare and cannot work outside the camps. As a result, they cannot acquire financial independence and are forced to remain dependent on their sometimes violent husbands. Exposed to rape and prostitution, they are at high risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as unwanted pregnancies, affecting their health and well-being. Underage girls are also exposed to such violence, and their future prospects dwindle in case of pregnancy.

The right to access education is hardly guaranteed inside the camps. Numerous difficulties¹¹⁹ prevent girls and women from gaining autonomy, gaining access to decent

115 100 millions de migrants en 2022 : « un record qui n'aurait jamais dû exister » - HCR. (2022, 28 décembre). ONU Info, accessible sur : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2022/12/1130927>

116 Mihami A. (2022, 25 novembre). Sur les chemins de l'exil, 90 % des femmes sont victimes de violences

sexuelles. TV5MONDE, accessible sur : <https://information.tv5monde.com/info/sur-les-chemins-de-l-exil-90-des-femmes-sont-victimes-de-violences-sexuelles-479829>

117 Ibid

118 *Les réfugiés et les migrantes*. (s. d.). ONU Femmes, accessible sur : <https://www.unwomen.org/fr/news/in-focus/women-refugees-and-migrants>

119 UNESCO. (2020) Faire appliquer le droit à l'éducation des réfugiés: une perspective politique. Documents de travail sur les politiques éducatives, 8, accessible sur : https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366839_fre

work and breaking the cycle of poverty, including explicit policies to exclude refugees from national education systems, administrative and functional barriers, and reduced school capacity.

Feminist foreign policy is an opportunity for France to participate in reducing these inequalities that hinder the achievement of sustainable development goals with regard to migration. For women and girls to participate in rebuilding their communities, they must have access to long-term psychological support to heal from their traumatic experiences. France could allocate funds to ensure sexual and reproductive health, access to water, sanitation and education in the camps, which are essential to achieving the SDGs.

Regarding the funding of humanitarian aid projects to support women refugees, the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) is considering increasing this dimension of gendered ODA due to the escalating number of crises and their increased impact on women¹²⁰. In addition, France could take part in discussions on an international definition of climate refugees, specifically within the United Nations, and establish ways to protect these persons from the profound upheavals taking place, as in Pakistan, for example. France must pursue its commitment to international negotiations for an agreement on the rules to establish to regulate migratory flows, particularly during the Global Forum on Migration and Development. By following the example of Denmark, which systematically grants asylum to women and girls fleeing Afghanistan¹²¹, France would send a powerful message to refugee women and girls from countries where their rights are violated and highly threatened.

At the European level, migration policies do not fall within the exclusive competence of supranational institutions. The foreign ministries of the Member States are not concerned with entries into national territories, as this is the responsibility of the ministries of the interior. On the other hand, the European Union has bilateral agreements with some bordering countries, known as transit countries, to regulate migratory flows, such as Turkey, Libya, Morocco, and the Balkans. In exchange for subsidies such as development aid, these countries commit to reducing the flow of migrants to Europe. France could undertake through its feminist foreign policy to promote a more humanitarian image of migration and apply human rights values and principles to its migration policies.

120 Entretien mené le 24 janvier 2023 avec Delphine O, ambassadrice au MEAE et secrétaire générale du Forum Génération Égalité.

121 Le Monde avec AFP. (2023, 30 janvier). *Le Danemark va systématiquement accorder l'asile aux Afghanes*. Le Monde.fr, available on: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2023/01/30/le-danemark-va-systematiquement-accorder-l-asile-aux-afghanes_6159894_3210.html

Even if the EU has no jurisdiction in these transit countries, France should be publicly discussing the deteriorating conditions of detention of migrants in these countries, which are funded to welcome these persons. Amnesty International denounced in a 2021 survey "unlawful killings, torture, and other mistreatments, rape and other sexual violence, arbitrary and indefinite detention in cruel and inhumane conditions, and forced labour¹²²". To legitimise a feminist French foreign policy, which translates to the European level to address global human rights issues in migration, France can consider European legislation recognising the full and transformative action of the European Union and a strict regulatory framework for the receiving and transit conditions of migrants.

• The European Union

The European Union is another multilateral organisation through which France is in a position to play a leadership role in ways of broadcasting values of equality and human rights, especially through the draft of a feminist European foreign policy. The European Union is a supranational lever with important skills and undeniable transformative power to foster structural change and face challenges such as gender inequality through migration and the digital, environmental and business fields.

Nevertheless, there are internal disagreements, between Member States, concerning the management and the way to establish consensual policies for a potential European feminist foreign policy. Human rights, and those of women and gender minorities in particular, are threatened in countries such as Poland for the right to get an abortion and Hungary for their measures against LGBT+ people. There already are constraining measures towards Member States that are violating the rule of law. In December 2020, the conditionality of the rule of law in the European multi-annual budget was adopted, allowing to freeze European funding in case of non-compliance¹²³.

In the diplomatic field, women's representation is still not equal to men's, despite implementation plans being put into place since Josep Borell, the High representative, took office. Men account for roughly 80% of high earning positions and 70% of intermediary

122 Amnesty International. (2021). « PERSONNE NE TE CHERCHERA » : LA DÉTENTION ABUSIVE DES PERSONNES RÉFUGIÉES ET MIGRANTES DÉBARQUÉES EN LIBYE. [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/07/MDE1944392021FRENCH.pdf), accessible sur : <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/07/MDE1944392021FRENCH.pdf>

123 Lictévout L. (2022, June 2nd) Comment l'UE conditionne-t-elle les fonds européens au respect de l'état de droit ? [Touteleurope.eu](https://www.touteleurope.eu/fonctionnement-de-l-ue/comment-l-ue-conditionne-t-elle-les-fonds-europeens-au-respect-de-l-etat-de-droit/), available on: <https://www.touteleurope.eu/fonctionnement-de-l-ue/comment-l-ue-conditionne-t-elle-les-fonds-europeens-au-respect-de-l-etat-de-droit/>

implication to act in favour of the sustainable development goals thanks to multilateralism.

France could be the precursor of a new regulation measure through the common market, allowing an increase in respecting human rights and gender equality. Taking as an example the measure promulgated in December 2022 on the implementation of a carbon adjustment mechanism at the borders (CAMB), in other words a carbon tax on “the most exposed to a risk of carbon leakage¹²⁹” products, European institutions can think about the introduction of tariffs on imported products derived from the exploitation of human beings or coming from a country that violates women’s rights. This regulation at the external borders of the EU, that could be initiated by France, would incite third-countries to take measures to increase their feminist and humanist ambitions. Furthermore, it is important to note that, as in any economic reform, this seemingly protectionist measure can engender deficiencies in terms of volumes of products, particularly in strategic sectors such as raw materials or rare-earth elements products. But is it also in these strategic areas that the exploitation of human beings is the most frequent, like in mining, this type of tax therefore proposes the beginning of a thought process on how to achieve some SDGs, like SDG 5, 8, 10, 12 and 17. Moreover, this type of mechanism requires monitoring that evaluates the efficiency of the measure in the common market.

The French feminist foreign policy can also promote reform policies in specific areas through European institutions. Digital and new technologies are cross-sectional areas, implying an interconnection of European policies and their actions for women’s rights.

Efforts are necessary to include and recognise women in these male-dominated areas. Digital and new technologies, supposedly tools of empowerment, are sources of inequalities today because of a lack of diversity: 85% of technological innovations and artificial intelligence are elaborated by white men¹³⁰. The disparity of positions in these departments shows the scarcity of trained women, an imbalance that will take years to be corrected¹³¹. Indeed, there are still disparities when it comes to students’ career counselling: only 33% of girls are encouraged to choose a digital career, unlike 61%

129 *Plan climat européen : un accord sur la réforme du marché du carbone dans l’UE*. (2022, December 19th), vie-publique.fr, available at: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/287579-mise-en-place-dune-taxe-carbone-aux-frontieres-de-lue>

130 Paris Peace Forum. (2022, November 12th). *Breaking the glass ceiling : for a feminist and inclusive digital economy* [Vidéo]. YouTube, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cTAZZNajEE>

131 Femmes@numérique. (2020, December 17th). *Quelle place pour les femmes dans le numérique en 2020 ?*, available at: <https://femmes-numerique.fr/quelle-place-pour-les-femmes-dans-le-numerique-en-2020/>

of boys¹³². Moreover, these gaps stay significant between responsibilities and women's representation in digital jobs, 18% of information and communication technologies specialists are women in Europe, according to the 2020 DESI report¹³³. Social norms and gender stereotypes in this field are challenges that France and the European Union must face. France could in this way participate to the birth of a more vigilant European Union about gender equality in the digital and new technologies field, as well as supporting the creation of positions in this field and associations that promote women's inclusion.

At the time of an ever quicker digital transition, France must impulse measures and resolutions at the European level to protect women and gender minorities. It is an issue of safety, democracy and human rights' defence essential to include in France's feminist foreign policy. In 2020, a study by Plan International revealed that almost 60% of women aged 15 to 25 had been victims of cyber-bullying, and that 39% of them said they had been threatened of sexual violence online¹³⁴, like threats, sexual harassment, the broadcasting of intimate pictures or videos, obscene photomontages or stalking. That is why, in September 2022, the European Union adopted the Digital Services Act, that aims at holding accountable digital services providers, amongst which social media platforms. This legislative act fights against illegal content, forces platforms to delete it and prevent it, and demands transparency about their moderation decisions.

The EU could also try to find a legal definition of online harassment common to all States, in order to be more efficient to fight the problem and better accompany the victims, while taking into account the prevalence of gender specific violence online.

Finally, to go further, a so-called green feminist foreign policy would also allow the EU to defend its core values, by acknowledging that global challenges such as climate change and natural disasters increase the threats on fundamental rights, increase violence against women, girls and LGBT+ people, girls being out of school and being economically dependent¹³⁵.

132 *Les chiffres clés sur les femmes et la tech.* (2023, January 25th). La Grande Ecole du Numérique, available at: <https://www.grandeecolenumerique.fr/ressources/les-femmes-et-le-numerique/chiffres-cles-sur-les-femmes-et-la-tech>

133 *Ibid.*

134 Plan international. (2020). *Libres d'être en ligne : l'expérience des filles et jeunes femmes en matière de harcèlement en ligne.* plan-international.org, available at: <https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/02/sotwgr2020-commsreport-fr.pdf>

135 Schmidt J. (2021, November 26th). *Une politique étrangère féministe et verte pour l'UE.* Green European Journal, available at: <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/une-politique-etrangere-feministe-et-verte-pour-lue/>

• Public development aid

Development aid is a diplomatic tool that allows for the completion of the sustainable development goals. France can pull that lever through the AFD (the French Development Agency), and thus through its feminist foreign policy, to support projects aiming at promoting gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment in partner countries, contributing to complete SDGs 1,3 and 5. Nevertheless, like Mar Merita Blat¹³⁶ mentions, the issue of the project's accountability and transformative impact is essential for all project leaders of the Fonds de Soutien aux Organisations Féministes (FSOF) – meaning Feminist Organisations Support Fund – financed by the AFD and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), and while respecting the strategic framework of the FSOF co-built jointly.

As of today, France must go further with its development aid, because it is short-term based and can get in the way of other sustainable development goals, like putting a brake on the economy and foster corruption. The lack of funding for feminist organisations is also an issue despite annual goals going their way, less than 1% of the global development aid aimed at gender is transferred to feminist organisations.

At the European level, taking a rights and empowerment-based approach to development aid, rather than one based on neo-colonial interests and resources extraction, could allow France, and therefore the EU, to legitimate its feminist foreign policy, by giving a gender dimension and changing the rhetoric on women and marginalised groups by recognising them as agents of positive change.

136 Entretien mené le 27 janvier 2023 avec Mar Merita Blat, chargée de mission-Experte du genre à l'Agence française de développement. Interview conducted on 27th January 2023 with Mar Merita Blat, project manager/officer, gender expert at the French Development Agency.

C. The importance of the full integration of civil society and the private sector for a concrete and efficient feminist foreign policy

• The ambivalence of the private and philanthropic sectors action

Without forgetting that the French government is primarily responsible for the implementation of the sustainable development goals, the partnerships and agreements between the private and public sectors are becoming commonplace, as evidenced by the growing investment of companies in multilateral institutions such as the WHO or diplomatic summits like the Generation Equality Forum, in an inclusive approach of actors from all walks of life.

The private and public sectors could collaborate for a greater consideration of gender and marginalised populations in commercial activities and multilateral contracts. The feminist foreign policy could require a reference framework to companies with which they make business, i.e. refuse to sign contracts with companies that would not respect the framework. As for extraction activities, mining and quarries, France could recognise the different types of oppressions and discriminations that derive from these industrial activities¹³⁷.

Similarly, taking into account the discriminations engendered by commercial activity is an engagement that France can bear with French companies and the ones that are active on its soil. Whereas some UN declarations frame companies' activities in a non-binding way, like the 2007 declaration that "guarantees the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples"¹³⁸, France could lay out a base that recognises the importance of mitigating gender-based externalities and the growing gender inequalities resulting from commercial activity. It is an ambitious but necessary process.

This base would give the necessary criteria and indicators to assess the private sector's compliance with France's will to fight for gender equality. Public funding being conditioned by gender equality, or "equa-conditioning", has become more relevant upon granting public funding to companies following the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, conditioning when it comes to public funding is a sought-after tool within the European Union since

137 The ILO and gender equality (GEDI). (s. d.). available at: <https://www.ilo.org/gender/Aboutus/ILOandgenderequality/lang--fr/index.htm>

138 UN Human Rights Office. (2007, September 12th). OHCHR | UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous people. OHCHR, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/indigenous-peoples/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples>

2005, particularly in ways of community aid to companies to guarantee an agriculture that is more environmentally-friendly. While a close collaboration between the government and the French public sector was able to support advances in terms of gender quotas and fight for equal pay, new requirements in terms of gender should be considered.

Moreover, if France's feminist foreign policy really wants to be transformative, it could adopt a long-term viable economic alternative, that is inclusive and integrates ecological limitations. The current dominant economic model exerts a double oppression on both nature and women, it faces social and ecological limitations. It would be smart to acknowledge this and to advocate for other economic models, sustainable in the long run, inclusive and integrating ecological limitations, like the social solidarity economy that constitutes 10% of the GDP and around 14% of private sector jobs in France¹³⁹.

Both the public and private sectors could also work together for a better representation of women in decision-making institutions for a few reasons. While the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change notes that women are more environmentally conscious, it has also been observed that a growing presence of women in national parliaments leads to the adoption of climate-friendly public policies¹⁴⁰. Women being better represented in private companies' executive committees would support, in the view of a more ambitious feminist foreign policy, reaching sustainable development goals in ways of protection of the terrestrial and aquatic life, climate change and gender equality. It could take the shape of introducing women quotas, especially women from marginalised groups. Nicolas Rainaud, who contributes to Equipop's advocacy for feminist public policies and to the gender commission for Coordination SUD, points out that the implementation of quotas must be a virtuous cycle to give meaning to representation¹⁴¹.

What could be the penalties in case of non-respect of these conditions? What would be the benefits for a French company involved abroad to adopt a frame of reference based on a feminist foreign policy? Companies could be graded by the Banque de France

139 *L'économie sociale et solidaire*. (s. d.). economie.gouv.fr, available at: <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/leconomie-sociale-et-solidaire>

140 *Dimensions and examples of the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, the role of women as agents of change and opportunities for women*. (2022). [Synthesis report]. UNFCCC. Secretariat, available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/494455>

141 Entretien mené le 27 janvier 2023 avec Nicolas Rainaud, responsable plaidoyer France et international à Equipop, membre du HCE et de la commission genre de Coordination SUD. Interview conducted on January 27th 2023 with Nicolas Rainaud, France and global advocacy manager for Equipop, member of the HCE and of Coordination Sud's gender commission.

rating¹⁴² and could see their access to State aid restricted. In case of non-conformity to the values of the Republic, they could also be taxed to a high enough rate to incite them to respect the conditions. It is a tool often used for professional equality between men and women. Nevertheless, a framework and clear indicators must be elaborated. Just like some companies put forward ecological arguments to marketing and financial ends, we will have to be vigilant to pink washing and communication campaigns on reaching the SDGs.

However, the private sector being more and more present in multilateral decision-making institutions is a cause for worry. Companies have very different goals and agendas compared to public entities. Many leaders' political allegiances are not reassuring when it comes to seeing structural and humanist change, especially in terms of women's or LGBT+ people's rights. The themes and goals defined in terms of equality and human rights must stay in the hands of the public power who, in theory, has common interest as a priority. This type of collaboration must also ensure some transparency to civil society to prevent any lobbying attempt.

In an international context where funding from States are limited, civil society organisations have to turn to the private sector, in particular foundations. Preferring autonomy, the latter generally maintain some distance with the public sphere¹⁴³. These associations' actions backed by philanthropists are therefore limited because of their refusal to support lobbying and advocacy activities with political leaders. Without these activities, it is the goal of the organisation, responding to a social need, that is not met. If, from an association's point of view, being funded by a foundation is beneficial for their activities, another issue appears, that of the withdrawal of the State. Indeed, foundations investing the sphere normally reserved to the State, the latter could at least invest in these fields.

142 La cotation Banque de France évolue. (2020, July 20th). Banque de France, available at: <https://entreprises.banque-france.fr/nec>

143 4 questions to Laurence de Nervaux, (2016, April 29th), Fondation de France, available at: <https://www.fondationdefrance.org/fr/paroles-d-experts/4-questions-a-laurence-de-nervaux>

• The crucial importance of civil society organisations

Civil society is the main support to the sustainable development goals, it represents the main instigator of progress in terms of ecology and equality through a growing mobilisation power and awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns geared towards citizens and political decision makers.

There are a few French public programmes that support foreign local initiatives. The “programmes des petites initiatives” (PPI) – “programmes of small initiatives” – from the Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM)¹⁴⁴ – French Fund for the Global Environment – have been implemented in 2006 and “contribute to strengthen the abilities and influence of the African civil society on environmental issues¹⁴⁵”. It is currently the only fund that finances conservation actions by South countries civil society organisations, but it is mainly present on the African continent. After more than fifteen years of support and more than 200 projects funded between 2006 and 2016, gender does not seem to be the approach favoured by the FFEM.

There is but little mention of women's place in the ecosystems conservation field, in the fight against climate change, or in environmental education in this programme. An example that the fund could replicate more often would be the aid given to women of “les Amis de la Terre du Togo”¹⁴⁶.

Le Fonds de Soutien aux Organisations Féministes (FSOF) – Support Fund for Feminist Organisations – of the AFD has created an apparatus going this way: the Initiatives OSC apparatus that supports civil society feminist organisations operating in countries that have priority in the French development policy¹⁴⁷. Another initiative, the Feminist in action project, is a consortium of six organisations that includes Care France and Equipop, is financed by the AFD and supports many feminist organisations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The goal is to strengthen the feminist ecosystem, to carry out actions for a better consideration of women's and girls' rights and to support the

144 Le Programme de Petites Initiatives (PPI) | FFEM - Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial. (s. d.). available at: <https://www.ffem.fr/fr/le-programme-de-petites-initiatives-ppi>

145 *Ibid.*

146 Programme de Petites Initiatives (PPI) : Capitalisation des expériences cofinancées par le FFEM entre 2006 et 2016. (s. d.). available at: <https://www.ffem.fr/fr/ressources/programme-de-petites-initiatives-ppi-capitalisation-des-experiences-cofinancees-par-le>

147 Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes (FSOF). (2021), available at: <https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/fonds-de-soutien-aux-organisations-feministes-brochure>

smallest NGOs that fight daily for their rights.

This support to the non-profit community finds its relevance abroad, as well as nationally. France's International Strategy for gender equality expects the French Europe and Foreign Affairs Ministry to set an example in terms of gender equality and that France must go further and be a role-model through all its institutions to embody a key player for sustainable development across the globe.

In addition to a positive external action, French associations' needs, whether they are active abroad or not, have to be taken into account. While gender inequalities have worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic and there is a resurgence of toxic conservative behaviours against women and LBGT+ people, French associations' public funding is not up to the challenge. Many NGOs are sounding the alarm because they are overwhelmed by the difficulties they are facing and the weight of having to be a substitute to State aid and actions. A durable change cannot only rest on their work. Thus, it is urgent to build a strong bond with all of society's players to fight inequalities that impact us all.

Besides NGOs, civil society is also composed of research actors. Think-tanks, research labs, observatories and councils monitor and analyse political decisions, findings and civil society's needs and provide concrete solutions and recommendations. This work, less put forward, is essential in the context of State accountability and raising public awareness on specific issues. The French government could rely on research to feed its feminist foreign policy and adapt it to circumstances.

While the feminist foreign policy is a roadmap for a better national external action in favour of gender equality, civil society organisations are a vector of actions and awareness-raising. They are the product of individual or collective action by the concerned populations and they are legitimate to impulse structural change provided that they are correctly backed up. France must finance them, take into account their priorities and demands, engage in dialogue and collaborate with them to implement a feminist foreign policy in service of human rights and sustainable development.

1. Defining the French feminist foreign policy based on a postcolonial, evolving, holistic and intersectional approach.

This demands exemplarity in terms of programmes and policies defended in France and abroad, of parity in national decision-making positions and international institutions of which France is a member and a clear vision of the feminist foreign policy ambitions by the administrative organisation. Redacting a strategic document, with indicators, a budget and a regular impact assessment is therefore necessary to orient and guarantee the implementation of a responsible and integrated feminist foreign policy to the rest of the government's action. Moreover, including sustainable development goals in the orientations of the feminist foreign policy would confirm the adoption of an agenda that emphasizes the resolution of global challenges.

2. Adopting a transversal feminist foreign policy that includes targeted strategies on the environment, business, digital, migrations and disarmament by recognising gender specific consequences in these fields.

They are key areas for the implementation of a foreign policy that has the ambition for real structural change to put an end to gender inequalities and reach the sustainable development goals. France must systematically take into account gender issues in all its works and promote this approach within regional and international organs of decision making.

3. Funding short and long-term concrete change in favour of gender equality and respect of human rights through public development aid and civil society support programmes.

Funding must be adapted to the needs and abilities of local feminist organisations to give them better tools. It is also indispensable that this funding participates to the promotion of inclusive and supportive economic alternatives sensitive to ecological limitations.

4. Systematically defending a feminist foreign policy in international institutions, amongst which the European Union, as well as a multilateral approach of its application to counter the rise of conservatism, and create a positive counter-power.

France could influence a movement in favour of the creation of a consortium of countries and organisations committed to defending women and LGBTQI+ people's rights, guaranteeing their autonomy and fighting against all forms of violence and discrimination towards them. It is thus essential that it strengthens its policy in this area.

5. Integrating the private sector, civil society organisations and the field of research in actions of the French feminist foreign policy.

The interdependence of the sustainable development goals makes necessary an active and transparent collaboration of all stakeholders involved in the realisation of the sustainable development goals. Considering on the field expertise, intellectual, and financial contributions to France's external actions in this sense is crucial.

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