

THE FEMINIST MUNICIPAL MOVEMENT'S

CALL TO ACTION

in the Wake of the 30th
Anniversary of the Beijing
Platform for Action

Overview of
Priorities for
the Coming
Decade



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Our Historical Fight for Equality

The Municipal Movement, rooted in the peace efforts of the early 20th century, has long championed equality, justice, and empowerment—from our cities and territories to the global stage.

Following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995—which made only limited mention of local governments—promoting women’s participation in local governance as a foundation of democracy became a key priority for the Movement, particularly through IULA, the founding organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Thanks to an initiative by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the first study on women’s roles in local politics was conducted, leading to the launch of the Worldwide Declaration of Women in Local Decision-Making in 1998. This milestone inspired the European Charter and has since informed UCLG’s equality policies and programs, including the African Charter on Gender Equality.

In 2013, the UCLG Gender Equality Committee was transformed into the UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality under the leadership of the Mayor of Paris, who later guided the organization to participate in UN Women’s Generation Equality in 2021. That same year, as COVID-19 exposed vulnerabilities and setbacks for women worldwide, a coalition of local leaders from cities including Barcelona, Bogotá, Paris, Banjul, and Freetown declared the Municipalist Movement a feminist movement, with a common vision for equality, social justice, and democracy.

Thirty years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

In 2025, the global community will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This framework has become a cornerstone for global gender equality and women’s empowerment. UCLG is articulating a strategy, driven by its Standing Committee on Gender Equality, now chaired by the President of the Region of Nouakchott, and in collaboration with the UCLG sections, to review progress and address gaps in the localization of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and strengthen the Feminist Municipal Movement around shared priorities. This includes proactive engagement at key events such as the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in March 2025, and it will contribute to subsequent milestones, such as the review of SDG 5 during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2025, and the World Social Summit in November 2025. This process will contribute to UCLG’s advocacy on local and regional governments’ essential role and impact in localization and equality. This will feed into our constituency’s calls for a structural engagement in global decision-making spaces and processes in areas of gender equality and social development.

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UCLG views Beijing+30 as a crucial moment to assess progress and deepen commitments to gender equality at the local level.

Since 1995, cities and local governments have increasingly recognized their role in advancing feminist policies, although persistent gaps remain. Since 2021, UCLG has been identified as leading a Feminist Municipal Movement, emphasizing transformative, grassroots change for gender equality. The movement has gained significant traction as cities and local governments become critical sites for advancing the goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the context of Beijing+30, it is uniquely positioned to catalyze action on key commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment—particularly by addressing local inequalities, enhancing women's political participation, and fostering partnerships with grassroots women and civil society to achieve social justice.

The Role of Local Governments in Achieving Gender Equality

The Beijing+30 review process highlights the importance of multilevel governance in achieving gender equality. Local and regional governments, as the level of governance closest to communities, play a crucial role in addressing inequalities in areas such as housing, public safety, education, healthcare, and labour rights. The Feminist Municipal Movement capitalizes on these opportunities by embedding feminist principles into urban planning, local governance, and public policy.

Cities, local and regional governments, and their associations are increasingly recognized as key actors in advancing the commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action, including:

1. Ending Violence Against Women

Local governments are creating gender-responsive safety and social protection programs, such as well-lit public spaces and community-based reporting systems for gender-based violence.

2. Economic Justice

Local governments are addressing the gender pay gap by promoting women's entrepreneurship, improving access to local labour markets, and providing affordable childcare and other care services.

3. Representation and Leadership

Feminist municipal initiatives amplify women's voices in local governance, with some cities instituting quotas for women in decision-making roles.

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Key Perspectives from the Feminist Municipal Movement on Beijing+30

1. Localizing Feminist Policies

- UCLG has been at the forefront of advocating for feminist municipalism, viewing local governments as key actors in achieving equality and social justice.
- Despite robust global frameworks, national-level efforts often stall—making local implementation crucial.

2. Gender-Responsive Public Services

Feminist cities must provide accessible and inclusive services, such as:

- Universal childcare and elder care to redistribute unpaid labor.
- Safe public transport and urban planning that prioritizes women's safety and mobility.
- Housing and social protection for women, particularly those facing violence.

3. Women's Political Leadership & Participation

- Although some progress has been made, gender parity in municipal leadership remains elusive.
- Structural barriers, including social norms and cultural traditions, continue to hinder full participation in local politics.
- A significant emphasis on meaningful youth participation and the coaching and empowerment of young women is crucial.
- Local media literacy programs designed to combat gender stereotypes and misinformation can help overcome these obstacles.

4. Care Economy & Just Transition

- Cities, regions, and their associations are essential in implementing a feminist, care-centered economy—recognizing care work as central to economic and social well-being.
- A just transition in climate and digital policies must incorporate a feminist perspective, ensuring that women, particularly those in precarious jobs, are not left behind.

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5. Combatting Gender-Based Violence

- The rise in urban violence against women—including femicides, harassment, and online abuse—requires urgent action.
- Local solutions include gender-sensitive policing, survivor-centered services, and robust digital safety frameworks.
- Collaboration with political parties and the media is critical to address violence against women political leaders at all levels.

6. Intersectional Feminism

- Leadership from Global South feminists is essential in Beijing+30 discussions, acknowledging that traditional, top-down approaches have marginalized many communities.
- Indigenous, migrant, and disabled women, along with other structurally discriminated communities, must be central to decision-making processes.
- Education for all women and girls is a non-negotiable prerequisite.

7. Women and Peace

- Ensuring women's participation in conflict prevention and local peacebuilding is a critical foundation for peaceful societies.
- Municipal institutions can cultivate a culture of peace and empower women to assume key roles in building peaceful communities.

Looking Ahead: The UCLG Feminist Pact & Beyond

While the Feminist Municipal Movement has achieved notable successes, challenges remain in scaling local efforts to align with global goals. Limited funding, capacity constraints, and entrenched patriarchal norms can hinder municipal action.

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Beijing+30 presents an opportunity to:

1. Strengthen Local, National, and International Partnerships

Enhance collaboration among municipal, national, and international actors to ensure that local and regional governments have the resources and political support necessary to advance gender equality.

2. Incorporate Intersectionality

Address intersecting forms of discrimination that affect women differently based on race, ethnicity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status.

3. Inspire Through Practice

Leverage global processes and platforms like Beijing+30 to exchange innovative ideas and lessons learned, fostering a culture of shared progress.

UCLG's Feminist Municipal Movement calls for a radical rethinking of governance:

- Increased funding and greater autonomy for local governments to implement gender-sensitive policies.
- Implementation of feminist budgeting at the local level.
- Quotas and policies to ensure that more women, especially those from marginalized groups, assume leadership roles.
- New forms of leadership that empower both boys and girls, men and women, equally.
- Decentralized power, giving communities and grassroots women's movements a stronger voice.
- International solidarity among cities to challenge policies that perpetuate inequality.

As Beijing+30 approaches, the Feminist Municipal Movement pushes for a bold, transformative agenda—ensuring that cities remain at the heart of feminist futures.

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