



## Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls

### Statement on the International Women's Day 2026

By the Women and Feminists Constituency Group of  
the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)

We stand in solidarity with women and girls around the world who face rising violence, growing inequalities, caste discrimination and shrinking spaces to speak out. Hard-fought progress is slipping away as power concentrates in fewer hands, misogyny spreads online and in public life and governments cut funding for gender equality, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and efforts to stop gender-based violence (GBV).

Thirty years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gains are uneven and at risk. Many countries have laws and promises on paper, but they're rarely enforced and justice often fails survivors. Women human rights defenders – including women defending land, women searching for their forcibly disappeared relatives - and feminist groups face threats, harassment, criminal charges, and even murder or enforced disappearance just for pushing for fairness.

Today, power, inequality, impunity, caste hierarchy and violence against women feed off each other, as seen in global cases like elite networks. Gender-based violence increases where money silences victims, corruption and influence protects abusers, hate speech strips away humanity and courts are weakened. Poverty, human trafficking, war and conflict, war-torn economies and drug violence turn women's lives into battlegrounds of deep injustice.

Autocratic leaders and far-right movements are speeding up attacks on women's rights. When democracy weakens, it hits women hardest: organising gets restricted, civic spaces shrink and vital services including health, education and social protection lose funding. Without strong democracy, gender equality can't thrive. Supporting women's rights isn't charity, it's essential for healthy societies. Support for women's and feminist organisations, already very low, is further cut.

Austerity and debt don't affect everyone equally; they hit women hardest. These policies slash public services, pile on unpaid care work, worsen financial struggles and increase risks of violence and mental health distress (including suicides) and increase risks of violence and hardship. Domestic workers, caregivers and informal workers who keep economies running; lack basic labour protections and safety nets. This is built-in violence and it has to stop.

**To make the slogan "For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Justice." real, we urge governments to:**

1. Ensuring accountability for violence against women and girl, end impunity for gender-based violence with independent, survivor-focused justice systems that prosecute every perpetrator, including addressing caste-based discrimination, untouchability, and the situation of indigenous women and girls.
2. Protect democratic spaces by safeguarding women human rights defenders, lifting curbs on free speech and assembly and stamping out misogyny and hate online and in politics.
3. Restore and increase funding for gender equality, SRHR and GBV prevention, with steady, flexible support for women's groups and feminist movements.
4. Promote fair debt relief by allocating sufficient and timely public financing to achieve gender equality in health, education, care, and social protection, without applying austerity measures against these rights.

### **We demand:**

1. Justice reforms that put survivors first, cut out political meddling and stop pardons or shields for abusers.
2. Policies to break down deep inequalities, like living wages, strong labour rights and protections for informal, domestic and care workers.
3. Roll out universal, rights-based social protection as a mandatory state obligation — not conditional handouts — grounded in dignity, equality and government accountability. Design systems that reach informal workers, caregivers, domestic workers, widows, caste - marginalised women, women with disabilities and older women.
4. Commit public money to social protection and care, shielding these budgets from cuts because of austerity and debt.
5. Full recognition of unpaid care work as key to the economy, with public investment in care systems and shared responsibilities.
6. Lifelong protections that address intersections like class, caste/untouchability, race, migration, disability, sexual and gender diversity, covering older women's pensions, disability support, migrant rights and widows' inheritance and housing.
7. Ensure protection and support for survivors of sexual violence, their families and communities. When Indigenous girls or women are harmed, ensuring their safety and justice is a shared responsibility that must not be delayed.

### **A Call to Action**

We won't accept a world where violence, inequality and getting away with it are just "normal." On the International Women's Day 2026, we demand bold steps to challenge unchecked power, dismantle caste and gender discrimination, end violence fuelled by austerity and debt, shield feminist movements and guarantee universal social protection based on rights. The promises made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, must not only be upheld — they must be accelerated and align with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind.

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