

Madrid Joint Political Declaration

on Building Peaceful and Democratic Societies through Gender Equality, Human Rights and Feminist Foreign Policy

under the auspices of the ‘5th Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy: Building Peace and Democracy’

in Madrid, June 2 and 3 2026¹

Preamble

We, the undersigned Ministers and high-level representatives of governments of Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Ireland, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Rwanda, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay, United Kingdom and Spain, gathered in Madrid at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policies, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and by the common standard for the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the foundation of a just, peaceful and inclusive international order, and recalling the obligations assumed by States Parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, as well as the commitments made in the International Conference on Population and Development, and its Programme of Action, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as anchored in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals, reaffirm our unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality, the full enjoyment of all human rights, and the empowerment of all women and girls in all their diversity, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.

We express our deep concern for the current multiple, interrelated and mutually reinforcing crises affecting the international community, including geopolitical and security crisis, democratic backsliding, threats to the full enjoyment of human rights, the weakening of multilateralism and disruption and violation of existing international rules, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, economic instability, which threaten to reverse decades of progress and have a disproportionate and specific impact on women and girls, exacerbating existing structural inequalities and widening gender gaps.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a multilateral order based on international and humanitarian law, human rights and a strengthened multilateral system, fit for the present and the future, with the United Nations at its centre, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as its foundation and core mandates, a system that can deliver a better future for people and planet, enabling us to fulfil our existing commitments while rising to new and emerging challenges and opportunities.

We recognize that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and that democracy does not belong to any country or region. We further recognize the intrinsic and mutually reinforcing link between democratic governance, the rule of law, peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, economic and social justice and gender equality. We emphasize that freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline, is a fundamental prerequisite for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women

in political and public life at all levels, and it is essential for preserving democracy and catalysing the transformative structural changes required to achieve gender justice.

We reaffirm the Sevilla Commitment, that promotes gender-responsive solutions across the financing for development agenda, to actively fight poverty and its feminization, and to eradicate inequalities in all their forms.

We further reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Pact for the Future, recognizing its importance in strengthening multilateralism, upholding disarmament obligations and commitments and protecting civilians in armed conflict, addressing global inequalities, while ensuring that gender equality and the rights of women and girls remain central to global governance and international cooperation efforts.

We recognize our commitment to achieving ambitious outcomes on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and reaffirm our strong support for the principles of the Pact for Prosperity, People and the Planet (4P), including through gender-responsive means of implementation.

Building on the commitments and progress achieved in previous Ministerial Conferences on Feminist Foreign Policies, including those held in Germany (2022), the Netherlands (2023), Mexico (2024) and France (2025) and their outcome documents, we resolve to further strengthen our collective efforts and translate commitments into concrete, measurable and transformative actions.

Call to action

Against this background, we do solemnly declare in mutual friendship and respect, our commitment to work together to:

1. Respect, promote, protect and fulfil all human rights, including for all women and girls throughout their life course, particularly from an intersectional perspective, recognising these rights as universal, indivisible and interdependent. In this regard, we call upon all Member States to comply with their international obligations and to consider ratifying, or acceding and effectively implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and their respective Optional Protocols, and to limit the scope of any reservations. We call for equal access to justice and remedies for violations of women's and girls' rights and commit to ensure that international independent accountability bodies can fulfil their mandates effectively. We further commit to tackling impunity for international crimes, including sexual and gender-based crimes, including by ensuring accountability under international law for the establishment of institutionalized regimes that result in systematic gender-based oppression and domination, supporting ongoing efforts to hold Member States accountable for violations of CEDAW, and ensuring that the International Criminal Court has the necessary resources and cooperation to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

2. Establish a just and lasting peace, grounded in full respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States, the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, as well commit to developing and implementing mechanisms for early warning, pursuing and applying confidence-building measures, intensifying the use of diplomacy to ease tensions, supporting the role of regional and subregional organizations in diplomacy and

mediation and settling international disputes by peaceful means. Promote women's full, equal, safe and meaningful participation at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes. We also commit to ensuring access to justice, effective remedies, reparations and comprehensive assistance for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence across all humanitarian settings, including ongoing conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as during and in the aftermath of disaster and health emergencies, in accordance with applicable international law, with particular attention to the most vulnerable, including refugees, internally displaced women and girls and those affected by armed conflicts.

3. Accelerate efforts to achieve gender parity across all domains of foreign policy, including through promoting women's equal representation and a feminist culture in our administration, including in the foreign service international decision-making bodies and multilateral fora. We further commit to taking all appropriate measures, including through laws, social policies and programmes, to dismantle structural and systemic barriers that restrict or discourage women's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation in all spheres and levels of public, economic and political life, narrow their political space, and undermine their agency at the domestic and international levels, including through gendered disinformation, hate speech or technology-facilitated gender-based violence through an online and offline continuum, which disproportionately affect women in politics, journalists, specially feminist journalists and women human rights defenders. Therefore we further commit to harnessing digital transformation, including the development, deployment and use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, by promoting inclusive, rights-based and gender-responsive technological innovation, closing the gender digital divide, and to strengthening regulation of social media platforms to ensure transparency, accountability and due process and access to effective remedy for users, and to promoting human rights-based and gender-responsive due diligence by companies, in accordance with international human rights law.

4. Advance feminist, intersectional and gender-transformative approaches across our foreign policies, including through the adoption of feminist foreign and development policies, where appropriate, as essential to dismantle structural inequalities, including patriarchy, racism and colonial legacies and practices, and root causes of all forms of discrimination, transform unequal power relations at all levels, prevent armed conflicts and other forms of violence and contribute to more democratic, equalitarian, peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies.

5. Defend the right of women and girls in all their diversity to bodily autonomy to make informed decisions about their lives and their bodies, free from coercion, discrimination and violence and further guarantee and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights as essential to achieving gender equality. In this regard, we commit to ensuring universal, comprehensive, affordable, timely and equitable access to integrated maternal health and sexual and reproductive health services, including in armed conflict settings. This includes high-quality care for pregnancies and childbirths, the prevention of unintended pregnancies, with a focus on adolescents-specific interventions, including access to modern contraceptives, and the provision of safe abortion care in accordance with international health standards and human rights law. We also commit to adopting and implementing a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, social and rights-based aspects of sexuality, that enables individuals to exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights and to protect their reproductive autonomy and integrity. We also commit to take effective action to prevent and halt regressive threats to roll back the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights, and to address the discrimination and barriers faced by marginalised groups of women, adolescents and girls, including indigenous, migrant, refugee and women and girls with disabilities.

6. Engage men and boys in all their diversity as allies and agents of change and beneficiaries of gender equality, by focusing on their respective masculinities, to transform unequal gendered power relations and patriarchal structures and their root causes that perpetuate gender stereotypes, harmful for women and men, girls and boys.

7. Take appropriate measures to create a safe, enabling and violence-free environment for all women and girls and adopt, fund and implement national action plans towards the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, in public and private spheres, including sexual violence such as sexual harassment, rape, gender-related killings, femicide, trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful traditional practices, institutional and political violence, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence, while establishing integrated information systems and interinstitutional coordination mechanisms to prevent, eliminate and respond to violence against women, including older women, adolescent girls, and girls, while improving the recognition, documentation and response to under-identified and emerging forms of gender-based violence, including institutional and vicarious violence.

8. Commit to transform global, regional and national financing systems to advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, by undertaking structural reforms to place gender equality at the centre of the international financial architecture and all financing for development efforts, including by systematically mainstreaming a gender perspective across domestic resource mobilization, public expenditure and procurement to support women-owned enterprises, international development cooperation and private finance. We will expand, where appropriate, progressive taxation and curb regressive taxes that disproportionately affect women and will promote gender impact assessments for all fiscal policies, budget allocations, and public investment plans, while addressing unsustainable sovereign debt burdens which have a differentiated impact on women and girls. We recognize that multilateral development banks and public development banks must play a key role in this regard, to strengthen the inclusivity of the international architecture and national systems and lower the cost of gender-based exclusion. We will put in place incentives to support equal economic participation, establish tracking systems for gender equality expenditures, and publish sex-disaggregated data and regular financing reports on public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. We will aim to scaling up, protecting and prioritizing investments to eradicate the feminization of poverty and advance women's access to economic resources, to land tenure and to own, have access and to control property, land and housing, irrespective of their marital

status, and to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing. In addition, we commit to strengthening transparency, accountability and inclusive governance mechanisms to ensure that resources effectively reach women and girls in all their diversity, particularly those in situations of vulnerability.

9. Advance a transformative vision of development grounded in the paradigm of the care society, recognizing care as an essential component for the realization of human rights, a public good and a cornerstone of a renewed social contract that promotes equality, social cohesion, safety, and wellbeing, sustainable and inclusive economies, and commit to promoting comprehensive, universal, accessible, appropriate, dignified, sufficient, sustainable and quality care and support systems based on co-responsibility among States, markets, communities and households, that recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, which disproportionately falls on women, while ensuring decent work and rights for care workers as essential workers, and strengthening public policies and funding, international cooperation and investment aligned with this objective.

10. Recognize the existence of diverse forms of families, that must be protected by States and respected by societies as a leverage for gender equality, and recognize that all children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and that parents, legal caregivers, family members and other members of the household have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child.

11. Recognise and honour the historic and ongoing struggles of feminist movements and women's organisations worldwide, whose collective action, leadership and solidarity have been fundamental in advancing gender equality and in securing the rights and freedoms we uphold today, and we pay tribute to women human rights and land defenders who have lost their lives in this pursuit. We commit to strengthening, safeguarding and expanding an enabling environment for civil society, grassroots and feminist organisations, including by protecting civic space

and combating the advance of restrictive laws and practises that threaten their autonomous existence, and by actively addressing the growing global backlash against gender equality. We further commit to defending the rights of women human rights and land defenders, and women peace builders, including youth leaders, by addressing the increasing threats, restrictions and forms of criminalisation they face globally, including in digital spaces. We also commit to ensuring sustained, flexible and accessible financial support for feminist movements and women's organisations, and to promoting their full, meaningful and safe participation in decision-making processes at all levels, recognising that their work is indispensable for the realisation of full democracy, just and lasting peace and security, human rights, development and gender equality and for the strengthening of effective, inclusive and accountable multilateralism.

ⁱ *‘The Principality of Andorra interprets paragraph 5 of this Declaration in accordance with its Constitution, its national legislation, and its existing international commitments, on the understanding that their implementation must be carried out in harmony with the domestic legal system and the sovereign powers of the State.’*