

Pursuant to Executive Order 14091 (February 16, 2023) on
"Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for
Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government"

2023 Equity Action Plan Summary

U.S. Department of State

Delivering equity through State

The mission of the U.S. Department of State (State) is to protect and promote U.S. security, prosperity, and democratic values and shape an international environment in which all Americans can thrive.

The Department is committed to advancing equity for individuals who experience heightened or compounded discrimination, violence, and inequality from existing, emerging, and growing global challenges. When the United States seeks to engage, inform, and understand the perspectives of all community members and address systematic exclusion, we will mitigate corruption, distrust, disinformation, economic migration, and authoritarianism. In so doing, we will safeguard democratic principles, inclusive security, and prosperity. We will lead with diplomacy that is rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: upholding and defending universal human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as dignity for all, championing opportunity for all, and respecting the rule of law. These values are the critical foundation for advancing U.S. national security, democracy, and global equality.

New strategies to advance equity

The Department has identified five areas of focus for its 2023 Equity Action Plan. The Department increased its efforts to embed equity in its work through outreach and engagement with marginalized racial, ethnic, and Indigenous communities; underserved groups; civil society; and bilateral and multilateral organizations through community consultation, high-level dialogues, and diplomatic efforts. The Department will continue to engage the public on these action areas, its progress, and next steps throughout the year and beyond.

1. Pursue diplomatic efforts to combat hate and protect inclusive democracy. *Globally, religious, ethnic, and racial minority communities are vulnerable to discriminatory laws, regulations, and practices in their host countries. They are often excluded from political participation and economic development, which make safe and sustainable access to and participation in diplomatic engagements and programs difficult. There is also often a lack of statistical hate crime reporting disaggregated by religious or other communities affected. To address these barriers and others, State will:*

- Embed community consultations and public engagement on reported violations and abuses against members of marginalized and underserved communities into strategic bilateral and multilateral human rights dialogues and action plans to generate evidence and actions that will improve respect for human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and inclusive democracy in countries under sanctions for gross human rights violations under the [Global Magnitsky Act](#) and other authorities, or those with the

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designation of [Countries of Particular Concern or Special Watch List](#) under the [International Religious Freedom Act of 1998](#) and [Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act](#).

- Collaborate and coordinate travel and public messaging by Equity Principals to elevate the interconnectedness of hate related to religious, ethnic, racial, and other aspects of identity that are exploited for discrimination and violence. For example, a U.S. delegation traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide and promote peace and tolerance.
- Amplify [Summit for Democracy](#) multilateral commitments that impact members of marginalized communities through Department senior leadership and initiatives, such as the [Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative Code of Conduct](#).
- Work with partners to implement the suggested commitments of the youth democracy cohort of the Summit for Democracy to strengthen and support meaningful inclusion of youth at all government levels, strengthen transparent and inclusive electoral processes, and build capacity for youth in politics through civil society support and education and participation in the Youth Democracy Network.
- Promote the meaningful participation of youth from marginalized communities in peace building and conflict prevention, management, and resolution, as well as post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.
- Consult and partner with foreign governments, multilateral and regional organizations, and civil society through events, statements and institutional mechanisms like the [Istanbul Process 16/18](#), to combat the rise in global antisemitism, Islamophobia, religiously,

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racially, and ethnically motivated violent extremism, homophobia and transphobia, and other regressive anti-rights movements.

2. Advance racial equity and justice globally. *Generations of discriminatory laws, regulations, and practices have built international, national, and local governance structures and community attitudes that compound systemic racism, discrimination, and xenophobia, which continue to have devastating outcomes for members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and Indigenous communities. These communities are often excluded from equitable access to political participation, employment, and education opportunities, and can even face violent suppression and statelessness due to their race or ethnicity. To address these barriers and others, State will:*

- Revitalize and work to achieve the objectives of the [2010 U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Racial and Ethnic Equality](#) and the [2008 U.S.-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality](#).
- Bolster and ensure robust U.S. support of the [United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent](#) and the [United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues](#).
- Work to achieve the objectives of the [Declaration](#) on the North American Leaders' Summit for the United States, Mexico, and Canada to advance equity and racial justice.
- Embed racial equity and justice across the Department by providing technical assistance for bureau-specific Racial Equity and Justice Frameworks through the internal [Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice](#) (SRREJ) Community of Practice.

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- Connect U.S. best practices to combat systemic racism, such as Executive Orders (EOs) 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, and 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, to global efforts through the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Global Forum against Racism.

3. Protect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Other (LGBTQI+) persons globally. *More than 60 countries worldwide criminalize homosexual status or conduct, which leads to increased violence and discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons in those countries. While there are 136 million intersex persons around the world, intersex persons face significant barriers to health equity and full inclusion in civic and social life. Few countries provide a pathway for legal gender recognition for transgender and nonbinary persons creating barriers to critical services and enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. To address these barriers and others, State will:*

- Continue to develop a nondiscrimination rule for all grants and contracts and socialize it with relevant stakeholders.
- Institutionalize advocacy by all officers in the Department for three specific advocacy areas: decriminalization of homosexual status or conduct, legal gender recognition, and ending violence against intersex persons.
- Implement an action plan to end so-called conversion therapy, focusing on designing output and outcome measures and monitoring implementation.

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- Strengthen and provide resources to LGBTQI+ advocacy groups around the world, focusing on support to build sustainable advocacy groups / networks.

4. Promote respect for international disability rights. *Institutional barriers from rules, restrictions, requirements, routines, traditions, or habits within society that are seamlessly integrated into education, workplace, relational, and other subcultures are often unnoticed inhibitors to equity for persons with disabilities. Changing institutional barriers to provide greater equity is often met with resistance to change a tradition or habit with the excuse that it would harm the others for a few potential benefactors. To address these barriers and others, State will:*

- Amplify EO 14095 on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers outside the U.S. through initiatives to ensure that [persons with disabilities](#) are included in the Care Agenda as receivers and givers of care, drawing attention internationally to the fact that gaps in care could occur that have a disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen and resource disability advocacy groups around the world – push for funding for local persons with disabilities advocacy groups through participating in relevant grant panels and advocating through bureau resource requests, focusing on funding intended to build sustainable advocacy groups / networks.
- As countries around the world ratify and implement the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD), help ensure they have the technical assistance and capacity to implement the CRPD and advance the livelihoods and promote independent living and self-sufficiency of persons with disabilities.

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5. Advance gender equity and equality globally. *Both democracy and gender equality, longstanding U.S. values, are effective and successful in delivering long-term stability and prosperity. However, over the last decade, anti-women's rights movements have become more visible, vocal, widespread, and successful, and are often tied to pushback on broader human rights issues. These movements are transnational in nature, and associated with or supported by authoritarian regimes that seek to attain or retain power, contributing to global democratic backsliding. To address these barriers and others, State will:*

- Enhance strategic communications in partnership with civil society, including clear, consistent, and tailored messaging on [gender equality](#) as fundamental to the advancement of human rights and democracy.
- Pursue targeted diplomatic engagement on the rights and empowerment of women and girls, and the wide-ranging benefits to societies as core democratic principles and build coalitions with government partners to share information and align narratives and approaches.
- Strengthen integration of gender equality in the Department's efforts to counter corruption and racially or ethnically-motivated violent extremism, address the misuse of technology and disinformation, invest in data and evidence-based policymaking, and reinforce gender equality as a core tenant of the multilateral system.
- Expand support to and meaningful engagement with women leaders, including by establishing the Department's first Women's Leadership Network; a diverse range of civil society organizations; and journalists to better understand, safely identify, and counter-

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pushback on gender equality, with guidance for Department personnel on inclusive consultations.

- Enhance Department personnel capacity, training, and understanding of how to advance gender equality through policy development, diplomatic engagement, and foreign assistance programming, including through new and strengthened courses at the Foreign Service Institute.

What State accomplished

Below is a sampling of State's progress delivering on equity and racial justice since its first Equity Action Plan in 2022.

- ***Produced numerous public reports to advance equity in foreign policy.***

These reports include the [Human Rights Report](#), [Trafficking in Persons Report](#), and [International Religious Freedom Report](#). [The Department also](#) established the first [Equity Agency Priority Goal \(APG\)](#), which drove significant organizational change by identifying outcomes and measuring results, such as more than 50 United Nations outcome and / or consensus documents that expanded inclusive language on historically marginalized and underserved groups, including United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, and eliminating gender-based violence.

- ***Began globally tracking foreign assistance programs to embed equity and inclusion into programming.***

This effort complements existing tracking efforts enabling programs to address the specific needs of marginalized, racial and ethnic, and other underserved communities, and continued efforts to develop a Social Inclusion Analysis Tool to help Department officials integrate and operationalize equity and inclusion into externally-facing foreign affairs areas, foreign policy implementation, foreign assistance program design, and diplomatic statecraft.

What State accomplished

- ***Increased the capacity of Public Diplomacy (PD) programs to embed equity into programs.***

Developed guidance that incorporates intersectional equity principles, leveraged data and technology to track equity in PD program participation, and expanded outreach and engagement with underserved communities to include providing live captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing and launching the inaugural [Sign@State Symposium](#) and [Minority Serving Institutions Conference](#).

- ***Increased small business awards by two percent within the simplified acquisition threshold (between \$10,000 and \$250,000).***

Issued specific new policies and training to monitor and ensure regulatory compliance and added a recognition program in support of key milestones for advancing equity in procurement initiatives.