



# Reimagining the Indo-Pacific: Using an Inclusive Lens

Policy Brief 1: Opportunities for Indo-German Engagement

The Federal Foreign Office of Germany and Kubernein Initiative have taken the joint initiative to consolidate past and current perspectives and understand the extent of gender mainstreaming in the Indo-Pacific region, with a focus on climate, trade and economic security, human and non-traditional security. We consider the centrality of human security in the Indo-Pacific and aim to explore ways forward for shaping more inclusive policies within the region, as well as learn from best practices that may be particularly relevant to Indo-German engagement. The policy brief is part of a series of publications under Kubernein Initiative and the Federal Foreign Office's joint project. Our perspective is rooted in Germany's 'Feminist Foreign Policy' vision, and Kubernein Initiative's work on inclusive foreign policy from an Indian context.

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# Towards a Gender-Inclusive Indo-Pacific: Opportunities for Indo-German Engagement

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## Introduction

The Indo-Pacific is an expansive geographic notion. With numerous littoral and non-littoral states, it serves as a critical bridge between major economic regions, connecting the dynamic economies of South Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific. Historically this shared strategic space has been of economic significance; colonial rule established strong trade routes between Europe and South and South-East Asia. Asian economies engaging with the region is a more recent phenomena, and marked by a historic speech<sup>1</sup> made in 2007 by Japan's then Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo in the Parliament of India:

**“We are now at a point at which the Confluence of the Two Seas is coming into being. The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity. A “broader Asia” that broke away geographical boundaries is now beginning to take on a distinct form.”**

Today, the region comprises of about 40 economies, and is home to 65% of the world's population (around 4.3 billion people), and USD47.19 trillion in economic activity<sup>2</sup>. In the growing multi-polar world order, the region has also emerged as a pivotal point of reference in international relations discourse and geostrategic dynamics. The United States, Canada, France, Germany, to engage more strategically with the region, have released Indo-Pacific strategy or policy documents. Germany's engagement is somewhat unique - as it does not have a physical presence in the region, and yet has policy guidelines, which signify recognition of a need to actively participate in shaping of the region's future. Engaging with like-minded partners in the region can help Germany be more impactful in its intentions. The Indo-German partnerships provides a strong avenue for such a collaboration amongst others.

India and Germany are aligned in their outlook towards the Indo-Pacific. At the sixth Intergovernmental consultations in 2022<sup>3</sup>, both Germany and India stressed the significance of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, recognising the centrality of ASEAN. The Indo-German partnership has grown

over the years and expanded to include countering emerging threats outside of their respective countries as well. For example, the bilateral Sustainable Development Partnership aims at supporting all countries in achieving national development commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement, limit global warming, and limit the adverse impacts of climate change on their respective populations. There is further scope for this Indo-German engagement within the region to mitigate the growing non-traditional security concerns faced particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

In this policy brief, we look at “non-traditional” security concerns that directly impact human security in the Indo-Pacific and could destabilise the region in a way that has implications on the world at large. We probe more deeply into the critical issues that could be considered as avenues for greater Indo-German engagement. Our approach is anchored on evolving global Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) dialogues, Germany’s Feminist Foreign Policy<sup>4</sup> guidelines, as well as Kubernein Initiative’s work on defining an ‘inclusive’ foreign policy<sup>5</sup>. Our aim is to guide policy thinking in a way that champions a deeper understanding of the region’s social, economic, and environmental nuances, recognising the inherent interconnectedness of gender and inclusivity with the challenges faced by the region.

## Our Approach

### Engaging with the Indo-Pacific using a Feminist Foreign Policy Framing

Human security is at the heart of a truly prosperous Indo-Pacific. As the idea of FFP is evolving, it is still new to the Indo-Pacific region. Further, the word feminism, has many contextual interpretations, and can easily be misconstrued and face backlash. While no country has formally adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy in the Indo-Pacific, there exist varying levels of gender mainstreaming across the geography<sup>6</sup>. Recognising this, we define a few broad mechanisms through which the FFP approach can meet the regional needs in the way forward.

“Human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people”. This calls for “people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people.”

— UN General Assembly resolution 66/290<sup>7</sup>

## → A partnership approach

In the dynamic geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region, a ‘partnership’ approach, as opposed to a ‘prescriptive’ one, is required when looking to apply a gender/inclusivity lens. A partnership-driven model of cooperation is indispensable for comprehending the nuances of culture, history, and social contexts that shape gender dynamics and security concerns in the region. Building collaborative partnerships with local actors who are best placed to understand security threats, can ensure that countries with Feminist Foreign Policy design initiatives that resonate with the needs and aspirations of the region’s diverse communities, thus fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

## → Context specific interventions

A truly ‘Inclusive’ Indo-Pacific, implies asking for whom is the Indo-Pacific free and open? How can economic growth be more equitable for a region that sees USD47.19 trillion in economic activity, and is likely to account for 50% of the world’s GDP by 2040<sup>8</sup>? The terminology ‘free, open and inclusive’ Indo-Pacific can be differently interpreted by the variety of actors that exist in the region. To bridge the feminist foreign policy approach with the geopolitical complexities of the region, we must be open to having more flexible frameworks that allow for multiple solutions to exist.

## → A reorientation of security - to include a human security lens

A Feminist Foreign Policy approach is essentially a people-centric approach. This allows expansion of what constitutes a secure Indo-Pacific, to include “non-traditional” concerns that impact “human security”. Bringing a human security lens implies asking at every point, how does an issue of geopolitics affect human lives. Such a shift enables states to use their foreign policy mechanisms for building stronger communities by effectively addressing emerging threats, in addition to traditional security concerns.

# Understanding Non-Traditional Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific

In the Indo-Pacific region, the focus of discussions are usually securitised<sup>9</sup> and have traditionally revolved around military and defence matters. However, the realisation that ‘non-traditional’ challenges to human security in the region potentially create equally significant risks that could transcend international boundaries is growing. For example, several countries (including Germany, the United States, Canada, France, South Korea, and Bangladesh) now include risks associated with climate change in their Indo-Pacific policies and country strategies, with a commitment to collaborate on mitigation and adaptation. We see the following as critical to connectivity within the region and must be prioritised in terms of engagement for achieving stability.

## Climate and Cascading Risks

Climate change impacts human security (through natural disasters, as well as changing weather patterns) in a variety of ways. Directly, in terms of health, physical security, migration, and livelihoods. Indirectly, through trade, agriculture, resources, blue economy and more. The Indian Ocean region is referred to as the ‘World Hazard Belt’<sup>10</sup>, where natural disasters, whether climatological (cyclones) or geological (earthquakes that result

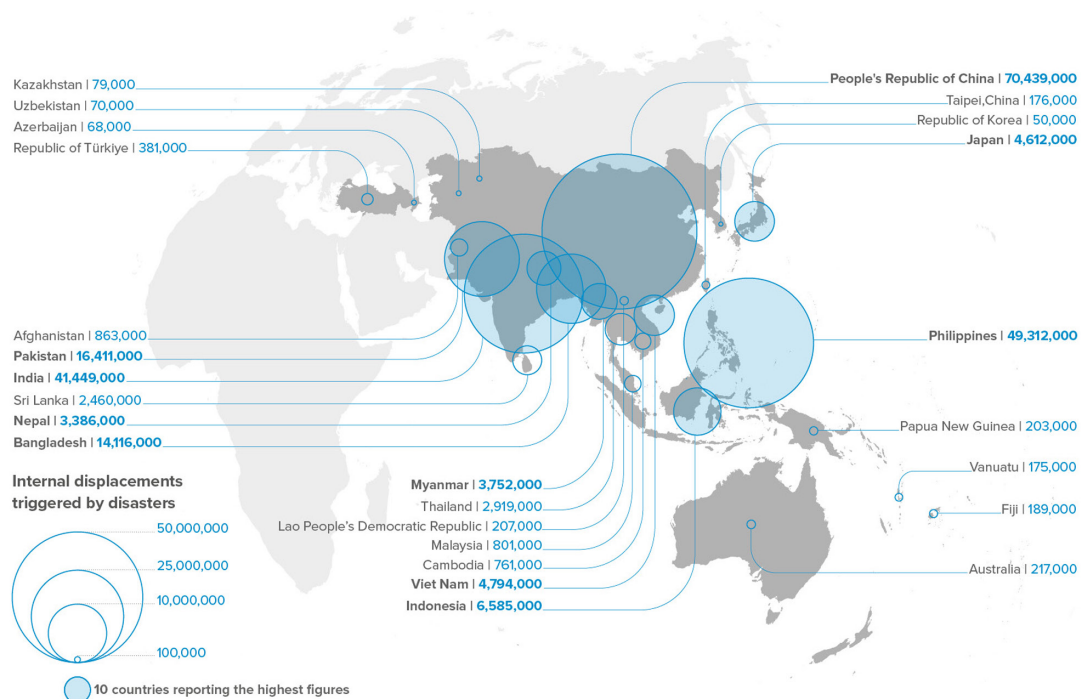
in tsunamis)—recur frequently<sup>11</sup>. Estimates suggest over 57 million<sup>12</sup> people were affected by climate disasters in the broader Asia-Pacific region in 2021. Disasters as well as changing weather patterns in the region put populations at risk, with women and other more vulnerable sections of society facing the greater impact.

## Disproportionate impact on women

- More than 70% of the fatalities from the 2004 Asian tsunami were women.<sup>13</sup>
- A 2014 study found that in societies where the socioeconomic status of women is low, natural disasters kill more women than men—both directly and indirectly through related post disaster events.<sup>14</sup>
- The 2007 tsunami in the Solomon Islands displaced 10,000 people, where women who stayed in temporary shelters faced a higher risk of sexual assault.<sup>15</sup>
- In many Pacific Island Countries (PICs), climate change has led to increased occurrences of gender-based violence.<sup>16</sup>
- Drought conditions force women and children to walk long distances to water wells, often resulting in a rise of rape and abuse (as witnessed in Micronesia and Kiribati).<sup>17</sup>

## Displacement and forced migration and its implications

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates that 225.3 million internal displacements—or forced movements—were recorded during 2010–2021 in the Asia-Pacific due to weather-related hazards like large-scale storms, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis etc<sup>18</sup>. According to World Bank estimates, the Indo-Pacific could see as many as 89 million climate migrants by 2050<sup>19</sup>.



The geographic names and figures are shown only when the total internal displacements value exceeds 50,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of separate figures. The boundaries and the names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Disaster Displacement in the Indo-Pacific from 2010 - 2021. Source: Internal Displacement Monitor<sup>20</sup>

## Economy, Trade and Inequality

Extreme weather events can cause a range of disruptions to global trade and supply chains in addition to directly impacting livelihoods. At seaports, small delays in loading cargo accrue over time, delaying the delivery of goods and slowing down maritime trade. An estimated 60% of the world's maritime trade<sup>21</sup> goes through the Indo-Pacific. In December 2021, typhoon-related flooding in the port of Klang, Malaysia, created a break in the semiconductor supply chain - semiconductors are shipped to Klang from Taiwan<sup>22</sup> for packaging before being transported to the United States and other countries. If global average warming exceeds 2°C in 2050, a Deloitte Economic Institute report and study from 2021 estimates the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be more than 5.5% (USD3.4 trillion) lower than usual<sup>23</sup>. Vulnerable populations and women are likely to face severe consequences<sup>24</sup> as disruptions in the supply chain extend to essential commodities including drugs and energy, leading to elevated living expenses and challenges in meeting basic necessities. This will aggravate existing inequalities in the Indo-Pacific, where in most countries families live on less than USD10<sup>25</sup> per person per day, in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms.

The Indo-Pacific region is also the largest producer of fish (over 50%<sup>26</sup> of total global captured fish). Here, climate change induced shifting coastlines can potentially alter Exclusive Economic Zones of coastal and island states, affecting their control over resources and resulting economic activity. Ocean warming, changing levels of salinity, and sea level rise also impact livelihoods and increase incidents of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing<sup>27</sup>. Further, in the main blue economy sectors of maritime tourism and fisheries, women will be more severely impacted, as they make up most of the workforce (as high as 54% in small island states<sup>28</sup>).

## Maritime Security

Environmental threats in the Indian Ocean Region have overreaching security implications on piracy and transnational crime. For example, dwindling fish stocks, due to climate change and made worse by overfishing, has exacerbated the phenomena of Somali piracy as local fishermen turned to piracy as a means of subsistence<sup>29</sup>. Maritime piracy has grown worse over time, endangering fishing boats operating in these waters as well as generating more traditional or state-centric lateral concerns, such as the militarisation of the ocean space, as seen, for instance, in the development of the Chinese naval base at Djibouti.

Across the world and particularly in Asia and the Indo-Pacific, fisheries, aquaculture, and shipping are a major source of employment. The highest number of fishers and aquaculture workers (85% of the world total) are in Asia, and so is the world's largest fishing fleet (estimated at 3.1 million vessels, or about 68% of the global total in 2020<sup>30</sup>). The FAO estimates that Asia will continue to dominate the aquaculture sector in this decade, and will be responsible for more than 89% of the increase in production by 2030<sup>31</sup>. Environment degradation, ocean warming, and climate change can significantly increase incidence of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU)<sup>32</sup> fishing, posing a challenge for livelihoods as well as policymaking. Further, the human rights of sea-based workers are often neglected, with high incidences of forced labour, illegal trafficking of people and irregular migration/asylum seekers. While open sea lines of communications are considered an important geopolitical issue, more focus is needed around concerns of human security.

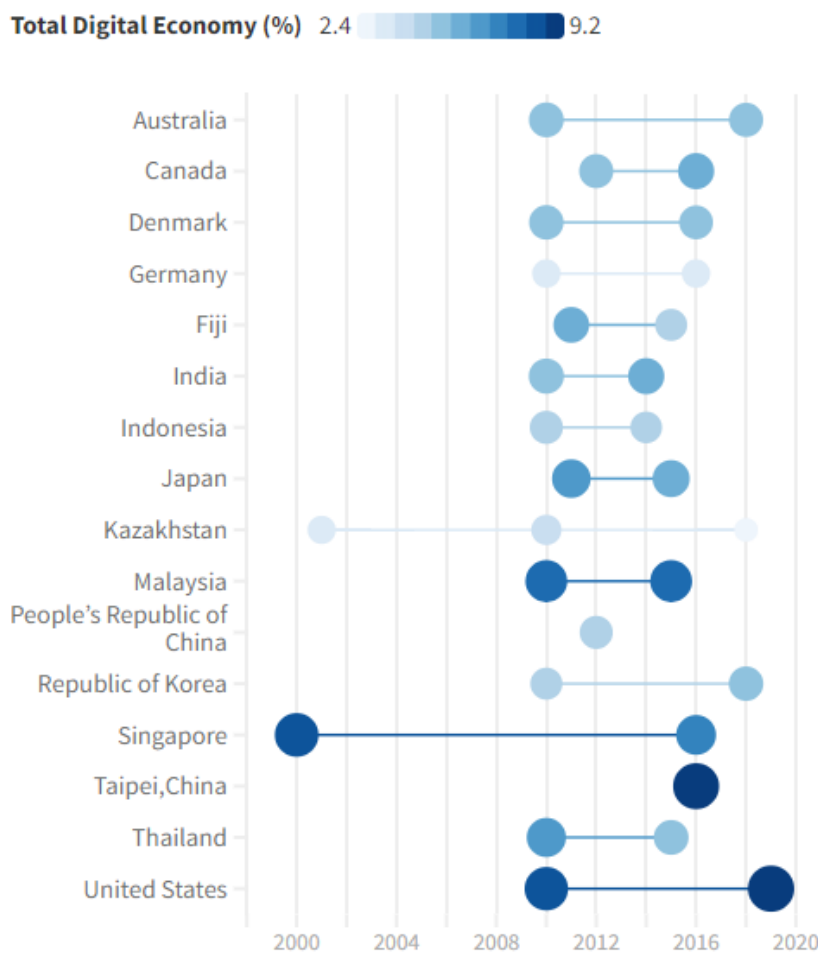
## Energy and Complicated Transitions

The push towards renewable energy is at the forefront of climate change mitigation efforts. While countries in the Indo-Pacific region are not historical emitters, there is considerable pressure on these countries to move towards cleaner energy systems as they grow faster than more developed economies. Despite best efforts and intentions, much of the world is still heavily reliant on non-renewable sources. The EU for example, which is at the forefront of transitions to renewable energy, still imports 58% of its energy<sup>33</sup>. Asia and the Pacific region remain responsible for 73% of global coal production, a revenue generating commodity<sup>34</sup>. An ILO study<sup>35</sup> on South-East Asian countries of Indonesia, Vietnam, and Philippines estimates in the worst-case scenario a

negative economic impact across labour, output, and the sectors associated with coal mines in the scenario of closures. While other research<sup>36</sup> suggests ways to turn a potential crisis into opportunity, the fact remains that deeper research is required in understanding the context specific needs, and enabling transitions that are beneficial to those contexts.

## Fragmented Connectivity in Technology

Emerging digital infrastructure in Asia opens the doors for risk (cyber security related) as well as reward (innovation around inclusive digital infrastructure). Lack of adequate connectivity and coherence on data governance, rules, and regulation, due to the disparate nature of countries involved is an area of concern.



Source: Asian Development Bank. Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2021 Special Supplement (August 2021)

Digital economy size (% of GDP) as of 2021  
Source: Asian Development Bank<sup>37</sup>

## Health Infrastructure

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how health is intrinsically tied to wellbeing, and to overall growth and development of a country. Even before COVID-19, an ADB report from 2018<sup>38</sup> characterised Asia as “a hot spot for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, including those with pandemic potential”. Other threats to regional health security include growing antimicrobial resistance and the health impacts of climate change, dwindling water resources, sea level rise and frequent natural disasters, as well as supply chain issues.



# India's Approach to the Indo-Pacific

Prime Minister Modi articulated India's vision in his keynote address<sup>39</sup> at the Shangri La Dialogue in 2018:

“Inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality and unity, therefore, lie at the heart of the new Indo-Pacific. India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country. A geographical definition, as such, cannot be.”

As an emerging key actor in the region, India was early to transition from using the phrase “Asia-Pacific” to “Indo-Pacific”. While India has not formally proclaimed an Indo-Pacific strategy, it effectively engages with the Indo-Pacific as a region and as a construct. From focusing on the immediate neighbourhood it has broadened its circles of engagement in the region. A division brief<sup>40</sup> elaborates on this engagement being through India's Act East policy, deepening engagement with Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, Gulf nations and others, and greater ties with ASEAN. In 2021 India held its first 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue with Australia<sup>41</sup>. It has expanded its presence in minilateral forums such as the Quad<sup>42</sup>, and trilateral forums such as the Australia-India-Japan led Supply Chain Resilience initiative launched in 2021<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, India is also spearheading regional organisations including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and 2019 Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative<sup>44</sup> focusing on - Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation and Trade, Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

India's approach aims to build issue-based coalitions that are not aimed against a particular country. This is also true for India's approach at a multilateral level as seen in the recently adopted “G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration” in September 2023<sup>45</sup> which builds consensus on challenges and areas in the Indo-Pacific region, and to play a stronger, and more collaborative role in shaping the maritime region.

# Germany's Approach to the Indo-Pacific

German interests in the Indo-Pacific date back to the early 1990s, when it released a policy document on ‘The Federal Government's Concept on Asia’ in 1993<sup>46</sup>. In 2020 Germany announced its “Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific”<sup>47</sup>. The primary objective of its policy guidelines is to diversify Germany's relations with like-minded countries in the region, and expand the scope from economic aspects to a more comprehensive approach. Germany was the second European country after France to formalise an Indo-Pacific policy.

In September 2022, Germany issued a progress report on its Policy Guidelines<sup>48</sup>, which highlight several key areas of focus, including regional cooperation in domains such as strengthening multilateralism, addressing climate change and environmental concerns, promoting peace, security and stability, upholding human rights and the rule of law, advocating for rules-based, fair and sustainable free trade, the digital transformation of regions and markets, and promoting culture, education, and science. While Germany maintains the importance of its relationship with China, enhancing engagement with ASEAN remains a priority. Furthermore, Germany has been actively expanding its engagement with other significant actors in the Indo-Pacific, such as Japan<sup>49</sup>.

# Opportunities for Indo-German Engagement in the Indo-Pacific

India is a significant partner for Germany in the region and the growing relationship, while some may denote as slow, provides numerous avenues of engagement. India and Germany have been engaged in Triangular Development Cooperation since 2017<sup>50</sup> with a focus on projects in Africa and Latin America in the areas of agriculture, agri-business/agri-tech, employment generation, and food security. Sustained engagement and a positive relationship that can be extended to the Indo-Pacific region with a more nuanced understanding of regional threats and their international implications. While a multitude of potential entry points exist and many are already in play, we define three broad areas where focus can be deeper and more importantly demand a greater inclusivity lens to be applied.

## Mainstreaming of Climate Action

Climate change has cascading risks and must be mainstreamed across broader conversations including trade, energy, migration. Trade for example is already impacted by climate, yet trade negotiations and actions do not prioritise climate action or an intersection between gender and climate. To safeguard economic concerns, climate and gender must also be an important part of Indo-Pacific conversation and strategies, both at the bilateral stage and the multilateral level. There are opportunities to collaborate and work with India-led organisations like the Coalition for Disaster Relief Infrastructure (CDRI) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA), as well as the Green and Sustainable Development Program (GSDP), to build climate-resilient infrastructure that addresses the longer term needs of the region, outside of immediate disaster relief. Special focus and attention must be given to smaller island nations in the region which are more vulnerable to climate change, and where the gendered impact of climate change and disasters is particularly harsh.

In the consideration of climate impact on a variety of issues, civil society actors can play a stronger role, by being an integral part of consultations, in the design and implementation of policy action. Building on cooperation from the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), there is scope for joint research and climate funding in the areas of adaptation and resilience across the region, in a manner that connects interrelated areas of concern.

## Energy and a Just Transition

The pivot towards green and renewable energy has increased engagement between Germany, the EU, and countries within the Indo-Pacific to further clean energy development, as well as just energy transitions.

To enable its own transition to renewable energy, Germany set up a Coal Commission in 2018. Through the German Development Agency (GIZ)<sup>51</sup> it has engaged on just transition projects in several countries including Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Mongolia, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. In India, the Ministry of Coal announced the creation of Sustainability & Just Transition (S & JT) Division in 2022<sup>52</sup>. The Ministry of Coal has also initiated the development of a Comprehensive Coal Mine Closure Framework in December 2022<sup>53</sup> following consultation with numerous actors, including GIZ and the World Bank. The framework will provide for loss of livelihood and development of the community and land using just transition principles with specific guidelines on the management of discontinued/abandoned/closed mines<sup>54</sup>.

There is an opportunity here for the concept of just transitions to be included in all energy related conversations, learning from the closure of the coal mines in countries that are at various stages of this process. Beyond the phasing out of coal, there is also a greater emphasis on renewable resources, and using broader recommendations from just transition principles, India and Germany can bring ideas and learnings into existing and emerging areas of energy discussion. While a lot of the conversation is focused on the supply side, there is an opportunity to drive more action on the demand side, from creating more awareness and campaigns and pushing for more efficiency through transfer of knowledge, financial assistance or other means in countries that are at the early stages of this change, ensuring that future transitions serve to improve the lives of communities they are directly or indirectly affecting. There is also an opportunity to apply a strong gender lens to many of these conversations both at the representation stage but also in the transition stage. According to the IEA, women account for 16% of the workforce in the traditional energy sector globally<sup>55</sup>, and according to IRENA, women account for 22% of the workforce in the oil and gas industry<sup>56</sup>. In the renewable energy sector that number is much higher, where women account for 32% of the share of the workforce<sup>57</sup>.

## Interlinking Connectivity

While economic security, a cornerstone of cooperation, is reflected in most countries' Indo-Pacific strategies, the adverse effects of trade that have a deeper impact on women and the marginalised are often overlooked. In addition to mainstreaming climate into these conversations, there are further avenues where Germany and India could work together towards strengthening connectivity with an inclusionary lens.

### Trade

Empirical evidence suggests that advancing gender equality in the Indo-Pacific region could add an estimated USD 12 trillion to global GDP in 2030<sup>58</sup>. The International Trade Centre (ITC)'s 2015 publication<sup>59</sup> *Unlocking Markets for Women to Trade* finds that promoting the role women play in trade has a 'whole-of-society' benefit. Women-owned businesses that export are 3.5 more times productive than women-owned businesses that do not export, and women entrepreneurs are more likely to employ women in comparison to men-owned and managed companies. Research also suggests that the participation of women in trade can support resilience<sup>60</sup> in global value chains. While the studies indicate positive impact of more women in the larger trade circles, there is limited understanding on the application of 'how' beyond increasing employment numbers. The lack of gender-disaggregated data for any trade-related factors is a major obstacle. These are all areas of growing concern and debate in Indian and Germany, and provide an opportunity where both countries could bring their respective contexts and experiences, and work together to mainstream gender in current and future bilateral projects, or in projects in third countries. The ongoing FTA negotiations between India and the EU also offer an opportunity to address key aspects of economic security in the Indo-Pacific through a stronger gendered lens, especially given that several more European countries are now championing the ideals of a more feminist foreign policy.

## Inclusive Digital Governance

Digital markets as well as platforms for payment open avenues for more marginalised sections of society to be better integrated. India has actively engaged in achieving greater financial inclusion through these platforms. In India a set of open API's - India Stack - has enabled an ecosystem of government and private sector players to come together and innovate on digital infrastructure for better last mile reach. Innovations include the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) that allows paperless payments and is used by 300 million users and 500 million merchants<sup>61</sup>. India has also opened the conversation on greater regional integration through bilateral engagement. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has partnered with Dubai's Mashreq Bank to allow Indian travellers to make UPI-based payments<sup>62</sup>. India and Singapore have also made similar UPI linkages<sup>63</sup>.

When it comes to scaling digital innovation, data privacy has emerged as a primary cause for concern. Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) is therefore an important pillar within India Stack, to promote individual agency and informed consent for all data transactions. India also has a Draft DEPA Framework that was released in 2020<sup>64</sup> by the NITI Aayog, and more recently in 2023 India adopted its "THE DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT, 2023"<sup>65</sup> that lays down the norms of data governance more broadly.

Germany has not advanced as rapidly in the digital domain largely due to concerns around privacy of data when innovation is deployed at scale. Germany and the EU tread cautiously on such innovation, as data governance is highly contextual, and global guidance and standards with regard to data governance are still under discussion. While Germany's concerns are pragmatic, India's approach to scale holds relevance for several fast-growing economies in the region that contend with large populations and disparate access. Working more closely in this area can perhaps yield solutions that benefit the needs of both, and contribute to shaping global guidance and standards that further increases progress.

## Way Forward

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The Indo-Pacific region contains multitudes - in geography, cultures, people, ideology, political and cultural space. Solutions for the region therefore require context-specific approaches that acknowledge the unique priorities and challenges of individual countries. Through this Policy Brief we aim to present a more nuanced understanding of human security issues in the region, to enable countries from outside the region to engage in a more impactful manner. We have narrowed in on areas for the Indo-German partnership to focus on, to develop solutions that integrate gender perspectives, promote women's rights, and contribute to enhancing human security in the region.

We acknowledge that the more tangible policy recommendations must bear in mind the complex nature of the region, along with balancing of values with pragmatism when it comes to solving for gender inequality. The idea of Feminist Foreign Policy is gaining traction in different geographies within the Indo-Pacific: in South Asia, Australia and Oceania, Indonesia, and other South-East Asian countries. This conversation has shown that achieving gender equality is a complex issue and there can be no one size fits all approach. An inclusive policy approach must allow for diverse perspectives, and thus for the possibility of many solutions to exist.

There is also the issue of policy 'time lag' that is a necessary evil. Policy making processes of both India and Germany can be construed as slow, but are intentionally deliberate, to ensure a measure of checks and balances. As a result, it always seems that the world is moving faster. The risks faced by the Indo-Pacific however, are unpredictable and require a more nimble approach. One way to navigate this complexity is to have goals defined as short term, medium term, and long term. Such as in the case of climate for example,

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disaster relief in the short term, energy transitions as a medium term and reduction of emissions as a more long term. This can ensure that the low hanging fruits are addressed first, which will help build confidence and consensus.

A feminist foreign policy approach, or an inclusionary approach, offers a promising framework for addressing the multifaceted challenges and opportunities within the Indo-Pacific region. Indo-German relations, underpinned by shared values of inclusivity, can serve as a pivotal bridge in advancing this agenda. By prioritising human security, both countries can lead by example and contribute to a more inclusive, sustainable, and secure Indo-Pacific region. In this era of flux, finding common ground can catalyse meaningful change, promoting not only a harmonious Indo-German partnership but also contributing to a more just and resilient Indo-Pacific. We move forward with the recognition that the ideals of a context specific feminist foreign policy lens holds the power to transform the Indo-Pacific into a region where every voice is heard and every life is valued.

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**About Kubernein Initiative:**

Kubernein Initiative is an independent, female led, geopolitical advisory firm based in Mumbai, India, working to mainstream issues that need greater intellectual capacity and focus. Our vision is to build an organisation that considers critical questions with a perspective that balances traditionally 'western' thought in the field of international relations and diplomacy with new and emerging ideas from the global south.