



Submission to CSW 58 session
Statement by the Women's Major Group

Moving from Rhetoric towards Real Inclusion of Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights in the final push for the Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development & Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Women's Major Group submits this statement with the aim to contribute to the theme of the CSW58 session, focussing on action needed on MDGs and giving input to the post2015/SDG agenda. For both areas of action, the Women's Major Group is convinced that without a **transformative shift in the way that gender equality and women's human rights and justice** are addressed, a truly sustainable Post-2015 Development agenda will not be achieved.

The Women's major group asks for a **"stand-alone gender equality and women's human rights goal"** in the Post-2015 development agenda, as well as having **gender equality priorities in all goals and dimensions of sustainable development**, including specifically as part of the Means of Implementation.

- The Millennium Development Goals have not been reached and goals 3 and 5 are especially off track. **A strong push** is urgently needed and priority should be placed on achieving gender equality, women's human rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, with full involvement of local women's rights organisations and movements.
- **Make the links among various multilateral processes** taking place. These processes include: the acceleration of the MDGs, the negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals/Post 2015 agenda, climate change negotiations, population and development negotiations (International Conference on Population and Development - ICPD), financing for development, and ensure attention to means of implementation externally such as through the discussions on trade and finance within the World Trade Organization, G20 and G8.
- **Adopting a human rights framework.** While we appreciate the references to the importance of a human rights framework for the new development agenda (in amongst others the Outcome Document of the Special Event, in the report of the High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda, in the report of the Secretary General "A life of Dignity for All"), we feel that this must go further. The new global development paradigm must be rights-based, holistic, inclusive, just *and* gender-just, equitable and universal.
- **Aiming at eradicating poverty through social justice and gender justice**, addressing rising inequalities and women's human rights, including respecting, protecting and fulfilling sexual and reproductive rights, with special attention to ensuring access to comprehensive and universal sexuality and reproductive health education, information and services.

- **Financing and means of implementation:** We are concerned at the lack of proposals for concrete financing mechanisms and means of implementation, both for acceleration of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and also for the SDG / Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda. We therefore call for explicit attention to monitoring and accountability frameworks and recognition of the need to address systemic global development systems, including restructuring the global financial system through transformation of the International Financial Institutions, combating tax dodging and tax evasions, complying with Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels of 0.7% of gross domestic product (GDP), using a Financial Transaction Tax for development purposes, among others.
- **Meaningful participation and involvement of civil society:** Finally, we call for a meaningful, inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process with full engagement of civil society and social movements, including participation of diverse women’s movements, feminists and gender justice activists, especially those from the economic south, at all stages of negotiations. Too often have women’s rights been traded against other issues in negotiations. We do not want to let that happen again. The Women’s Major Group calls for access to all meetings, formal and informal, where the new development framework is being decided.

1. On the call for a human rights framework

The work to accelerate the Millennium Development Goals **needs to be based on the specific and already agreed upon international human rights instruments and mechanisms.** This includes implementation of already agreed upon international agreements such as the 1993 Vienna Human Rights Declaration and Program of Action; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and the Key Actions (ICPD+5), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Declaration and Programme of Action; the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2. On achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment

The achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment should be at the heart of the development agenda. We ask for a “stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s human rights” in the Post-2015 development agenda, as well as gender equality as a cross cutting issue in all dimensions of sustainable development, including clear and transformative targets, sufficient allocated resources and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

3. On participation and principles

The Post-2015 process and the Sustainable Development Goals should be built on internationally agreed development and environmental sustainability goals, all Rio principles including the precautionary principle and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, existing national, regional and global accountability mechanisms within the United Nations human rights system. By the same token it should ensure meaningful, consistent and systematic participation of civil society organizations and youth from the “Global South”, particularly those women and girls living in poverty.

4. On sustainability

Ensuring intergenerational equity is imperative. It requires engaging women and men fully in formulating right-based, ecosystem-based, gender-responsive and socially just solutions to halt biodiversity loss and climate change, which stand as symbols of a global focus on short-term gains and unsustainable consumption and production patterns, and impede poverty eradication.

5. On economic models

A sustainable and equitable economy, accepting the limits of growth and consumerism is crucial. Transforming the current development model, reformulating the economic model and indicators to reflect value on people and women's unpaid care work and planet is crucial. It thus challenges the current economic patriarchal, unsustainable and extractivist model of development. This also means ensuring equal access to full and decent employment and binding human rights based regulatory mechanisms to keep private sector and businesses accountability. This also means recognizing and learning from alternative visions of development that put people and the planet's well-being at the center. One of the most significant macro-economic alternatives would be just and progressive tax systems, which favour the poor over corporations and where the resources earned from taxes are spent on public services.

6. On education

There needs to be a firmer commitment to ensuring education as fundamental human right, and recognition that education is an indispensable requirement for realizing other human rights and a tool to a country's economic growth and for achieving gender equality and human rights. Further attention should be given to the underlying socio-economic, cultural and political causes for low enrolment and completion rates among girls, and implement comprehensive education on human sexuality programs in and out of schools that give children and young people the life skills they need to understand their bodies and their rights.

7. On security

The women, peace and security agenda should be a core concern and highlighted in the Post-2015 agenda. Achieving gender equality and women's human rights including to full and equal participation in decision-making, including during peace processes, is intrinsic to peace and security and sustainable development. This implies full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and an alternative approach to conflict affected areas, focusing on the root causes of conflict and human security, sexual harassment in the workplace and violence against women.

We call for prioritization of:

- 1) Women's economic autonomy and gender justice:** not only stopping the feminization of poverty or working to eradicate poverty, but transforming macroeconomic structures, restructuring the global financial architecture, taking into account and redistributing women's unpaid care work, changing role-models, building equality and social justice and ensuring that women have access to and control of economic resources.
- 2) Women's political autonomy and full citizenship:** working for parity of participation at all levels, and ensuring women's participation across the broad spectrum of formal and informal decision-making institutions and not limited to quota systems; further ensuring that participation is central to building democracy and ensuring women's full citizenship and fundamental human rights.
- 3) Women's freedom from all forms of violence:** whether perpetuated by state-sponsored actors, private actors or by family members, violence remains one of the most pervasive barriers to women's full enjoyment of their human rights. Any effective intervention needs to address violence against women and accelerate its full eradication.

- 4) **Women's sexual autonomy and gender equality:** women must have the freedom to express their sexuality free from violence, coercion and discrimination. Women should have access to universal and equitable sexual and reproductive health education, information and services and to receive social support without stigma or discrimination.

- 5) **Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights:** without the ability and freedom to control their bodies, lives and sexuality, the full range of women's human rights cannot be achieved. Ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights must be explicit aims in the Post-2015 sustainable development framework.

The Women's Major Group coordinates the input and participation of Women and Feminist organisations in the United Nations processes on Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 development agenda (www.womenrio20.org).

This statement has been submitted by following member organisations of the Women's Major Group:

- 1) Action Aid International
- 2) Action Canada for Population and Development (Canada)
- 3) Adéquations (Groupe français genre et développement soutenable)
- 4) Aranya Agricultural Alternatives (AP India)
- 5) Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Regional (Asia-Pacific)
- 6) Association for Women's Career Development in Hungary
- 7) Association pour le développement et de la promotion des droits humains (ADPDH)
- 8) AWID
- 9) CARE International
- 10) Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
- 11) CoopeSoliDar R.L
- 12) Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
- 13) Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM)
- 14) Gender Empowerment and Development – GeED
- 15) GLASS
- 16) International Council for Adult Education – Gender and Education Office (ICAE)
- 17) International Women's Alliance (IWA)
- 18) Ipas
- 19) Namibia Women's Health
- 20) Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women
- 21) Niger Delta Women's movement for Peace and Development
- 22) Rural-Urban Women And Children Development Agency (RUWACDA)
- 23) Soroptimist International
- 24) Suma Veritas Foundation
- 25) WECF International
- 26) Wo=Men, Netherlands
- 27) Women for Women's Human Rights, Turkey
- 28) Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) - New Ways
- 29) Women Initiative for Peace and Good Governance (WIPGG)
- 30) Women Sport International

- 31) Women's Earth and Climate Caucus
- 32) Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights