



Post 2015 Women's Coalition comprehensive response to the Zero Draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda

On 2 June 2015, the zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda was released by the co-facilitators of the Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations sessions. This document includes the Declaration, Goals and Targets, Means of Implementation and the Global Partnership, Follow up and Review as well as annexes on the proposed target revisions, proposed technology facilitation mechanism and the introduction included in the OWG Outcome Document.

The Post-2015 Women's Coalition believes that the Post 2015 Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) present an opportunity to change business as usual and work towards a comprehensive gender equality strategy; address inequalities; promote peace and security; and be inclusive and accountable to all. In this regard, we welcome the inclusion of all the goals and targets as proposed by the OWG, including the stand-alone goal on gender equality; inclusion of women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; calls for gender disaggregated data; recognition of the importance of civil society engagement; the call to end all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls everywhere, as well as the inclusion of gender equality as a separate element in the Preamble of the Zero Draft.

However, the current Zero Draft does not attempt to address the structural imbalances, problems of power and patriarchy and neoliberal globalization, which are at the root of many inequalities, and shies away from tackling issues around marginalization, including gender and sexuality which were hard-won at Beijing, Cairo, Vienna, and Rio. Furthermore, although States are obligated under international human rights law, including the Maastricht Guidelines, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to progressively realize women's and girls' human rights using maximum available resources, these obligations are not adequately reflected in the Zero Draft. The Zero Draft's voluntary follow up mechanisms are also disconnected from existing human rights monitoring mechanisms while its restricted targets and indicators fail to capture the ambition needed for transformative change.

The Post 2015 Women's Coalition wishes to reiterate that the targets under means of implementation should always be tied back to the achievement of targets under the goals, and not seen as separate targets to achieve the goals. We also wish to raise that while the overall concern is with inequalities within and between countries - the focus is still very much restricted to Least Developed Countries

(LDCs), landlocked countries and on African countries, and not on middle-income countries who still record high levels of inequality and income poverty.

The Women's Coalition is also concerned that the role of business and the private sector, as well as of public-private partnerships in implementing the SDGs, has been prominently highlighted in the Zero Draft. We believe that that this is not matched with appropriate accountability measures to ensure that such actions adhere to human rights standards and be responsive to age, disability and gender requirements.

Furthermore, consideration of peace, without addressing gendered militarism, the connections between gender equality and peace, and the arms trade, is insufficient to making a change that women human rights defenders (WHRDs) can see and feel for sustainable peace, gender justice, and development in local communities and worldwide. We are also concerned with the absence of violence against WHRDs and lack of attention towards the obstacles and risks that they face due to structural inequities, upholding the human rights principles of universality and nondiscrimination in all aspects.

Lastly, that Member States should adhere to the spirit of participation and accountability and regularly report on the implementation of the Post-2015 development framework. The process should ensure critical feedback is given by civil society at all levels - national, regional and global - and taken into consideration by governments to accelerate progress for all citizens under this new agenda.

The Post 2015 Women's Coalition believes that in order to achieve a transformative sustainable development and peace, the Post 2015 Development Agenda should ensure the universal realization of all women's and girls' human rights including economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights. However, the following key areas continue to be red flags and must be fully addressed in the implementation and financing mechanisms for a just and sustainable agenda that includes gender equality, sustainable development and peace:

➤ **Human Rights-Based Approach to Sustainable Development**

The Declaration in the Zero Draft fails to ensure a human rights-based approach as a cross-cutting framework or to adequately articulate gender inequality, discrimination and structural and systemic disadvantages. Due to its main focus on the current exploitative market based development model it fails to reformulate economic policy-making and indicators to reflect the value of people and planet in order to uphold the principle of universality and also to address the needs and rights of at-risk and marginalized populations.

➤ **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities (SOGI) & Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**

The Goals and Targets disregard the full inclusion of people who are marginalized and socially excluded based on their sexual orientation and gender identities. The inclusion of all people, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities through implementation mechanisms which address diverse experiences of human security is critical for the purposes of realizing human rights and true

democracy, equality, peace as well as long-term national prosperity and wellbeing. The goals and targets also fail to ensure comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights including comprehensive sexuality education and comprehensive reproductive services for all people.

➤ **Peace**

The Goals and Targets include both gender and peace but leave each issue largely separate. Conflict prevention is inadequately addressed as an approach to development that requires action to strengthen women's participation in peace processes, regulate arms to address sexual and gender based violence, address root causes and drivers of conflict in line with the Arms Trade Treaty, or implement Beijing commitments on reducing military spending which currently stands at 1.7 trillion USD globally, and redirecting resources to gender equitable social development. Implementation efforts must address this gap by connecting the SDG framework to existing human rights and disarmament commitments and obligations for sustainable development and peace.

➤ **Violence Against Women and Girls**

Violence against women and girls is a concern in its own right, but is also relevant for its impact and repercussions on other aspects of women's equality, including education, health and work. The elimination of violence against women must be seen as inseparable from achieving gender equality and national development. In this regard, we call for attention to the gender dimension of cases relating to WHRDs. This requires examining the gender-specificity of individual violations; gendered structures and ideologies permeating a given context; the range of State and non-State perpetrators who may pose specific threats to WHRDs; and the resulting gendered consequences of violations. Finally, effective and gender-sensitive responses should be developed, that recognize that different WHRDs may have different needs, mediated by their identities, social positioning, personal situations and the contexts in which they live and work.

➤ **Unpaid domestic & care work**

Despite the fact that this work represents more than 25 trillion USD of the global economy, the Goals and Targets fail to recognize unpaid care work as a major human rights issue due to its impact on women's poverty and their enjoyment of rights. Failure to adequately address women's unpaid care work in the Zero Draft will lead to the continued marginalization of women's unpaid care work in social and economic policymaking in the development framework. The unequal distribution of care responsibilities between the state and families, and between men and women remains a barrier to women's effective participation in the labor force and to access to decent work and should thus be recognized.

➤ **Education**

Gender equality is also central to achieving the right to education for all; the Zero Draft misses the opportunity to highlight this crucial link. To ensure equitable quality education for all, education policies, planning and learning environments must be gender-sensitive and inclusive. To ensure equity within education, gender issues must be mainstreamed in initial teacher training and continuous professional

development programs; in school access, attendance and completion, and school-related gender-based violence must be eradicated.

➤ **Inclusion of Middle Income Countries (MICs)**

While we need to focus on least-developed countries, landlocked countries, small island countries, countries in situations of conflict, and African countries, it should also not be forgotten that poverty and inequality exists in developed countries and middle-income countries (MICs) where inequality is the greatest. If the SDGs aspire to eradicate poverty, the fact that the majority of the world's poor by income measures live in countries classified by World Bank as Middle Income Countries should be acknowledged and included.

➤ **CSO participation**

Governments do not hold a silver bullet to create change. Civil society organizations, particularly women's rights organizations, are still not recognized as key partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of the agreements and relevant policies at all levels in the framework of the goals and targets as well as within the structure of development of indicators, i.e. the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG). Thus, there is a need to recognize the importance of ensuring the effective and meaningful participation of civil society organizations, particularly women's rights organizations, as key partners in the follow up and review the new development framework at all levels.

➤ **Means of Implementation**

Means of Implementation still fails to capture systemic structural obstacles to just and sustainable development. Governments must address systemic barriers, such as corruption, lack of good governance, inequality, discrimination etc. to be able to create an enabling environment for development financing and the implementation of the Post 2015 agenda through the Financing for Development (FfD) process based on a human rights framework which strengthens the human rights of all people especially women and at risk communities. There is an urgent need for keeping the FfD process and post-2015 MOI agenda tracks separate and to ensure that the FfD process set the right path towards establishing just and healthy economies that could form the basis for a world in which the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights are a lived reality for all people. In addition, mobilization of MOI should include new innovative mechanisms for financing for development that replace the unjust aid and debt system and reducing and redirecting military spending by increasing gender equitable social spending, investments in human security. The private sector must not replace the state in providing public goods and services and must be held accountable to uphold human rights for all. It is also very concerning that the targets related to MOIs have been presented without the matching SDG targets, opening to the possibility that implementing the SDGs would only mean focusing on achieving these targets.

➤ **Follow up and Review**

Change requires effective implementation, including follow up and review mechanisms. However, the Zero Draft's voluntary follow up mechanisms and limited space for the High Level Political Forum to provide effective monitoring and follow up limit the effectiveness of moving from words to action in the

Declaration, Goals and Targets. In this regard, the follow up and review process should ensure strong women led civil society's participation including through institutionalization of the Major Groups and other stakeholders; institutionalize transparent and participatory monitoring and review mechanisms; build on existing human rights accountability mechanisms; and ensure accountability on women's human rights for business and the private sector and strengthen recognition of diverse realities in monitoring through gender lens and disaggregated data.

In conclusion, the Post 2015 Women's Coalition continues to stress the need to have the Post-2015 Development Agenda rooted and integrated within a comprehensive gender equality strategy. We affirm our continued position in demanding a new development agenda that is designed to realize gender equality and women's human rights. We commit to continuing to take action to strengthen the institutionalization financing and political will for gender justice, development, and peace.