

Women's Major Group (WMG)

Recommendations for the UN Political Declaration of the Post -2015 Development Agenda

16 February 2015

Introduction

The Women's Major Group acknowledges the Co-facilitators proposed "Elements Paper for Declaration Discussion", but feels the content and structure need a stronger focus on the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the declaration must prioritize human rights, gender equality and the full realization of women's and girl's human rights, ending inequalities, and achieving environmental sustainability, peaceful societies, accountability and justice through a profound transformation of the current neoliberal economic model of development.

a). Regarding point 1, a "collective vision to 2030"

The WMG envisions a world in which human rights, including women's and girl's human rights, are upheld. We quote the Secretary General's synthesis report which states *"This is the century of women: we will not realize our full potential if half of humanity continues to be held back."*

Our vision must be underpinned by key principles, including:

- Intergenerational justice to ensure the well being of future generations and of our planet.
- The protection, respect for and fulfillment of universal human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and good governance and the implementation of human-rights based approaches to development.
- Gender equality and the full realization of women's and girls' human rights as a pre-condition for sustainable development.
- Ecological justice to protect biodiversity, address climate change, and promote living within planetary boundaries.
- Equality and nondiscrimination, with reducing inequalities as an overarching objective for all goals and targets.
- All Rio 92 Principles including the principles of people-centered development and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

The declaration must present a holistic and transformative approach to sustainable development that aims to shift the existing development paradigm through lasting, structural reform.

b). Regarding point 2 "what must be done to get there"

The Sustainable Development Goals must be the basis for the Post 2015 agenda and the implementation of goals and targets must ensure that no one is left behind. The Post-2015 Political Declaration should be visionary, forward-looking, inspirational, designed to motivate action and instill urgency to overcome all

the challenges humanity and our planet currently face. It should capture the nature of this historic moment and opportunity. It should inspire real action for transformative change, by mobilizing all citizens, leaders and stakeholders at all levels across the world to ensure it is fully implemented.

The key parts of the Political Declaration should focus on:

1. Human Rights, Eliminating Inequalities and Poverty Eradication
2. Realization of Women and Girls Human Rights and Gender Equality
3. Economic Justice for Sustainable Development
4. Combating Climate Change, Protecting Forests, Biodiversity, and Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecosystems
5. Realizing Peace, gender equality and addressing root causes of conflict

Consideration should also be given to making ‘visible’ all major population groups who face "intersecting" discriminations and particular risks and vulnerabilities in order to ‘leave nobody behind’ including adolescent girls, indigenous peoples and local communities, afro-descendants, rural women, urban poor, slum dwellers, survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking, persons living with HIV or AIDS and persons living with disabilities, migrants, domestic workers and others working in informal sectors such as sex workers, those in high-risk occupations, people experiencing discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, older persons living in poverty or neglect, and the displaced and refugees, especially women and children, and all those living in conflict-affected, humanitarian and environmentally-fragile settings.

c) Regarding point 3 “How we will do this”

We seek fundamental structural and transformational changes to the current neoliberal, extractivist and exclusive development model that perpetuates inequalities of wealth, power and resources between countries, within countries, and between men and women. The **Post-2015 Political Declaration** must promote economic models and development approaches that are firmly rooted in principles of human rights and environmental sustainability, that address inequalities between people and states, and that rebalance power relations to achieve justice, sustained peace, equality, the autonomy of peoples, and the preservation of the planet.

For the success of the post-2015 development agenda, **adequate international and domestic resources** and clear commitments to the full range of means of implementation—including technology development and transfer, capacity building, inclusive and equitable trade regimes, partnerships, as well as enabling environments—are required. Governments should commit to **strong gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches to development financing and the prioritization of public sector financing** as integral strategies, and provide a framework for accountability for both public and private sector financing for development. **Gender budgeting** should be an integral part of the post-2015 MOI strategy.

To ensure that technologies effectively support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, systemic obstacles to access environmentally safe, socially appropriate and economically equitable technologies must be challenged, and the development of local innovations, indigenous knowledge and endogenous technologies should be promoted, and ensure assessment of technologies.

The Post-2015 Political Declaration should ensure principles of transparent, inclusive and participatory processes, and the involvement of civil society organizations and all major groups,¹ especially women’s, youth and other groups representative of diverse constituencies and those in vulnerable situations, in decision-making, indicator setting, review and monitoring processes.

The **Post-2015 Political Declaration** must refrain from arbitrarily reducing or “simplifying” the SDGs for the purposes of communication. The WMG rejects the use of six “essential elements” proposed in the Secretary-General’s synthesis report because they obscure critical priorities, including the goals of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment and reducing inequalities within and between countries.

d). Regarding point 4 “Follow up and Review”

The WMG calls for strong accountability, based on transparent, inclusive and participatory review and monitoring mechanisms. We call on governments to solemnly **reaffirm our universal aspirations for peace, development and human rights** for all and our determination to achieve the Post-2015 Development Agenda; and **pledge to review on a regular basis the progress made** in implementing the provisions of this Declaration.²

Effective and meaningful participation of civil society organizations and all major groups, in the review and monitoring mechanisms at local, national, regional and global levels, and in the High-Level Political Forum, including women and indigenous peoples, should be ensured. The **Political Declaration** should explicitly reaffirm the **rights to seek and impart information, to self-expression, to freedom of organization, association and assembly, and to freedom of the media, public participation, access to justice, as well as other** related human rights.³ We call for a **mandatory universal global accountability mechanism**, that ensures qualitative and participative monitoring, building on the existing mechanisms under Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review⁴, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights treaties.

All stakeholders, including in public-private partnerships, should be held accountable to their commitments, ensuring **compliance with human rights, gender equality, labour and environmental standards** in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. A strong justice system that can provide remedy and redress for individuals when their rights are violated as a result of development initiatives is essential. We call on governments to commit to include measures to hold private sectors accountable including through a binding **corporate accountability mechanism**.

As a key basis for follow up and review, the indicator framework should emphasize equity and focus on especially disadvantaged and excluded groups to effectively **address the multiple dimensions of poverty and discrimination**. Disaggregated data must be collected and analyzed for all goals and targets, at a minimum based on gender, age, income level and geographic location.

e). Commitments

The commitments need to be ambitious and go well beyond just a reaffirmation of prior agreements and conventions. The WMG calls for strong commitments for post-2015 agenda in all areas of goals and targets, Means of Implementation and Accountability. There should be a *specific paragraph in the Declaration that focuses on the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment with explicit reference to the ‘human rights of women and girls’*, noting this omission in the SDGs.

f). Plan of Action

The post2015 agenda’s plan of action should be based on the **17 goals and 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals**. We call on all governments of the world to move from **empty promises to real action** for sustainable development based on the principles of solidarity, equality, justice, and universality in order to achieve the well being of today’s and future generations and a healthy

planet. This global agenda should be measured with global indicators and full participation of all sectors of government and civil society. The implementation of the goals and targets should be supported by strong **ethical and transparent financial and non-financial means of implementation**, based on strong environmental, human rights and gender equality safeguards and redress mechanisms.

¹ On civil society engagement, see Rio+20, paras. 43 (including major groups), 53, 75(h); UN Millennium Declaration, para. 20 (“partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations”).

² Adapted from UN Millennium Declaration, paras 31 and 32.

³ UN Millennium Declaration, para.25 (“ensure freedom of the media” and “right of the public to have access to information”).

⁴ Universal Periodic Review, UN Human Rights <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>