

UN Women messages for the post-2015 development agenda

[WORKING DRAFT]

A. Core messages on general principles

1. UN Women supports the report of the Open Working Group (OWG) and its proposed goals and targets. UN Women welcomes the proposed sustainable development goal 5 of the OWG on “achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls” as well as gender-sensitive targets in other goals.
2. The post-2015 development agenda should include a strong and comprehensive goal on gender equality, the empowerment of women and human rights of women and girls and must integrate gender perspectives throughout the entire framework, including with regards to means of implementation. The design and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda must build on existing commitments to gender equality, such as those contained in the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW.
3. The post-2015 development agenda needs to address the structural causes of inequality. The unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunities that perpetuate gender inequalities, poverty, vulnerability and environmental degradation must be changed, and peaceful and sustainable societies created. This requires a shift from dominant economic models which narrowly focus on increasing GDP to alternative approaches that emphasize human development, well-being, the realization of human rights and sustainability.
4. The particular needs of women who face multiple forms of discrimination must be prioritized. The future agenda must address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, age, income, location, ethnicity, disabilities and other factors.
5. The post-2015 development agenda should be universal and implemented in all countries, by involving all stakeholders of society, women and men, boys and girls. A transformative approach based on human rights will ensure that goals, targets and policies are based on principles of equality and non-discrimination, and are complementary and coherent so that gains in one area do not come at the cost of progress in another. An integrated and universal agenda can only be achieved by ensuring coherence and linkages between social, economic and environmental policies and by pro-actively addressing gender inequalities.
6. A transformative post-2015 development agenda requires: significantly increased investments for gender equality; increased investments in statistical capacities and gender statistics to support effective monitoring; and strong accountability mechanisms that clearly set out who is

responsible for what and provide avenues for women and men to hold decision-makers answerable for their actions and seek redress where necessary.

7. Inclusive processes and structures are needed for women's civil society organizations from grassroots to regional and international levels to effectively participate in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda.

B. Messages on priority targets for proposed Goal 5 (Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls)

8. To address the full range of structural barriers to gender equality and to harness the synergies between gender equality and the three dimensions of sustainable development, it is essential to include gender equality targets across the framework. The targets for proposed Goal 5 (Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls) should transform unequal power relations between women and men and address the structural barriers holding back progress on gender equality. Based on existing international norms, standards and agreements, UN Women's preferred formulation for the targets for proposed Goal 5 are set out below. These proposals are in line with the priorities of gender equality advocates.
9. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in laws, policies and practice
 - Laws and policies that discriminate against women and girls need to be urgently repealed as a first step towards achieving substantive gender equality, complemented by measures to change discriminatory social norms and practices. The Beijing + 5 review established 2005 as a target date for the revocation of laws that discriminate against women; this deadline has come and gone. We must ensure that this long overdue reform is finally achieved.
10. Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres
 - Violence against women and girls is a form of discrimination and a pervasive human rights violation. Violence is embedded in the unequal power relations between men and women as well as in gender stereotypes that perpetuate or condone such violence. In order to eliminate such violence States should implement already existing commitments and place a greater focus on prevention by addressing its root causes. Setting a target on eliminating all forms of violence against women is central to the overall achievement of gender equality, as well as the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights.
11. Eliminate all harmful practices, in particular, child, early and forced marriage and FGM

- Harmful practices are forms of violence against women and girls and human rights violations which are linked to deep-rooted inequalities and discriminatory social norms. Comprehensive and coordinated strategies to address gender inequality and violence against women and girls in general, and action by a wide range of stakeholders, as well as targeted interventions are needed to prevent and respond to harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and FGM.

12. Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work

- Unpaid care and domestic work sustains economies, communities and households, and is mainly carried out by women in many countries. This work must be recognized as such, and made visible by measuring it properly through time use surveys. It must be reduced through investments in infrastructure and social services, and redistributed between households and the State (through provision of services and infrastructure) and between women and men in households.
- Unpaid care and domestic work is linked to poverty. The lack of accessible basic services and infrastructure disproportionately affects poor women who are forced to compensate through demanding and intense unpaid workloads (including tasks such as fetching water and biomass for fuel from long distances). Women's heavy unpaid care workloads are exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation, i.e., extreme weather events, droughts, floods, soil erosion, deforestation, etc. Not only do they make care work more arduous and time-consuming, they also compromise women's abilities to cope.

13. Ensure women's full and equal participation and leadership in decision-making in public and private spheres, including in peacebuilding and transitional justice institutions

- Women's capacity to influence decision-making at all levels, whether in public or private institutions (including parliaments, local governments, unions, cooperatives, civil society organizations and movements, firms, households, peace processes and transitional institutions for the administration of reparations and relief and recovery activities), is an essential feature of the enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms. Women's full participation and leadership in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda is fundamental for democratic accountability and the legitimacy of the new agenda.

14. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, including through access to essential information

and education and services on issues such as sexuality, relationships, pregnancies and safe child birth. The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

15. Ensure women's equal right to: inheritance; access, control, and own assets and productive resources, including land; access and manage natural resources; access essential services and infrastructure, including technologies, financial services and ICT

- The equal right to inheritance and equal right to access, control and own land and other assets are essential for the women's enjoyment of their human rights; for social status and security; for decent work, sustainable livelihoods and the production of goods and services to generate an adequate standard of living. For example, ownership of and/or access to land, a car, a bicycle or other means of transportation can be useful for multiple purposes, including earning an income. Assets can also serve as a buffer against shocks (e.g. sale of assets during emergencies, improved natural resource management for greater resilience).

16. Adopt and strengthen non-discriminatory legislation and policies for the achievement of gender equality

- Legal and policy frameworks need to be aligned with international standards on human rights and provide for women's access to justice.

17. Address gender equality across all goals and targets

- To overcome existing policy silos and to build on the linkages among different goals, it is critical to mainstream a gender perspective across all goals and targets, including means of implementation and global partnership, monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

C. Messages on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda

The "data revolution"

18. The "data revolution" must become a revolution in gender data to rectify the systematic underinvestment in the production, analysis and use of gender statistics. Data and statistical requirements for the post-2015 development agenda will be substantial, particularly for monitoring gender equality, women's empowerment and the human rights of women and girls under the new framework. Unlike the MDG 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women), the current proposed targets in the OWG report are more comprehensive.

19. The minimum set of 52 gender indicators and the set of the 9 core indicators on violence against women adopted by the UN Statistical Commission provide a strong basis for monitoring gender

equality in the post-2015 development agenda. However, many areas of statistics that are critically important such as time use, violence against women, women's secure access to land, water and natural resources or are still not produced regularly by countries. There are also some areas where new standards and methodologies will need to be developed, as for example, in the area of women's participation in local governance as well as women, peace and security statistics. Data is not systematically sex-disaggregated, yet where gender statistics are collected, they are most often disaggregated only by sex, thus failing to address inequalities among women based on other factors, such as age, location, disability and income.

20. Unlike the MDGs, the choice of targets and indicators for the SDGs cannot be driven by data availability. Rather, the new framework should focus on what we value – and is thus important to measure – to drive the collection and analysis of new and existing data.
21. The data revolution requires significantly increased investments in statistical capacity at the national, regional and international levels and for the production of gender statistics to make it possible to effectively monitor the post-2015 development agenda. There is a need to build the capacity of national statistical agencies and line ministries to integrate gender perspectives in their national survey instruments (household, labour force and other surveys and censuses). In addition, country-level technical and financial capacity to produce high quality statistics through administrative sources, such as civil registration systems, business registries etc., should be developed.
22. “Big data”¹ provides a real opportunity for regular monitoring but should not be seen as a cost-effective alternative to traditional statistical production. Rather, big data and traditional statistics should complement one another to enable sound, accurate and timely monitoring. Concerns about data quality, ethics and privacy underline the need for sound methodologies and ethical standards for data collection, analysis and reporting.

Adapting or “localizing” the agenda to national and sub-national context

23. Member States have stressed that the new agenda be adaptable to the conditions of each country. There is a need to adopt different strategies in different contexts and to adapt the agenda to respond to different levels of development through targets that are tailored for particular national contexts and country circumstances.

¹ Big Data is an umbrella term referring to the large amounts of digital data continually generated by the global population. See http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/Primer%202013_FINAL%20FOR%20PRINT.pdf

24. Countries should adopt and adapt the new agenda, including the gender equality and human rights commitments, in a comprehensive way, as set out in the OWG report, and in compliance with international human rights standards. There must be no “cherry-picking” of the targets and indicators or watering down of existing standards and commitments. Implementing already existing commitments and targets, including those relating to gender equality and women’s empowerment, will be essential to the achievement of sustainable development.
25. Localizing the agenda must be a robust and inclusive process, engaging all parts of government, civil society, and the wider community. The full engagement of women and of women’s civil society organizations is critical.

Accountability

26. Achieving gender equality requires the involvement of women and men, girls and boys, and is the responsibility of all stakeholders. Governments must meet their obligations as duty bearers and women and girls must be empowered to claim and enjoy their human rights. A transformative agenda should ensure strong accountability mechanisms at all levels to enable women and men to hold decision-makers to account for delivering on their commitments. The post-2015 development agenda will need a clear framework that specifies who is responsible for delivering on what.
27. The post-2015 development agenda should emphasize universal accountability, outlining the responsibilities of all countries and other stakeholders to each other for delivering on commitments.
28. Accountability for the post-2015 development agenda should be integrated in existing or new national accountability mechanisms. In addition to formal accountability mechanisms, such as parliamentary scrutiny and reporting to CEDAW and other treaty bodies, inclusive and participatory democratic deliberations will be important to shape and monitor local, national, regional or international policies to implement the post-2015 development agenda. It is particularly critical to ensure women’s full and equal participation, voice and leadership in country monitoring and accountability mechanisms, particularly by marginalized groups of women.
29. Civil society organizations, including women’s organizations, play an important role in monitoring progress and holding governments to account on their commitments. It is important that more space is created for civil society, grassroots and local organizations and individuals to participate in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda at local, national and global levels.

30. All parts of government must be responsible for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming must be institutionalized across different sectors of the government, with effective means of monitoring progress. Legal frameworks should be implemented and national action plans on gender equality should be strengthened by setting specific goals, including effective monitoring and timelines, reporting, and the allocation of adequate resources to ensure their implementation.
31. State restructuring has increased the influence and impact of private sector actors on the enjoyment of human rights in many countries. While States must continue to regulate the private sector to ensure compliance with human rights standards, multi-stakeholder accountability frameworks which include civil society can provide complementary avenues of accountability for the private sector. Multi-stakeholder accountability frameworks must include transparent reporting processes and procedures, public consultations and hearing and the ability to submit and respond to complaints.

Financing for gender equality

32. The chronic underinvestment in gender equality must be turned around. The expectations of an ambitious post-2015 development agenda must be matched with an equally ambitious level of investment. This can only happen if national budgets are allocating necessary funds to gender equality across all sectors, States meet their official development assistance (ODA) commitments and all other sources of funding are mobilized to advance gender equality.
33. It is vital to ensure greater coherence between macro-economic policies, including monetary and fiscal policy, and gender equality. This involves a reorientation of macro-economic policies to broaden fiscal space necessary to increase investment in gender equality. The knowledge and capacity for States to carry out their own gender responsive planning; costing and budgeting processes must be strengthened to ensure allocation of adequate resources to the implementation of policies in support of gender equality.
34. It will be vital to monitor public spending and analyze the effects that public spending, tax policy, and monetary policy have on gender inequality. Monitoring performance – through budget monitoring and tracking – supports transparency of information towards stronger accountability for commitments to gender equality and women's rights. Central to these efforts is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.
35. While the share of ODA allocated on gender equality has remained relatively stable, there remains considerable underinvestment in gender equality, particularly when aid spending is broken down by sectors. Gender equality focused aid is concentrated in the social sectors of education and health which are vitally important, but must also target economic sectors and

infrastructure, women's role in peace and security and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

36. With increasing state restructuring and public sector reform the influence and impact of private sector actors on the enjoyment of women's human rights have grown and it is increasingly important that private actors are aligned with national efforts to advance gender equality. All actors investing in gender equality are accountable for results and must ensure that their investments support national efforts towards sustainable development. Financing for sustainable development from the private sector, including transnational corporations, must meet human rights standards and principles and such actors should be held to the same standards of transparency and accountability as other donors.
37. Civil society especially women's organizations and gender equality advocates play an important role in holding governments and donors accountable for commitments on gender equality and women's rights. Decisions on public spending and priority setting should be participatory and inclusive with adequate space and resources for civil society and women's organizations to participate and influence outcomes. To rectify underinvestment, resources must be significantly increased for local, national, regional and global women's organizations.

International trade, finance and technology

38. Ensuring a global economic architecture that promotes - rather than undermines - human rights and substantive equality for women and girls must be a priority for the post-2015 development agenda. This includes ensuring a fair and equitable international trade and financial regime, adequate financing for development and access to technology and knowledge.
39. The use of gender analysis and gender impact assessments should be enhanced in research and development in science and technology in order to deliver improvements for women and girls through improved infrastructure and in all sectors, including water and sanitation, energy, agriculture, health and education.

Global partnership

40. A renewed global partnership is needed to support the post-2015 development agenda. This will require strengthened cooperation with the meaningful involvement and active participation of developing and developed countries, multi-lateral and bi-lateral and financial institutions, parliaments, local authorities, private sector entities, philanthropic and civil society organizations and other stakeholders.
41. Multi-stakeholder partnerships must ensure that mobilization of knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources is gender-responsive, and all actors must be held accountable for their contributions to gender equality and sustainable development.

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42. Strengthened transparency and accountability of all stakeholders for financing for gender equality and women's rights are essential to the global partnership.