



## Women's Major Group

### **10 Red Flags for the *Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda***

The Post-2015 has the potential to create a new global paradigm for just, sustainable and rights-based development. The Women's Major Group (WGM) has been part of the process to help devise a transformative agenda that is able to address the fundamental inequalities between people and inequities between countries, while promoting a rights-based approach to development that puts people, particularly women, at its center. On the eve of negotiations on the *zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda* of the Post-2015 Political Declaration and its various components, the WGM is releasing **10 Red Flags** to highlight areas that need to be strengthened to achieve the transformative change we envision.

The elements that will be negotiated to decide on the Post-2015 agenda include the political declaration, chapeau to the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and follow up and review. Another substantive part of the Post-2015 agenda concerns the Means of Implementation (including the Technology Facilitation Mechanism), which are being discussed under the Financing for Development (FfD) platform. The WGM calls for an ambitious outcome in the Addis Ababa meeting that will ensure the resources, capacities, and technologies needed for the full implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

#### **10 Red Flags**

- 1. Gender equality and the human rights of women and girls must be recognized as a cross-cutting issue critical for the success of the post-2015 development agenda**
- 2. Commitments to human rights and inclusivity must be strengthened**
- 3. Commitments to civil society and major group participation must be strengthened**
- 4. The role of feminist and women's organisations must be recognized and supported**
- 5. The role of the private sector must be regulated and its social, economic and environmental impacts assessed and remedied where appropriate**
- 6. The Political Declaration must emphasise commitments to the wellbeing of people and the planet**
- 7. The Vision and the Call for Action need to acknowledge the way in which the current economic model has contributed to inequalities and environmental degradation**
- 8. The goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group should be fully endorsed, and there should be a clear path to devise ambitious indicators for the SDGs**
- 9. Means of Implementation must be prioritised for the Post-2015 agenda**
- 10. The commitments to monitoring, review and accountability must outline comprehensive processes for national, regional and global reviews**

**1. Gender equality and the human rights of women and girls must be recognized as a cross-cutting issue critical for the success of the post-2015 development agenda**

Women and girls comprise the majority of people living in poverty, experience persistent and multidimensional inequalities, and bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of financial and environmental crises, natural disasters and climate change. Gender equality, the empowerment of girls and women of all ages, and the full realisation of their human rights is not only a good in itself, it is essential for poverty eradication and sustainable development. As such, Gender equality and the full realization of the human rights of girls and women of all ages should be emphasised as a cross-cutting thematic priority throughout the political declaration, and not only in reference to the sustainable development goals and targets.

The Zero Draft must reflect the full range of issues that are critical to achieve gender equality, the human rights and empowerment of women and girls, and not just a subset of them, including women's economic rights and their sexual and reproductive rights. Women's participation in all stages of the peace-building process must be recognized as an essential condition for peace-building, and protection of women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence in armed and post-conflict must be prioritized. To ensure success, the draft must commit to sufficient, dedicated resources to achieve gender equality, including for women's and feminist organizations.

The Zero Draft must also reaffirm and contribute to the fulfilment of commitments to achieving gender equality that have already been agreed and ratified, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

## **2. Commitments to human rights and inclusivity must be strengthened**

We welcome the Zero Draft's references to human rights. However, it does not sufficiently stress the underlying importance of human rights for sustainable development. Language on human rights must be strengthened to recognize that a human rights-based approach is integral to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Further, the human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people must be respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination on any basis or distinction of any kind. Closed lists in the zero draft must be broadened accordingly, explicitly acknowledging that there will be no discrimination under any basis in the implementation of the Agenda and reinforcing commitments to ensure that no goal or target will be achieved unless achieved for all, including those living in poverty and those who are most marginalized. As it is, the Post-2015 Political Declaration Zero Draft is a regression from existing human rights commitments.

## **3. Commitments to civil society and major group participation must be strengthened**

The Zero Draft mentions the importance of relevant actors, or 'stakeholders' contributions in achieving the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including civil society, business, the private sector and academia. However, we are deeply concerned that the distinct and specific role that civil society organizations must play in developing, implementing and monitoring the Agenda is not recognized, or is subsumed by references to stakeholders. Further, the political declaration must recognize the role of Major Groups, which continue to form a critical organizing mechanism for civil society engagement in sustainable development processes, particularly in follow-up and review of the agenda. Institutionalized mechanisms for the involvement of civil society and major groups at all stages of policy development, implementation, accountability, follow-up and review must be established.

#### **4. The role of feminist and women's organisations must be recognized and supported**

Feminist and women's organizations have been central actors in the development of the Post-2015 Agenda and will be crucial for its implementation. The political declaration should commit to ensure that women, feminist and women's organizations are included at all levels of decision making regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation. Although feminist and women's organisations have been subsumed in the category of 'relevant stakeholders', this does not acknowledge specific expertise nor the ability to input into the achievement of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Women's and feminist organizations are able to contribute to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in a variety of ways including through the development and implementation of contextualised programmes, the analysis of data, and by holding governments accountable for their commitments.

#### **5. The role of the private sector must be regulated and its social, economic and environmental impacts assessed and remedied where appropriate**

We are deeply concerned by the prioritization given to public-private partnerships in the political declaration and its potential to promote the outsourcing of development programmes as well as critical public services. The private sector has its own interests, which often conflict with those of people, resulting in programmes and services that prioritise profits over public good and the needs of the most marginalised people. Certain public services should be the primary responsibility of states and ring-fenced from public-private partnerships, especially those related to the delivery of health care, education, water, sanitation and energy. That is consistent with the duties of governments to fulfil the human rights of its citizens to health care, education, water, housing sanitation and other goods. Further, any public-private partnerships that do proceed must be evaluated ex ante for their economic, social and environmental impacts; compliance with gender equality and human rights standards; and any potential conflict of interest. They should demonstrate specific added value in contributing to the achievement of agreed sustainable and social development principles and goals as outlined in the Rio Declaration, the Copenhagen Declaration, the ICPD Programme of Action and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the future SDGs. Further, the political declaration must include strong commitments on the parts of States to ensure private sector accountability, including for transnational corporations in their cross-border activities, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, including access to justice and legal remedies where human rights are violated, monitoring and periodic evaluation, and participatory review mechanisms.

#### **6. The Political Declaration must emphasise commitments to the wellbeing of people and the planet**

Despite the fact that the Political Declaration addresses many important elements, it falls short in critical areas, in particular in its commitments to ensuring the wellbeing of both people and the planet. As mentioned above, the Political Declaration must clearly state that the Post-2015 Development Agenda requires a human rights-based approach. This agenda must be transformative, and address the fundamental inequalities that continue to perpetuate discrimination between people and inequities between countries. The political declaration does a particularly weak job in addressing the wellbeing of the planet. Commitments to take urgent action to address climate change and keep global warming below 1.5 degrees, as well as commitments to address biodiversity loss, desertification and unsustainable land use; protect wildlife, safeguard forests and mountains; and reduce disaster risk and build resiliencies must be included.

**7. The Vision and the Call for Action need to acknowledge the way in which the current economic model has contributed to inequalities and environmental degradation**

The vision in the Political Declaration must better draw connections between economic and social development, the environment and justice. It must recognize how inequalities (including gender inequality and inequalities within and between states), human action and entrenched structural and systemic problems have undermined development, contributed to environmental degradation and climate change, and threatened the wellbeing of people and the planet. Acknowledging and addressing these challenges is fundamental for the Post-2015 Development Agenda to deliver transformative change.

**8. The goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group should be fully endorsed, and there should be a clear path to devise ambitious indicators for the SDGs**

The SDGs proposed by the Open Working Group derive from an inclusive and transparent process, and therefore should be approved for the Post-2015 agenda. In that regard, the Technical Review process should only address remaining issues in regard to removing xs, but by no means open up the door for further revision of the goals and targets. With regard to indicators, it is critical that the political declaration not only acknowledge the work being done to develop an indicator framework for Post-2015, but set out key principles for that process in order to ensure the indicator framework matches the level of ambition of the SDGs. The framework must address the interlinkages between social, economic and environmental development, including women's and girls' human rights and gender equality. Data must be disaggregated, at a minimum by age, sex, income, geographic location, race and ethnicity, and disability, as well as other relevant factors. In addition, the framework should not be constrained by the availability of data but should instead measure the factors that are most likely to lead to transformative change. The role of civil society organizations, particularly feminist and women's NGOs, in supporting the work done by national statistics offices in every country and in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SDGs should be acknowledged.

**9. Means of Implementation must be prioritised for the Post-2015 agenda**

Despite the fact that the Means of Implementation (Moi) section has a function as a "placeholder", this is a critical element for the success of the post-2015 development agenda. We reiterate that it should not only be addressed in its entirety under the FfD platform. There are many elements that are beyond the mandate of the FfD mandate that needs to be addressed for the effective decision making in regard to the Moi for the Post-2015 agenda. This is the case for capacity building, but also of including in depth the importance of indigenous knowledge and technologies in the discussion. Moreover, the means of implementing and financing the Sustainable Development Goals is not gender-neutral. If and how financial resources are mobilised have clear implications for women's human rights and the achievement of gender equality; gender equality must be considered as a means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and as a critical policy measure for countries who want to achieve their full development potential. This requires dedicated resources from both national resources and official development assistance to advance gender equality and support feminist and women's organizations.

**10. The commitments to monitoring, review and accountability must outline comprehensive processes for national, regional and global reviews**

The importance of proper monitoring and enforceable accountability mechanisms cannot be understated. The Post-2015 Development Agenda must be implemented using human rights-based, gender-sensitive approaches with proper monitoring and enforceable accountability mechanisms.

The document should include a stronger call to governments to create robust, transparent, multi-sectorial accountability mechanisms at the national level that includes meaningful participation of civil society organizations, including women's and feminist organizations. These should be complemented by strong, transparent and participatory regional and global monitoring and review mechanisms. All of these mechanisms should work together to promote the fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the realization of gender equality.

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