



## **At international meeting on sustainable future, women are referred to in unacceptable terms**

**Statement by the Women's Major Group,  
June 21, 2013**

*The Women's Major Group, composed of 420 organizations from 80 countries, participated in the 4th Open Working Group Session on Sustainable Development from 17 to 19 June 2013.*

We were very pleased to hear numerous governments make statements on the importance of creating the environments necessary for girls, women and young people to be healthy, educated, and to have access to livelihoods, a living wage, and decent work in the Post 2015 Sustainable Development agenda. Many government representatives also clearly reaffirmed the rights of women and adolescents to have control over and decide freely on their sexuality and reproductive lives, as well as their rights to be free from violence, coercion and discrimination. As one delegate said, it is unacceptable that there are 15- 16 million adolescent girls who still get pregnant each year, many as a result of force or abuse, and that even now more than 200,000 women die each year due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth."

"Despite widespread acknowledgment that we must accelerate progress on the unfinished health MDGs and pay greater attention to equity, gender equality, non-discrimination and human rights, there were still some governments who took the floor to issue statements that instrumentalized women. A number of governments unabashedly stated that women should be "used" for the production of children, of workers, and of "economic growth". Another comment focused on how unfortunate maternal mortality is when "we need those women to bring up our children."

These comments, and others like them, demonstrate the deep discrimination against women that still permeates the halls of power, as well as the permissibility within international institutions of continuing to disregard women and our rights as full and equal citizens. It is unacceptable that in the year 2013 these insensitive, degrading and misguided comments are acceptable in the chambers of the United Nations.

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