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PERSPECTIVES

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Why environmental sustainability and gender equality are so important to reducing poverty and inequalities

WOMENS MAJOR GROUP[1] AT UNEP
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1. Introduction

On September 25th 2015, the Heads of States of the UN's 193 member states adopted the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and its 17 "Sustainable Development Goals[2].

This is the result of two policy processes that have merged, namely the sustainable development process, which was developed following the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, and the development process, with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at its core.

One of the main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio+20"), which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, was the launch of a process to develop a set of universal goals and targets to address economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and to merge the Rio process with the "MDG" process.[3]

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1   The publication is based on previous publications by the authors, including the Women's Major Group 2013 policy publication. This publication is available at: http://www.womenmajorgroup.org//wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Womens_priorities_SDG.pdf

2   UN adopts new Global Goals, charting sustainable development for people and planet by 2030 http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51968#.VgmE7MbLD-Q

3   For further information on the history of women's movement in Sustainable Development please see: http://www.womenmajorgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/History-of-the-Women%E2%80%99s-Movement-and-Sustainable-Development-4.pdf

Already in 1987 the Brundtland report noted *"inequality is the planet's main 'environmental' problem; it is also its main 'development' problem."* For that reason, the Brundtland Commission concluded that sustainable development does not only mean poverty eradication in terms of "meeting the basic needs of all" but also that "those who are more affluent adopt lifestyles within the planet's ecological means."

Unsustainable development, inequality and the violation of the human rights of women and men are closely linked. In fact, they are different faces of the same problem. Respect for human rights, including in particular the right to non-discrimination, prescribes that every human being, regardless of his/her sex, race, religion, age or sexual preference, has an equal right to enjoy the natural wealth of our planet. This equal right to ecological space, not only of current generations, but also of future generations, is at the heart of sustainable development as well.

With women forming the majority of the world's poor[4] specific attention is needed to eliminate the multiple causes of inequality and discrimination which they face.[5] The root causes of inequality are often embedded in deeply rooted patterns of discrimination, causing women to receive lower wages, own less property, and be more vulnerable to the hardships of poverty and environmental degradation.

The care economy, which encompasses paid and unpaid work, tends to rely on the cheap or invisible labour of women. The provision of care is central to livelihoods and should be a collective responsibility involving men equally, as well as families, households, communities, and the public and private sectors. This does not imply the monetization of unpaid care work, but does call for its effective redistribution.

Women's unpaid contributions to our economies are not valued nor measured. The main economic indicator used for policy decision-making, i.e. the gross domestic product (GDP), is 'gender blind'. It does not reflect the unpaid contribution of women or the unvalued contribution of nature to our economies. In the words of Robert Kennedy, the GDP "measures everything, except that which makes life worthwhile".[6] According to some estimates, women's unpaid labour is equivalent to at least half of a country's GDP.[7] The unpaid labour performed by women is a large part of the so-called 'care economy'. It involves the unpaid work usually performed in the domestic sphere providing direct (feeding, clothing, cleaning and caring for the ill, young and vulnerable) and indirect care (wood collection for energy purposes, seed collection for self-sustenance, etc.) that enables others to take part in the economy and generate income. "If the care economy sputters, it will have serious consequences for both society and its productivity as it is losing its most important resource and value generator – people".[8] Gender-aware indicators reflecting the value and persistence of this work should be implemented in all economic and policy planning, advancing already existing statistical advances such as time surveys and satellite accounts and incorporating their data in the development models.

The contribution of nature and ecosystems also remains invisible in the GDP. Intact ecosystems assure the survival of the poorest people, who depend for up to 80 per cent of their livelihoods on functioning ecosystems.[9] Given women's unequal care responsibilities their dependence on natural resources for survival in the form of water and wood gathering for their households in rural and urban poor contexts (just to cite two examples) makes them more vulnerable to the depletion of natural resources.

4   Estimates that globally women account for 70 per cent of the poor are based on a combination of assumptions, such as women's land ownership (1-2 per cent), property ownership and income levels (up to 80-90 per cent lower for the same job then men in some countries). See UNDP Human Development Report http://hdr.undp.org/en/

5   UNICEF(2007). State of the World's Children 2007: Women and Children, the Double Dividend of Gender Equality. UNICEF: New York.

6   See: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/may/24/robert-kennedy-gdp

7   See: http://www.wecf.eu/english/articles/2012/06/saschagabizon-unwomen.php

8   See: http://www.undp.org/women/CD-Gender-and-Budgets-2004/3.1-care.htm. Both these concepts (social capital and care economy) essentially capture the 'values' of human investment and activity in the economy.

9   TEEB (2010). The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity. Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature, Synthesis of approach, Recommendations and Conclusions of TEEB. Available at: http://www.teebweb.org

If rivers dry up, the women and girls that depend on them have to walk longer distances to collect water for their families. This is the same if forests are depleted and women need to collect wood to cook and warm up their houses.

About the Women's Major Group

The Women's Major Group (www.womenmajorgroup.org) was created as a result of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which recognized women as one of the nine major groups of civil society whose participation in decision-making is essential for achieving sustainable development. Its fundamental role is to assure effective public participation of women's groups and other organizations and social movements striving for gender equality and gender justice in the United Nations policy-making process on sustainable development. The Women's Major Group (WMG) is recognized as one of nine major groups by the United Nations Environment Programme, where it is currently facilitated by a team of organizations, including Global Forest Coalition (GFC), Niger Delta Women's Movement for Peace and Development, as well as Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) / Women International for a Common Future (WICF), Soroptomist International, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture (WOCAN) and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). The WMG is also recognized by ECOSOC as one of the major groups involved in the post-2015 SDG policy process. The WMG at UNEP and ECOSOC are organized globally with over 600 representatives of nongovernmental organizations.

2. Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals

2.1. Lessons from the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed in the year 2000 as a global action agenda to eliminate extreme poverty by 2015. The eight MDGs were mostly not achieved, progress was very uneven, and even though extreme poverty (as measured by an income below 1 dollar a day) was reduced overall, this was mostly due to progress in a few emerging economies, and not in least developed countries.[10] In most countries, inequalities have increased, even if gross national product (GNP) increased. The lack of a systematic and well-defined accountability architecture has been identified as a key reason for some major shortfalls in achieving the MDGs, including commitments under MDGs 3 (gender equality), 5 (maternal health), 7 (environmental sustainability) and 8 (the global partnership).[11] Another main lesson learned from the MDGs is that we need to understand the root causes underlying the current unsustainable and inequitable system in order to develop a new economic paradigm that allows for the survival of the planet, as well as a more equitable social order.

The MDG report shows that an environmental cost has been paid in those countries that have experienced decreased levels of poverty. The Human Development Report (2013) warns that if *environmental degradation* continues at the current rate, these gains in poverty reduction will be entirely turned back, pulling over *3 billion* people back into extreme poverty.[12]

2.2. The Sustainable Development Goals

The WMG has been one of the most active civil society groups participating in the policy-making process which led to the adoption in June 2014 of the 17 SDGs and their 169 Targets.[13]

The SDGs were negotiated in an unusual intergovernmental process called the Open Working Group (OWG) where Member States negotiated mainly in smaller groups of two or three countries, and not as usual by larger political groupings composed of G77 countries, the European Union and the United States.

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10   Uneven progress of UN Millennium Development Goals. See: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-11364717

11   CESR and OHCHR (2013). Who Will Be Accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda .

12   UNDP (2013). Human Development Report 2013. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/

13   Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.

The General Assembly's (GA) Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs submitted its proposal to the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014. The General Assembly has adopted the 17 SDGs and with that, the Rio and MDG processes were officially merged.

The adoption of the SDGs is a commendable achievement

The WMG in their policy statement following the agreement of the 17 SDGs,[14] commended those governments who fought hard to secure and advance gender equality and the women's human rights in the SDGs. The WMG deplored that certain countries, led by Saudi Arabia, have consistently tried to delete the language around the rights of women and girls. The WMG also commended the co-chairs for forging a compromise with all Member States and for not having given in to pressures to reduce the goals to the lowest common denominator. The WMG concluded that the ambition should have even been higher, but that the adoption of the SDGs is a significant step forward. The intergovernmental negotiations to formulate the SDGs were an inclusive and complex process amidst sharp differences and disputes among Member States. Taking this political reality into consideration, the WMG acknowledged that the adoption of the SDGs is a commendable achievement. The WMG continues to support and promote the SDGs as the "Seventeen for Sustainability", despite attacks by certain Member States, including the United Kingdom.

The WMG had advocated for a dual strategy, of having again a standalone goal on gender equality and women's right – similar but much more comprehensive than the MDG goal 3 – as well as ensuring the gender equality dimension in the other SDGs.

The Gender Equality Goal

The WMG welcomes the agreement on SDG goal 5 to "Achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls". The WMG regrets though that a few countries have refused to refer to "women's rights" in the title. The WMG welcomes in particular the targets of SDG 5 to "end all forms of violence, discrimination, early forced marriage and harmful practices against women and girls", "universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights", to "ensure women's full participation in decision making, and equal rights to land and economic resources".[15] At the same time, the WMG deplores the fact that the language does not go far enough, and does not recognize the sexual rights of women, men and young people in order to control their sexuality, and allow them to live free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Even though there were a majority of states in favour of this stronger language, a vocal minority, including the Vatican and Saudi Arabia, once again blocked consensus. It was not until the last hours of negotiations of the 2030 Agenda, in July 2015, that the outcome finally included a full reference to reproductive and sexual health, as well as rights.

Importance of goals on oceans, climate and SCP

The WMG welcomes the fact that gender equality and women's rights are addressed in different SDG goal areas, including women's equal rights to education and life-long learning, to decent work and equal pay for work of equal value.[16] The WMG welcomes the fact that, unlike the MDGs, the agenda has standalone goals on ecosystems, ocean, sustainable consumption and production[17] and a standalone goal on climate change which recognizes women's role,[18] and comprehensively aims to end poverty and hunger, ensure healthy lives, universal access to water and sanitation for all, not just for a the more easy-to-reach groups.

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14 WMG-8 Red Flags following the conclusion of the OWG Sustainable Development Goals. See: http://www.womenmajorgroup.org/womens-8-red-flags-following-the-conclusion-of-the-open-working-group-on-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/#more-1515

15 Goal 5 targets: end all forms of discrimination; eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls; eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations; recognize, and value unpaid care and domestic work; take measures to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities; ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences; and specific means to implement gender equality and women's rights, including legislation, access to finance, productive resources etc.

16 Including in the context of ending poverty, addressing inequalities, health, education, decent work and capable institutions.

17 Including standalone goals on sustainable use of oceans, ecosystems, forests, and halting biodiversity loss.

18 Launching urgent action prior to 2020, whilst ensuring priority for the legally binding UNFCCC policy process.

The goal on reducing inequalities, and other important goals and targets

The standalone goal on reducing inequalities within and between countries (goal 10) is imperative to addressing the root causes of poverty, and so are its targets to reverse the trend towards ever-growing income inequalities by reforming global financial systems and fiscal measures. Goal 16 on peaceful inclusive societies and its targets on participatory decision-making, access to justice and reducing arms flow are as important as the goal 17 on means of implementation (MOI), as well the implementation targets under each of the goals.

Reducing excessive wealth as important as reducing poverty

The WMG had advocated for stronger targets in a number of goal areas, in particular goals and targets that would reverse the *concentration of power.* The SDGs can only be successful when it *not only aims to reduce extreme poverty, but also extreme wealth.* Currently, the 80 richest individuals own as much as the bottom 50 per cent worldwide.[19] Just 5 per cent of the 46.2 trillion-dollar wealth of the world's so-called "High Net-Worth Individuals" is enough to cover the annual cost of a global social protection floor and climate change adaptation and mitigation combined. For the SDGs to be transformative, they must radically change the global political economy system through a redistributive framework that aims to reduce inequalities of wealth, power and resources between countries, within countries, between rich and poor, and between men and women. The WMG had therefore called for specific language on *progressive tax systems* worldwide and innovative financing mechanisms such as the *financial transactions tax (FTT).* The WMG also had called for *extra-territorial practices* to be addressed, ending impunity of costs being transferred to States, citizens and the environment and corporations getting away with this as if they have 'rights' which would stand above those of people.

Lack of recognition of indigenous women, pastoralist women and artisanal fisher women

The WMG notes that most of the "environmental" goals on agriculture, oceans, ecosystems, and sustainable consumption and production, do not acknowledge that women farmers, indigenous women, pastoralists and artisanal fisherwomen are already feeding the majority of the world population, and are more productive per unit than large industrial agriculture, while maintaining the largest seed and livestock diversity. The call for more productivity based on gene banks and technology (Goal 2), instead of supporting agro-ecology and the rights to land, water, diversity and livelihoods of small food providers and particularly women, is a step in a wrong direction. This will worsen hunger and resource erosion. Instead, the WMG had called for inclusion in the SDGs of free, prior and informed consent and the rights of indigenous peoples, including references to *indigenous and community conserved areas and territories* (ICCA's)[20] as well as references to women as decision makers, resource managers and experts on adaptation and disaster resilience in goals on water, energy, and management of ecosystems.

Lack of attention to women's role in peace and justice

In an agenda that is intended to ensure human dignity, the respect, protection, and fulfilment of the full range of human rights obligations must be central. Because of its focus on peace, rule of law, and access to justice, Goal 16 would have been the logical place to include many aspects of a human rights-based approach to development. However, the WMG regrets the lack of attention to women's role in peace and justice, particularly with respect to access to meaningful, affordable or free and human rights-based justice systems for all individuals, and particularly for women and marginalized groups.

Technology focus remains on trade and private access

Although technology is introduced in many different goals as an essential component for the realization of each goal, there is not a recognition of the urgent need for fair and equitable access

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19   Forbes Magazine based on earlier calculation by Oxfam in its publication on inequalities.

20   Global Forest Coalition "Supporting Community Conservation" 2015 http://globalforestcoalition.org/resources/supporting-community-conservation/

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to technology and to overcome intellectual property barriers, the need for developing countries to build and develop their own technological base, and the extremely important need to integrate multilateral, independent, participatory *evaluation* of technologies for their potential social, economic, environmental and health impacts, while women are seen as mere recipients of technology. The establishment of a technology transfer mechanism that could address these aspects should have been clearly affirmed.

2.3. Agenda 2030: monitoring and accountability

The 17 SDGs are the core part of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, governments are negotiating the other parts of the agenda, including the indicators for the 169 targets, the political declaration, the process for monitoring and accountability, and the financial and non-financial means of implementation.

The WMG calls for robust, transparent and participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms that can improve the *credibility, ownership and effectiveness* of the 2030 Agenda for people and for states, and make the entire process more transformative and responsive to peoples' needs and for the sustainability of our planet. As the Secretary-General has said, a new paradigm of accountability is in fact "the real test of people-centred, planet-sensitive development."[21]

Accountability for the 2030 Agenda is a matter of universality, not conditionality. Unlike the MDGs, which applied primarily to developing states, this is a universal agenda and therefore provides an entry point for meaningful monitoring and accountability of domestic implementation by countries at every income and development levels and mutual accountability between states and with other development actors for global partnerships for development. The Women's Major Group firmly believes that States and the people who live within their borders will benefit from effective accountability.

To ensure accountability governments should solemnly *reaffirm to realize the 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.[22] *Re-affirm principles of transparent, inclusive and participatory processes, ensuring the involvement of civil society organizations and all major groups,*[23] especially women's, youth and other groups representative of diverse constituencies and those in vulnerable situations, *in decision-making processes and in follow-up mechanisms at local, national, regional and global levels, including their meaningful participation in the High-Level Political Forum.* In this regard, the *right of the public to access information,*[24] and fundamental related rights should be explicitly listed, especially *rights to seek and impart information, to self-expression, to freedom of organization, association and assembly, and to freedom of the media.*[25]

States should ensure that the accountability structure of the post-2015 development agenda is:

- *Universal:* Accountability for the 2030 Agenda should be about ensuring universality, not conditionality. All countries, regardless of whether they are high, middle or low-income contries, as well as other development actors, including the private sector, should be held accountable to their commitments in the 2030 Agenda, and any review mechanisms established to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should ensure that all states participate.

21 UN Secretary-General (2015). The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet. United Nations: New York. Available at: http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

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

23 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).

24 Rio+20, para. 44.

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

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- **Open, democratic, transparent, and participatory:** Those affected by development – in particular women of all ages, girls, and people from other marginalized groups and their representative organizations – should have the primary voice in holding states and other actors accountable to development commitments. They should be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development programmes that affect them. With this in mind, people and civil society organizations (CSOs) should play a key role in any review mechanisms created to monitor implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, including at national, regional and global levels. This includes *well-resourced and equipped independent civil society accountability mechanisms.*

- **Human rights-based:** States must ensure that they are implementing their development commitments in line with their international, regional, and national human rights obligations under relevant laws and treaties. Information from reviews and expert assessments issued by human rights bodies, including the United Nations Human Rights Council and treaty monitoring body system, should guide state implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

- **Data-driven, evidence-based and verifiable:** Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be based on disaggregated data extensive data, collected by the state and verified by independent experts, including civil society organizations.

- **Regular, timely, and results-oriented:** The process of holding states accountable to their development commitments should occur regularly and often enough to ensure adequate monitoring of implementation. Accountability processes should be focused on ensuring results, namely the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda in line with human rights obligations.

- **Promotes joint or mutual accountability:** States and others involved in global development partnerships should be able to hold each other accountable for development commitments. This mutual accountability should include non-state actors, particularly international financial institutions, who should be held accountable to the roles they play in implementing the agenda.

Review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda

All review mechanisms should be grounded in principles of respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including sexual and reproductive rights, in accordance with the principles of equality and equity, gender equality, *free, prior and informed consent,* transparency, accountability and rule of law.

They should create linkages with existing human rights accountability mechanisms, and draw from the best practices used in those mechanisms, such as the Human Rights' Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), to inform the High Level Political Forum's[26] own methods of work in this area.

The Secretary-General's Synthesis Report for the first time lays out a framework for review of the 2030 Agenda. It calls for three tiers of review, national, regional, and global, that integrate existing mechanisms, such as human rights treaty bodies and also review of global partnerships, where both recipient and donor countries are monitored on their commitments.[27]

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26 High Level Political Forum – HLPF https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf

27 UNSG Synthesis Report, para. 149.

In line with and building on the recommendations in the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report, the Women's Major Group calls for the following structure and modalities of reviews for the 2030 Agenda:

a. National-level monitoring and review

Civil society organizations must be involved at every stage of the accountability process, including as representatives on the accountability mechanism, key witnesses at any hearings or evidence-gathering sessions, and have the ability to publicly respond to reports or statements relating to the post-2015 framework. The participation of civil society will enable governments to understand the issues being faced by particular populations or in key regions, and will support the development of better policy and programming to support the government in achieving its targets. In order to ensure even greater representation, civil society organizations should be able to participate, including as experts on expert review panels, with particular emphasis on including women of all ages, girls, and marginalized groups. *As for the United Nations process, national processes should foresee an own space for women's organisations, a sort of national "Women's Major Group" spaces.*

National-level reviews should be the cornerstone of accountability for the 2030 Agenda. As the Secretary-General points out in the Synthesis Report, national-level reviews are the closest to the people affected by development programs, and thus States must place high priority on ensuring robust reviews within their borders.

b. Regional-level monitoring and review

The regional reviews should also have robust mechanisms for the participation of civil society organizations, other constituencies and major groups, similar to those described for a global review mechanism below.

c. Global-level monitoring and review

Only 8 to 9 days were scheduled for the annual review of progress by all 194 countries on the post-2015 development agenda during the HLPF; this appears to be little when compared to the time required for the Universal Periodic Review. The WMG sees possibility of synergies to be built with other existing review processes of Multilateral Agreements and Conventions, including a role for UNEP for example on Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

The WMG further endorses the proposals of human rights organizations, led by the Centre for Reproductive Rights, Amnesty International, the Centre for Economic and Social Rights and Human Rights Watch, that the universal peer review of the HLPF has the following characteristics:

- A culture of universal participation;
- An interactive dialogue that reviews each state's progress in implementing the post-2015 agenda;
- Review of every state three times between 2016 and 2030;
- Comprehensive reporting that feeds into reviews, including member state reports that are developed through national accountability processes; reports from major groups, recognized constituencies and rights holders; as well as *United Nations reports,* summarizing the assessments of United Nations agencies as well as the outcomes of other relevant reviews;
- Sufficient support and meeting time for the HLPF, including sufficient meeting time to conduct 40-50 reviews each year and an adequately staffed, permanent secretariat;
- Open, participatory and transparent modalities and a meaningful role for the major groups and recognized constituencies, and rights holders; and
- A web of effective monitoring and accountability where the HLPF review should be complemented and informed by efforts at the national and regional levels, as well as global thematic review bodies that are mandated to look at overall progress and bottlenecks on specific goals.

It is essential that the global review mechanism produce specific recommendations to support and accelerate progress as required.

Data collection for the 2030 Agenda

The WMG calls on states **to establish strong bodies to collect data on all targets and indicators as proposed in the SDGs.** This data should be disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location and other statuses to ensure that sustainable development programs are inclusive of all people. Data should be quantitative and qualitative, assessing both development outcomes and processes by which those outcomes are achieved, in order to ensure conformance with human rights obligations. Furthermore, data must be ethically gathered, ensuring free prior and informed consent, with full confidentiality guarantees, in particular where data relates to stigmatized or marginalized groups. The collected data should then serve as the basis for national reports on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and be made available to all, providing a foundation for all levels of monitoring and review.

Private sector accountability for the 2030 Agenda

In many countries, private sector actors, particularly transnational corporations and international financial institutions, have wielded disproportionate influence over development-related policies and practices. As such, the myriad green lights given so far to private sector financing and partnerships for sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda, without any specific language on evaluation, accountability, transparency and overall governance, is deeply worrying.[28]

As the post-2015 Human Rights Caucus has pointed out, "while the private sector can play an important role in contributing new resources to achieving sustainable development, *any development cooperation needs to ensure full and continued compliance with human rights standards".* Specific *ex ante* criteria, based on human rights standards, should be established to determine whether a specific private sector actor is fit for a partnership in pursuit of the SDG goals. These would include whether the private actor has a history or current status of serious allegations of abusing human rights or the environment, including in their cross-border activities; whether the private sector actor has previous involvement in acts of corruption with government officials; and whether the private actor is fully transparent in its financial reporting and fully respecting existing tax responsibilities in all countries within which it operates. International financial institutions, including those from the North and those emerging from the South, need to properly integrate human rights criteria into their safeguard policies and procedures, and be held accountable for violations of human rights resulting from any harmful policies and practices."[29]

As a matter of urgency, states should create a binding corporate accountability mechanism to monitor the human rights impacts of private sector activity overall, and particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

2.4. Declaration for universal sustainable development agenda

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the core part of the Post 2015 agenda. In addition, governments have agreed on a political declaration which will set the tone and encompass the entire agenda of goals, means of implementation and monitoring and review mechanisms.

The WMG called in this context for the *post-2015 Political Declaration* to be visionary, future-inspiring, designed to motivate action and instil urgency to overcome all the challenges the humanity and our planet is facing. It should capture the nature of this historic achievement and opportunity.

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28   See Women's Major Group, Women's "8 Red Flags" following the conclusion of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (21 July 2014).

29   Post-2015 Human Rights Caucus, Letter to the President of the General Assembly Sam Kutesa (20 September 2014).

The post-2015 declaration should particularly highlight the key values, guiding principles and indispensable elements of sustainable development:

- Intergenerational justice to ensure the well-being of future generations and of our planet
- The protection, respect for and fulfilment 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 non-discrimination, with reducing inequalities as an overarching objective for all goals and targets
- All Rio 92 Principles, including the principles of people-centred development and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)

Regarding planetary boundaries, governments should commit to a system change, which requires commitment to a radical and urgent transition and transformation from maximized profit-growth economies to resilient and people-centred economic models that are just, equitable, gender-responsive and locally driven. Recognize the plight of developing countries (particularly LDCs and SIDS) as a priority in the post-2015 development agenda, while developed countries recognizing their obligation to support adaptation measures for developing countries through finance, technology transfer and assessment, capacity building and the removal of patent and intellectual property restrictions.

3. Financial and non-financial means of implementation

There are no exact calculations on what financial and non-financial resources are required for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but there are estimates. During the 15 years of the implementation of the "Millennium Development Goals" an annual budget of some 100-120 billion dollars were allocated as "Overseas Development Aid" (ODA) by donor countries. This donor funding was a substantial part of state budgets in a number of least development countries, but at a global scale, it only represents a minor part of overall investments in developing countries; direct foreign investments and funding via development banks are many times more important, reaching in the trillions. Direct foreign investments have had many negative environmental and social impacts, which overshadow the much small grant funding for sustainable, socially inclusive development. For the implementation of the SDGs, grant funding from ODA will remain a key component to address in particular extreme poverty and systemic barriers to sustainable development.

Means of implementation are not gender-neutral

The current global financial, trade and investment architecture has entrenched the considerable constraints women face in realizing their human rights and achieving gender equality. Women comprise the majority of people living in poverty; form the majority of informal and agricultural workers and workers in vulnerable or precarious forms of employment; bear the burden of unpaid care work; are denied equal ownership of and access to economic resources, including land and finance; and are denied equality in decision-making in most facets of political, economic and social life. Means of implementation are therefore not-gender neutral; they will reinforce or challenge the current economic and political structures that are at the root of gender inequality and violations of women's human rights.

Women's equal rights to participation in the economy and labour market must be recognised as an entitlement based on their human rights, rather than contingent on their contribution to the profitability of business - we reject any instrumentalization or commodification of women. The resolution of key development challenges that directly affect women's rights, such as debt

sustainability and tax cooperation, should not be being shifted out of the United Nations and into less democratic institutions, such as the IMF, where countries do not have an equal voice and vote.

Financial means of implementation currently lack reference to gender budgeting.

Member States agreed in July 2015 on the "Addis Ababa Action Agenda - AAAA[30]" which is presented as the main elements for the financial means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In the final outcome document, the earlier omission regarding Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was corrected, and the AAAA now ensures GBR for all aspects of fiscal policy. A few countries continue to argue that tax policies are internal policies which do not belong in an international agreement, but in reality, tax policies have had a global impact for a long time. The way in which for example corporations are taxed, has led to an increased growth of tax havens, and it has become a common fact that large corporations such as Google, IKEA and Apple do not pay any, or hardly any, taxes. At the same time, more domestic resources must be mobilized to implement sustainable development, if international corporations are not taxed, than who is supposed to bring the additional tax revenue?

Tax justice

The WMG also noted that calls to broaden the tax base should not result in an increase in regressive taxes, which disproportionately impact women as consumers of most staples and basic goods. The WMG welcomed that the Financing for Development "zero draft" spoke of "promoting equity, including gender equality as an objective in all tax and revenue policies, including incentives we give to domestic and foreign investors and tax treaties and agreements." Unfortunately this language was lost in the final outcome document. To help achieve this, the WMG had supported the call by G77 countries to upgrade the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to an "intergovernmental body on tax cooperation" under the auspices of the UN with the necessary technical support, including gender expertise. The UN resolution on Debt Restructuring of 2014[31] does provide a good base to move forward in this direction, and to regulate the most excessive activities, such as "vulture funds".

Access to financial mechanisms for sustainable development

Important gender inequalities exist with respect to access to finance and property worldwide, and this is also the case in the area of sustainable development. Women's rights organizations have worked to get recognition for the need of capacity building for women, as well as specific budgets and "windows" for women to obtain access to funding and technologies for sustainable development.

The WMG has called for dedicated funding for women's organizations to contribute to local and national sustainable development. Currently, only a fraction of ODA funds are allocated to women's civil society organizations, despite the key role which they play in advancing women's rights, as shown in studies by UNWOMEN and the World Bank. Specific financing mechanisms should ensure that they are accessible for women's organizations and entrepreneurs; this means that macro and micro-funding windows should be part of these mechanisms. WECF International and its NGO partners in Georgia has published a case study on the development of a first gender-sensitive nationally appropriate mitigation action, which shows that women face a number of additional barriers compared to men in accessing mitigation funding and technologies.[32]

Technology as a means of implementation for sustainable development

The WMG is convinced that cooperation, transfer, assessment and development on technologies that strengthen gender justice and environmental sustainability are essential for the

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30   Addis Ababa Action Agenda, A global framework for financing development post-2015 http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Addis-Ababa-Action-Agenda-Draft-Outcome-Document-7-July-2015.pdf

31   Resolution on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Adopted by General Assembly Establishes Multilateral Framework for Countries to Emerge from Financial Commitments Sept 2014, http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ga11542.doc.htm

32   WECF – International (Women in Europe for a Common Future), Publication "Lessons from examples of gender equitable climate finance and national gender-sensitive implementation plans", 2015 http://www.wecf.eu/english/publications/

implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The WMG is concerned that a number of Member States seem to believe that there is no role for the state in this area. But, it is evident that the "market" has not been able to ensure that women are equally involved in technology development and decision-making, or in closing the technology gender gap.

The core objective must be the *transfer of environmentally safe, socially appropriate, gender-sensitive and economically equitable technologies* to developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda. Systemic obstacles must be addressed, such as restrictive intellectual property rights, corporate control and trade regimes. Technology transfer that genuinely promotes sustainable development and addresses economic and gender inequalities stresses the importance of establishing a global technology facilitation mechanism at the United Nations. Monitoring and assessment of potential impacts of technologies with the active participation of women and affected communities should be an *integral component of the technology cycle and a key function of a technology facilitation mechanism.*

The vital role of endogenous capacity and indigenous knowledge

While technology transfer to attain the 2030 Agenda must be promoted, the *endogenous capacities of developing countries and local communities* to adapt existing technologies and generate appropriate technologies to respond to needs and conditions must be strategically developed and supported. The contribution of *informal technology* transfers, especially between and among communities, as well as intra-generational transfers must be recognized and scaled up as effective vehicles for technology deployment. *Collective community actions* as a non-financial MoI must be promoted, and traditional governance structures and value systems must be supported.

Local innovations, *indigenous knowledge and endogenous technologies* that are mostly held by women have enormous contributions, sustainable development thus must be scaled out: recognizing and protecting community rights over traditional knowledge systems as embodied in international instruments. An *Innovations Fund* must be established to support the grassroots to *bridge the technology divide* and to facilitate the deployment of locally-appropriate, environmentally sustainable and proven technologies.

Regulatory frameworks for hazardous technologies

Regulatory frameworks on hazardous technologies, including wastes and substances of technological innovations, must be strictly enforced and must include stringent requirements on life-cycle analysis of technological products. Dangerous technologies should be banned, such as nuclear, GMOs, synthetic biology and geo-engineering.

Gender and technology choices and access

Gender concerns in technology are often overlooked. As one feminist scholar has observed, the "technology question in feminism is generally neglected" (Faulkner, 2000).[33] Gender being a 'non-issue' in technological discourses is largely due to the pervasiveness of the concept of 'technology neutrality.' Women are generally regarded as recipients of technology rather than creators of technology, while, conversely, they are regarded as nurturers of nature and the environment (McIlwee and Robinson, 1992 and Edwards, 1996 in Faulkner [2000]). As a result, women's power with regards to technology is relegated to exercising 'consumer choice' over products that are made commercially available to them (Faulkner, 2000:15).

Women as consumers of technologies

As consumers, women are being exposed to the risks involved in food and consumer products of genetic engineering, nanotechnology and synthetic biology, often with no or little information being provided to them by technology owners/sellers. Indeed, it is often the case that the

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33   Faulkner, Wendy (2000). "The Technology Question in Feminism; A view from feminist technology studies", paper for publication in Women's Studies International Forum, University of Edinburgh, June 2000. Available at: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDIQFjAA&u rl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.rcss.ed.ac.uk%2Fsigis%2Fpublic%2Fbackgrounddocs%2FTech_Q_in_F eminism.doc&ei=XV4WUZPQKcel0QW95oHoDQ&usg=AFQjCNG- z2X320c7xrLdWaWBubiEs2Wcgg&bvm=bv.42080656,d.d2k

adverse consequences of these new technologies are not known, and by the time unexpected consequences become apparent, the technology is already well-entrenched (referred to as the 'Collingridge Dilemma'), often with irreversible impacts. This quandary is evident in the case of GM crops and foods whose risks to human health and the environment came to global attention only after the products had been introduced into the human food and animal feed supply systems (UCS, 2004).[34] The same story is echoed in products of nanotechnology, which are prematurely designated as 'clean' even though credible institutions have barely begun to look into the safety of the technology.

Technology and CEDAW

As the principal international legal instrument on women's rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) enshrines the right of women in rural areas to access appropriate technology (along with access to credit and loans, marketing facilities, and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and in land resettlement schemes). However, CEDAW has so far been silent on the right of women in urban and peri-urban areas to appropriate technology and completely fails to acknowledge gender concerns in technology. With this silence on the relationship between technology and women, the prevailing condition of women being passive recipients of new technologies with no active role in decision-making with respect to the technology development process is implicitly perpetuated. The massive influence of new technologies in shaping today's world economy and socio- political relations merits a review of CEDAW and other international legal instruments on the protection of the rights of women, taking the gender dimension of new technologies into account.

Lack of gender-equality in technology decision making

Conducting a literature search on the gender dimension of technology governance can be likened to searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Scholarly writing or documentation of actual experiences and reflections on this topic is virtually non-existent – beyond the sparse literature on the gender question in technology in general and the more recent focus on gender and governance in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

Women are at the forefront of dealing with the unintended and unpredictable consequences of new technologies, but are not yet empowered to assess their relevance, alternatives and potential impacts. Gender concerns cannot be dismissed and women's rights as active actors cannot remain muted if technology is to become a tool to attain sustainable development.

There is a consensus view among global institutions and experts that there is little substantive effort to assess, let alone try and control the introduction of new technologies to minimize harmful effects (UNEP, 2012[35]; ETC Group, 2010[36]; Unger, 2002[37]). Technology governance is virtually absent in a world where high technology products dominate many peoples' lives.

The UNEP Foresight Process Report itself urges policymakers to "consider...organizing a new international governance system which would produce, and potentially oversee, new international procedures to identify dangerous side effects of technologies and chemicals before they are produced" (UNEP, 2012).[38] It suggests that such a governance system would be anticipatory, impartial, aware of the need to deal with the risks arising from interactions among multiple technologies developed for different purposes, and universal. It must also ensure that individual countries and their corporate interests do not make decisions that can

34   Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). 2008. Interference at the EPA: Politics and Science at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. UCS Publications, April 23, 2008.

35   United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). 2012. The Future We Want. Rio de Janeiro, 19 June 2012. http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/774futurewewant_english.pdf

36   ETC group - Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (2010). The Big Downturn? Nanogeopolitics. Available at: http://www.etcgroup.org/fr/node/5245

37   Unger, S. H. (2002). "The Growing Need for High Ethical Standards in Engineering", Business and Professional Ethics Journal, Vol. 21:1, pp. 65-73 (Spring 2002). Available at: http://philpapers.org/rec/UNGTGN

38   UNEP. (2012). "21 Issues for the 21st Century; Results of the UNEP Foresight Process on Emerging Environmental Issues." February. Available at: http://www.unep.org/pdf/Foresight_Report-21_Issues_for_the_21st_Century.pdf

have global impacts unilaterally (UNEP, 2012). The report urges policymakers to work together with the scientific, environmental and other stakeholder communities to determine what a new governance system should look like.

Technology assessment lacking

Technology assessment (TA) is a concept that originated in the early 1970s reflecting attempts to analyse and evaluate the impacts of applications of scientific-technical knowledge in modern society (Maarsen and Merz, 2006[39]: 11). TA aims to address concerns about the unpredictability of technology impacts, and to address the lack of public trust that results from controversies over technologies. In order to be effective, technology assessment needs to be anticipatory, comprehensive, inclusive and oriented towards decision-making.

Ironically, in the years after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the capacity of governments and the international community to undertake technology assessment and evaluation diminished. Immediately following the Earth Summit, the United Nations Centre on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), first established in 1979, was drastically cut back from its significant New York offices to a small secretariat housed within UNCTAD in Geneva. Simultaneously, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), which monitored the major industries developing new technologies, was eliminated altogether.

The collapse in the ability of governments to assess new technologies took place at exactly the point in time when it was most needed – as the world moved to liberalize trade and financial systems in pursuit of economic growth and, as indispensable to that strategy, unleashed the most rapid, and broadest, expansion of new technologies in history (EEA, 2011).[40]

In the absence of any technology assessment mechanism to deal with intergovernmental concerns and transboundary issues, the United Nations has had no structural alternative but to adopt moratoria on genetic use restriction technologies (terminator seeds) on ocean fertilization and a general moratorium on climate-related geo-engineering under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This, among others, calls for the precautionary principle which states that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat. The gendered implications of such technologies have the potential to have a profound impact on the livelihoods of communities and peoples, including women in rural areas involved in commodity production and those in urban areas engaged in processing and manufacturing.[41]

From the United Nations to Member States: Building technology assessment capacity

The Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want," reaffirmed the commitment of the international community in 1992 to strengthen the capacity of countries to pursue national and regional technology assessment initiatives (as embodied in Chapters 34 and 35 of Agenda 21).

Nevertheless, the United Nations system has no credible capacity to evaluate technologies or to advise governments. Furthermore, the use and application of technologies will vary from country to country because of the extraordinarily different health, environmental and socioeconomic conditions that might apply. Thus, there is an urgent need for both a global and national-level monitoring and information-sharing capacity that includes the full participation of civil society, especially the indigenous and local communities that will be affected, with a particular effort to include the views of women.

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39   Maasen, S. and Merz M. (2006). TA Swiss Broadens Its Perspective; Technology Assessment with a Social and Cultural Sciences Orientation. Centre for Technology Assessment, Switzerland. http://www.ta-swiss.ch/incms_files/filebrowser/2006_TADT37_AD_SoKuTA_e.pdf

40   European Environment Agency (2011) The European Environment; State and Outlook 2010; Assessment of Global Megatrends. EEA: Copenhagen.

41   Daño N. and Wetter K.J. Emerging Technologies: Sustainability, Gender and the Need for Technology Assessment and Monitoring. In Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Priorities: Recommendations for the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Available at: http://www.womenmajorgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Womens_priorities_SDG.pdf

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Technology Facilitation and Assessment

There are several ways to operationalize the commitment made by states to move toward a technology assessment and information mechanism, which has remained unimplemented since 1992 (UNCSD Rio'92). One is through the establishment of a Technology Assessment Service under the strengthened UNEP. Another is by reinvigorating UNCSTD with more staff, resources and an expanded mandate to monitor technologies and share information under the guidance of an intergovernmental committee. A more strategic approach would be the creation of an International Convention for the Evaluation of New Technologies (ICENT) under the UN General Assembly, which would have the advantage of being able to address the socio- economic as well as the environmental aspects of new technologies. ICENT should aim to create a socio-political and scientific environment for the sound and timely evaluation of new technologies in a participatory and transparent process that supports societal understanding, encourages scientific discovery and facilitates equitable benefit-sharing (ETC Group, March 2012[42]). The Technology Facilitation Mechanism, as agreed at the Addis Ababa "Financing for Sustainable Development" conference, has now created new opportunities and urgency for moving forward. In line with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), gender perspectives must be integrated in the framework and approach of any technology assessment model.

Ensure full and equal participation of women and men in technology decisions

A recent report submitted by the United Nations Secretary-General to the UNGA, in response to the request made by member-states in the Rio+20 outcome document, recommended the establishment of an international network of technology assessment centres and/or national and global advisory groups on technology assessment and ethics as important elements of a global technology facilitation mechanism (UNGA, 2012:16).[43] Any such technology assessment platforms must be democratic, participatory, inclusive, comprehensive and proactive. Women, as key users and consumers of products of most emerging technologies, must be actively involved in technology assessment processes, as well as men and women from indigenous and local communities, who are generally the least prepared to deal with the unforeseen consequences of technologies and are virtually never consulted in the technology development process. Latest developments in developing a stakeholder Engagement Strategy of the CTCN[44], which will be a platform for facilitating and sharing climate solution technologies, show once more that ensuring full integration of women, local communities and indigenous peoples is not achieved unless all actors become fully aware that without inclusive and gender-equitable institutions and technologies, sustainable development cannot be achieved.

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42   ETC group - Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration. 2012. Who Will Control the Green Economy? http://www.etcgroup.org/content/who-will-control-green-economy-0

43   United Nations (2012). Report of the Secretary-General on options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/technology/facilitationmechanism/index.php?page=view&nr=1417&type=111&menu=35

44   Climate Technology Centre and Network http://ctc-n.org

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Moreover, during 2008-2012 Caroline mobilized for the GCAP Stand Up Take Action Campaign Days, International Day of Climate Action, and the United Nations Human Rights Day in the Niger Delta. Caroline has made interventions on behalf of rural women at global conferences and discussions, including the Rio+20 conference in Brazil and the Post 2015 Development Framework processes with the United Nations High Level Panel members. Recognized as a Women Leader in her community and across the globe, Caroline is currently the Co-chair for the Women's Major Group (WMG) of United Nations Environment Programme and a Global Facilitation Team Member for the Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (FTF-GCAP).

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Through her years of policy engagement, Neth's interest and passion over issues on technology and society have deepened. Currently, her work at the ETC Group directly involves her in discussions on the impacts of new and emerging technologies from synthetic biology to geoengineering on the future of the world's food, agriculture, climate and economies, and the need for participatory technology assessment. Neth holds a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies from the University of the Philippines and a Master's in Community Development.

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