

Statement on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in relation to the Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Longer version for online submission

Thank you. I'm Hendrica Okondo from Kenya, speaking today on behalf civil society organizations from all regions, about the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Declaration.

We welcome the zero draft of this document, particularly the inclusion of the goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group in the Zero Draft. We applaud the continued effort by the UN system and member states to ensure that the process to develop a bold and ambitious agenda is inclusive and transparent.

However, we also wish to draw your attention to 10 main issues that need to be addressed, for the agenda to become truly transformative. Our language suggestions are highlighted in yellow, bold and underlining, referring to the specific paragraphs in the Declaration and Follow-up and Review sections of the Zero Draft.

1. We are deeply concerned that the opening Declaration of the zero draft does not sufficiently reflect the centrality of **'people', human rights**, and the **"social dimension"** of sustainable development. This should be corrected in the **Preamble** of the document.

Bullet 2: "Secure **equal access to** education, health and basic services for all **without discrimination on any grounds**;"

Bullet 3: "Achieve gender equality and empower **and fulfil the human rights of** all women and girls"

Bullet 5: "Foster inclusive **social development**, economic growth, shared prosperity and sustainable lifestyles for all"

2. Human rights are integral to the implementation and realization of the Post-2015 development agenda. Therefore, we call for explicit reference to the **"respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all"**, and **the inclusion of non-discrimination principles** in the first paragraph of the introduction. Moreover, key international **human rights instruments** need to be referenced in paragraph 11.

Para 1: "We, the Heads of State and Government of the 193 member States of the United Nations, meeting in New York from 25-27 September 2015 as the Organization celebrates its seventieth anniversary, have agreed today on new global goals for the **fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and the** sustainable development of humanity and of our planet."

Para 11: "The new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law. It is grounded also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights **and the obligations of States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, and other international instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development. We

reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.”

3. The list of conference outcomes referred to in the Zero Draft is incomplete and is biased towards the Rio+20 process. Therefore, we call for the inclusion of a reference to the outcome documents of the **International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of their review conferences in paragraph 10**, as per the Open Working Group outcome document Target 5.6, and para. 6 of its introduction (see Annex 3, page 41.)

Para 10: “We ~~[DELETE: recall]~~ **reaffirm our commitments to fully implement** the outcomes of **all** major UN conferences and summits which have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and have helped to shape the new Agenda. These include the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; the Millennium Declaration; the World Summit on Sustainable Development; the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (“Rio + 20”); **the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, among others**; and the latter’s follow-up intergovernmental processes. We recall also the synthesis report produced by the Secretary General of the United Nations in December 2014.”

4. In paragraph 15 of Our Vision, instead of using the word ‘basic’, there needs to be an emphasis on **“universal access to quality education and health”, as well as “social protection”**.

Para 15: “In the goals and targets which we have agreed, we are setting out a supremely ambitious vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease, and want. A world, for example, of safe and nutritious food; of affordable drinking water; of universal access to ~~[DELETE: basic]~~ **quality education and health, and social protection**; of physical, mental and social well-being. A world of universal respect for **all** human rights and human dignity, **free of discrimination, coercion and violence**; of justice and equality; of respect for race and ethnicity, **for minorities and diversity**; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential while promoting shared prosperity. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality **and all their human rights, including freedom from violence and harmful traditional practices**, and all barriers to their empowerment **and full and equal participation in decision-making across social, cultural, economic, and political life** in our societies have been removed, A just, equitable, tolerant and inclusive world. And one in which humanity lives in complete harmony with nature.”

5. In order to ensure that no one is left behind and that the Agenda encompasses and contributes to the fulfilment of human rights for all, closed lists in the Zero Draft must be broadened by ending lists with **“among other factors”**, explicitly acknowledging that there will be **no discrimination on any basis** in the implementation of the agenda.
6. **Gender-equality** should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue throughout the agenda. Moreover, the Zero Draft must reflect the full range of issues that are critical to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of girls and women, and the full realization of their human rights. Particularly the **“respect, protection and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights”** need to be addressed in paragraph 18.

Para 18: ~~[DELETE: Working for]~~ **Realizing** gender equality and the **human rights and** empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full rights and opportunities. This is also a basic issue of human rights. Women and girls must enjoy equal access **and their rights** to education and equal opportunities for employment with men and boys, **their**

sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. All forms of gender inequality, gender-based discrimination and violence against women and **girls [DELETE: children, both boys and girls]**, will be combatted.

7. The zero draft lacks comprehensive inclusion of **adolescents and young people**. We call for the addition of a new paragraph **20 bis**, and additions in **paragraph 22 and 37** to address meaningful participation of adolescents and youth, as well as the need to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against children, adolescents and youth.

Para 20bis or 18bis: “We stress the importance of fulfilling the human rights and needs of children, adolescents and youth as well as ensuring their active participation in decision-making processes, and reaffirm our commitments to repeal laws, policies and practices that discriminate against them, based on their age, gender or otherwise violate their rights. All forms of violence, exploitation and abuse against children and adolescents, both boys and girls, must be eliminated.”

Para 22: “We commit to providing quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary. All people irrespective of gender, race or ethnicity, **or any other factor**, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, children, **adolescents** and youth in vulnerable situations, **with particular attention to girls**, should have access to learning that helps them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.”

Para 37: “We emphasize more generally the critical importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders in implementation of the new Agenda. Governments and public institutions will work closely in this regard with national parliaments, local authorities, international institutions, business and the private sector, civil society, **women’s, youth and community-based groups**, academia, **national human rights institutions**, philanthropic organizations, voluntary groups and others. **We pledge to support and engage with civil society in the implementation of the new Agenda, and to promote a safe and enabling environment for civil society and protect fundamental rights to access public information and to freedom of speech, expression and of the media.”**

8. Paragraph 23 on health is well-balanced, but should start with a reference to the “**right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**”. This right is key to the realization of all targets under the health goal and to sustainable development at large.

Para 23: To achieve the new Agenda, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health must be fulfilled for all. To extend life expectancy, **ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing** for all, we must achieve universal health coverage. No one must be left behind. We commit to accelerating the progress made to date in reducing infant, child and maternal mortality **and morbidity** by ending all] preventable deaths **and injuries** of infants, children and **[DELETE: expectant mothers] pregnant women and adolescent girls** by 2030. We shall ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information and education **for all**. We will equally accelerate the pace of progress made in fighting malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases and epidemics. At the same time we shall devote greater effort to tackling non-communicable diseases.”

9. The zero draft does not adequately and distinctly address the role of **civil society** in decision making regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation. Therefore, we call for the inclusion of a reference on “**support for and engagement of civil society in the implementation of the SDGs**” in paragraph 37, as well as explicit mentioning of the role of civil society in the follow-up and review section.

Para 37: “We emphasize more generally the critical importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders in implementation of the new Agenda. Governments and public institutions will work closely in this regard with national parliaments, local authorities, international institutions, business and the private sector, civil society, **women’s, youth and community-based groups**, academia, philanthropic organizations, voluntary groups and others. **We pledge to continue supporting and engaging with civil society in the advancement and promotion of sustainable development and the implementation of the SDGs at all levels, including by promoting a safe and enabling environment for civil society.**”

10. A strong **monitoring, review, accountability and follow-up mechanism** is of central importance to the realization of the SDGs for all. The Follow up and review section requires to be strengthened by including references to:

- “**Human rights principles and standards, gender equality and human rights of women and girls**” in paragraph 3.a;

“They will address progress in implementing the goals and targets, including the means of implementation, in a manner which respects their integrated and inter-related nature, **and which takes into account international human rights principles and standards, with particular attention to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls.**”

- The need to work towards an enabling environment for participation of **civil society** in paragraph 3.c;

Para 3.c: “They will be open, **transparent** and inclusive, supported by an enabling, **safe** environment for the participation **and meaningful engagement** of all people, **civil society** and stakeholders.”

- The alignment of the HLPF’ work with the **international human rights system** under paragraph 8;

Para 8: “The HLPF **reviews will cover the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated manner, and** will be the apex of a global network of review processes, working coherently with the General Assembly, ECOSOC, **the international human rights system** and other relevant actors, in accordance with existing mandates. It will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies. Adequate linkages will be made with the follow-up and review of **all UN Conferences, including** on LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries in special situations **as well as of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 and the Beijing Platform for Action, among others.**”

- The **equal and mutual accountability** of member states for fulfilling their commitments and responsibilities across all goals, targets and indicators under paragraph 2.

Para 2: “All member states **must be equally and mutually accountable for fulfilling their respective commitments and responsibilities across all the goals, targets and indicators, and** will engage voluntarily in review processes, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. As national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development, outcomes from national-level processes will inform reviews at both regional and global levels.”

Other concrete language suggestions will be submitted through the **online form**.

Thank you for this opportunity.