



Women's Major Group Governance & Structure

What is the Women's Major Group?

The Women's Major Group (WMG) was created as an outcome of the Earth Summit in 1992, where Agenda 21, the "blueprint for sustainable development" outlined the critical role, rights and responsibilities of nine Major Groups, including women, in global sustainable development processes. The WMG is an open-ended alliance that in 2017 comprises 1300+ organizations and individuals that self-organize to promote human rights-based sustainable development with a focus on women's human rights, women's empowerment and gender equality through engagement with intergovernmental negotiations on sustainable development and environment.

The WMG is self-organised and open to all interested organisations (e.g. diverse women's groups, civil society organizations, social movements and women from indigenous and other communities) working to promote human rights-based sustainable development with a focus on women's human rights, women's empowerment, gender justice, and gender equality in these international policy processes.

The mandate and policy processes of the Women's Major Group

The Women's Major Group (WMG) for Sustainable Development (SD) has a core mandate and responsibility to facilitate women's civil society perspectives in the policy space and processes of the United Nations related to sustainable development. The WMG provides a formal channel for physical or virtual participation in key global and regional meetings; observing and speaking in official intergovernmental sessions; engaging in coordinated and strategic advocacy with decision-makers; contributions to coordinated position statements, analysis and policy recommendations published on the UN webpage for Major Groups; participation in reporting and accountability efforts; capacity building; and access to documents and information.

The Women's Major Group is the focal point for UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs), for all UN Sustainable Development policies and also links to ECOSOC and the General Assembly processes. The mandate of the WMG for Sustainable Development covers Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (formerly post-2015), including the Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the High Level Political Forum (the primary space for follow-up and review of Agenda 2030 and related processes). It covers the Rio+20 outcome (SDGs, Financing for Sustainable Development, Small Island Development States-SIDS, Technology). The responsibility of the WMG applies to global, regional – through regional forums for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, and national – supporting women's human rights movements in Voluntary National Reporting (VNR) countries to the HLPF, amongst other things.

Goal of the WMG

The long-term goal of the WMG is to bring about policies based in a coherent global sustainable development framework that are founded on core principles of gender equality and justice, women's human rights and social, economic and environmental sustainability. This sustainable development

framework and related policies are important - and necessary - to overcome structural economic, social and environmental crises that disproportionately impact women and girls; to tackle intersecting inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics, disabilities, and other status; to ensure government accountability to commitments of gender equity and empowerment; and to create diverse, vibrant, equal and just societies for all people.

How the Women's Major Group works

The Women's Major Group is facilitated by a set of up to 9 Organizing Partners. This includes two global OPs (ideally one North/one South) and up to 7 regional OPs to ensure geographical representation across all regions including the economic South and North: (1) Africa, (2) Asia, (3) the Middle East & North Africa, (4) Europe & Central Asia, (5) Latin America and the Caribbean, (6) North America (preferably NY based), and 7) Pacific Small Island States.

To ensure that women's participation is meaningful, the Women's Major Group facilitates conversations among women across all regions and from diverse perspectives to share information about participation and advocacy opportunities; promote discussion spaces; develop common platforms for advocacy; map country positions and priorities; raise funds for women to attend regional and global meetings; and ensure coordinated outreach to governments in capitals and with missions in New York. While much of this work is done virtually through multiple listservs (general, advocacy, regional, working group and meeting-specific lists) and online conference calls, the WMG also facilitates in-person strategy meetings ahead of and during key meetings.

Cooperation with other networks

The WMG aims to cooperate closely and build bridges with other Women's Major Groups and Women's constituencies linked to related UN policy processes, while respecting their mandates in those processes. This includes the WMG for the United Nations Environment Programme covering Sustainable Consumption and Production and the Chemicals Conventions, among others; the UNEP WMG shares the WMG for SD website. It also includes constituencies in processes for Climate, Biodiversity, Disaster Risk Reduction, Cities, Financing for Development, Commission on Population and Development (CPD), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and processes of the UN Regional Economic Commissions.

Communications

Website: www.womenmajorgroup.org

Twitter: twitter.com/Women_Rio20

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WomensMajorGroup

Announcements: <http://www.womenmajorgroup.org/news-2/>

Join the Conversation

- To be added to the moderated General WMG listserv, sign up on the WMG website or contact Lean at lean@wedo.org, providing your name, organization, and country.
- To join the advocacy listserv that allows for more in-depth discussion, please complete the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WMG_Experts (open only to civil society).
- To join a regional listserv that follows more in-depth regional discussion, please contact Lean at lean@wedo.org

Governance

Organizing Partners Election

The WMG transitioned to a team of eight organizing partners (OPs) in 2017, with two global OPs, and regional OPs from Africa, Asia, Europe & Central Asia, Latin America & Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, and the Pacific small island states..

Criteria for WMG OPs

Organizations should have:

- A mission focused on achieving women’s human rights, women’s economic and/or social development, and/or women and the environment/sustainable development.
- Staff with relevant expertise in gender equality, women’s human rights, economic, social and sustainable development and/or related thematic issues.
- A national and/or regional/international scope of activities related to women’s human rights and gender equality.¹ If a national organization, must show capacity to handle regional networks.
- Proof of their independent juridical personality and non-profit and/or tax-exempt status in a State Member or Observer of the United Nations.
- Demonstrated (net)working relationships with national, regional or global organizations or networks involved in women’s human rights and gender equality.
- Demonstrated national/regional constituencies of women/gender experts and or organizations, preferably including of traditionally under-represented groups.
- An established office or address (called e.g. headquarters), with an executive officer.
- Governance statutes which are transparent and accessible and if a network organization preferably a democratically adopted constitution.²
- In case of network organization, the organization shall have procedures that give authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives.³
- Interest and capacity to coordinate development of position statements, strategies, relevant meetings and delegate activities to WMG members.
- Sufficient (financial/human) resources for its representative to be able to engage in the policy process for at least 2 years. At least one staff person should be able to dedicate at least 20-30% of their time to participate in and lead Women’s Major Group work. Depending on time of the year, there might be less or more work.
- Experience in proposal writing and fundraising and a willingness to fundraise on behalf of the Women’s Major Group.
- Experience advocating for women’s human rights, gender equality and/or economic, social and sustainable development in relevant global and/or regional policy processes⁴
- For regional OPs, ability to facilitate strategic discussions and share information in the key languages used in their region.

¹ UNEP Stakeholders engagement policy

² ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

³ ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

⁴ UN processes on Post2015, Post Rio+20 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

Balanced distribution of OPs: Geographic distribution / Thematic representation

The WMG strives to have regional representation and thematic diversity by bringing together organisations that have:

- Global policy process expertise⁵
- Regional and national expertise
- Relevant thematic and intersectional expertise⁶
- Organisational expertise (e.g. networking, advocacy, outreach, grassroots, rural and remote organising, capacity building)

OP responsibilities

- Consult with national/regional women's human rights and gender equality networks to prepare written inputs for global and/or regional policy processes in the form of discussion papers and priorities for action papers that address gender equality and women's human rights within economic, social and environmental spheres—including cross-sectorial themes, and that reflect the Women's Major Group's views on progress made, outline obstacles and constraints to implementation, and identify new challenges to be met to expedite implementation;
- Organize, manage and disseminate data and information on the Women's Major Group and the 2030 Agenda follow up and review processes;
- Consult with women's organizations and networks to identify participants for global and/or regional events on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs;
- Provide logistics support, share information and develop processes so that the Women's Major Group can maximize their understanding and presence at the HLPF and other related processes;
- Coordinate and facilitate the participation of Women's Major Group members in the HLPF and other related global and/or regional processes;
- Work in collaboration with other major groups' sectors' representatives to ensure continued space for civil society engagement in the HLPF and other related global and/or regional processes and coordinated positions, as necessary;⁷
- Organize and facilitate working groups on key themes, issues and processes for the Women's Major Group;
- Fundraise and contribute to donor reports on behalf of the Women's Major Group;
- Oversee and manage the WMG's finances and secretariat;
- Provide strategic direction and guidance to the Women's Major Group through an inclusive, consultative and transparent process, of decisions surrounding WMG positions on all Agenda 2030 and Rio+20 outcomes;
- Facilitate public representation of the WMG and coordinate active member participation in regional and global meetings related to the 2030 Agenda;
- Inform the WMG constituencies at all levels of all WMG activities and strategies;
- Streamline policy papers and positions developed by various WMG thematic and/or advocacy working groups and convert materials for global advocacy purposes;

⁵ UN processes on Post2015, Post Rio+20 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

⁶ Gender Equality, Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (SRHR), [SOGIESC and LGBTQI human rights](#), Peace & Rule of Law, Energy, Forests & Biodiversity, Oceans & Seas, Climate Change, Food Sovereignty, Energy, Education, Decent Work, Finance, Trade and Investment, Social Justice and Social Protection, Technologies, & ICT.

⁷ DESA, [Sustainabledevelopment.org](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/orgpartners.html), can be retrieved at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/orgpartners.html>

- Conduct advocacy meetings in New York and regional meetings on behalf of the WMG and organize members to participate with adequate preparation and strategy;
- Ensure the WMG has a well-functioning secretariat, which can be covered by OPs, or can be subcontracted, and includes maintaining websites other social media, listserves, organizing travel and logistics for meetings, etc.

Process for Nominations, Selection and Ending of OP position⁸

The WMG aims at a balanced distribution of OPs as much as possible, bringing together organizations that have expertise in relevant international and regional policy processes, thematic debates as well as organizational skills (see footnote [6] above).

An organization nominates a person(s) for the function of OP and this person(s) has the responsibility of fulfilling the ToR of OPs; each nominee will indicate if it is global, regional or global and regional, along with their organization's thematic focus area. If an organization is not complying with the ToR, the OPs will decide if the organization needs to step down. It is up to the other OPs to decide if they call for special elections or wait to the next period of elections.

The WMG can elect a min of 4 OPs and maximum 9 OPs, out of the nominated organisations.

In total, we ideally strive to have 9 OPs: one OP per region and two global co-chairs (one North/one South) and others selected from among the regions in order to ensure geographical representation: (1) Africa, (2) Asia, (3) the Middle East and North Africa, (4) Europe & Central Asia, (5) Latin America, (6) North American (preferably NY based), and 7) Pacific small island states

Among the OPs, there should be:

- Thematic balance, addressing the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development
- Institutional and leadership continuity (OPs may be re-elected for another term, up to 2 consecutive terms).
- At this moment, the Asian and Pacific region is the only region, which has an existing transparent and democratic process to elect a regional WMG representative for the regional SDG policy process (UNESCAP). Therefore only the Asia and Pacific region is invited to nominate one commonly agreed WMG OP, to avoid the doubling of the election processes. See separate note on nomination and selection process.

Organizing Partners & Secretariat as of February 2017

Organization	Region	Contact
WMG Secretariat		Lean Deleon Email: lean@wedo.org
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD)	Asia and the Pacific	Kate Lappin Email: apwld@apwld.org
Gender Equity: Citizenship,	Latin America and the	Emilia Reyes

⁸ Proposed is a slate nomination and election process that will produce balance between regions, themes and types of organizations.

Work and Family (Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia)	Caribbean	Email: emilia@equidad.org.mx
Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)	Central Asia & Europe	Sascha Gabizon Email: wecf@wecf.eu
Kenana Association for Sustainable Development and women empowerment	Middle East & North Africa	Shaima Aly Email: Kenana-egypt@socialworker.net
International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)	Global	Rachel Jacobson Email: rjacobson@iwhc.org
Women Environmental Programme (WEP)	Africa	Priscilla Achakpa Email: Priscilla.achakpa@wepnigeria.net
Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA for Equality)	Pacific Small Island States	Noelene Nabulivou Email: divafiji2@gmail.com
Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)	Global	Eleanor Blomstrom Email: eleanor@wedo.org