

Side event: The Centrality of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

19 January 2015

At the side event, organized by UN Women, panelists took a deeper look at the latest post-2015 discussions, stressing that only a transformative approach can steer the world onto a more just, equitable and sustainable path.

As the international community moves closer towards a framework on what will follow the Millennium Development Goals, this session provided an important opportunity to advance debate on the importance of gender equality in the new development agenda, including in implementation, global partnerships, follow-up and review.

In her opening words, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka emphasized that a time-bound approach is essential, marking 2030 as the deadline to “bend the curve of gender inequality” particularly by measuring and monitoring key indicators. She called for alternative approaches, including strong comprehensive goals to overcome structural impediments to gender equality as a precondition for a successful post-2015 outcome.

Echoing the “inspirational” momentum of 2015, Ambassador Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, focused on the universality and inclusivity of the post-2015 agenda. He called on Member States to demonstrate that the agenda requires action at all levels and that all stakeholders are involved. This includes issues of financing arrangements and monitoring.

Roberto Dondisch Glowinski, Director General for Global Issues in Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reiterated that gender-based discrimination produces economically inefficient outcomes. He stressed the importance of defining key gender indicators and of understanding and accepting the multidimensionality of poverty, beyond it being solely considered as income per capita, but also in terms of access to services and rights. Having the capacity to implement and measure development will allow countries to know where they stand at a regional and national level.

Wardarina, of the Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development and representative of the Women’s Major Group, opened her comments by looking at the power of wealth and its unequal concentration. While applauding the Secretary-General’s synthesis report’s commitment to gender equality, eradicating violence and abolishing child marriage, she pointed to the need to address land rights, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, and address the impact of climate change in particular. She urged for a more people-centred approach to ensure that the agenda reflects the language of human rights.

Kate Gilmore, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stressed the demographic shift and increasing role of youth and reflected on whether the right population is being

targeted in the post-2015 development agenda: “Our real challenge is this partially known future, but we know it’s a girl, and now she’s 10. We need to think of what life story she’ll be able to tell by the time she’s 25.”