



Women's Major Group contribution to the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee toward the 3rd Global SIDS Conference

Envisioning Just, Sustainable Futures for SIDS Women and Girls

During this International Year of Small Island States, and as input into the first Meeting of the Preparatory Committee toward the 3rd Global SIDS Conference with the theme, “sustainable development of small island States through genuine and durable partnerships”, the WMG raises the following core issues for discussion and advancement of the Conference programme and outcomes:

Moving into the final preparations for the 3rd Global SIDS Conference, the WMG affirms the Pacific SIDS and Timor Leste statement at the recent OWG8 meeting that called to, “review and restructure global production and consumption patterns that often are drivers of social inequity, gender inequality and violence”. Also, it noted that “(r)evising the existing inherent unequal power structures and systems will provide better socio-economic opportunities for women and girls to participate meaningfully and as equal partners in their national development.” The WMG strongly concurs, and trusts that the 3rd SIDS Conference in Samoa from 1-4 September 2014 will showcase the many social, economic, environmental and other political partnerships of SIDS women working for sustainable development, gender equality and universal human rights.

Therefore, we first strongly reaffirm that gender equality and women's human rights are a transformative necessity for all development, and for longterm survival, sustainability and wellbeing of SIDs societies.¹ This is builds on long-agreed normative international agreements on gender equality and women's rights, and in accordance with the Barbados Declaration and the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) (1994), and the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy for Implementation (2005) with their important references to gender equality advancement.

Secondly, on the structure, characteristics and governance of development, we call for a strong debate on the current global development system, which plays a major role in exacerbating inequalities, and perpetuating maldevelopment and exploitation within and between SIDS States and societies. Women in SIDs bear the burden of unsustainable export-oriented economic growth, with environmental disasters exacerbating persistent poverty and rising social inequalities, human rights violations and discriminations. The small scale, ecological complexity and remoteness of most small island states add to intersecting impacts on women, girls and their communities, and they also face overall very high levels of economic, social and environmental injustice;

Thirdly, to promote sustainability of livelihoods, community wellbeing and ecological sustainability, it is critical to recognize and respect nature and end its

¹ Women's Major Group Strengthening Gender Justice: Recommendations,for,the,Sustainable Development Goals and the,Post-2015,,Development,,Agenda, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, September 2013.

commodification. Further actions include securing safe, sustainable and just production and consumption patterns and eliminating hazardous substances and technologies; ensuring food and water sovereignty for all, paying particular attention to local communities, small holder farmers and fisherfolk who are often women, as key economic actors whose right to use and own land and access forests, grass and wastelands, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans should be protected through legally binding safeguards, including against land and resource grabbing;

Fourth, ensure economic rights and justice for women in SIDS states. We remind you that women play the largest role in unpaid informal work, the care economy and social reproduction in small island states. They are also crucial food producers and leaders in many industries including agriculture and fisheries, but inadequately framed as such in SIDS discussions and text so far, where gender equality is a mainstreaming concern instead of a core transformative aspect of sustainable development. Concerning all of the population, gender issues are not best contained within wider 'Social Inequalities' text. Rather, just as 50 States recently affirmed in a powerful OWG8 statement on gender equality and women's rights presented by Argentina, such issues must take urgent and topmost priority in any development agenda, and be emphasised as a standalone area and mainstreamed throughout. This requires the development paradigm to be redefined in the Post 2015 Development agenda. For instance, claims of economic development are not development at all, if social and ecological costs are high. This also underscores important work toward alternative conceptions of development in SIDs and others, and new indicators of sustainable development in order to adequately define and describe costs and gains.

Fifth, we call for recognition and respect for the unique knowledge of SIDS societies, including indigenous peoples and local island communities, including rural, remote, urban settlement, highland and coastal communities among others, and ensuring the right to free, prior and informed consent in any development projects that may affect the lands, territories and resources which they own, occupy or otherwise use. It is important to integrate and address the inequality, pressure and exploitation of women living in poverty within urban and rural communities, including through reversing rapid and unsustainable urbanization to prevent degradation of ecosystems and exploitation of resources that exacerbates injustice in urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

Sixth, fulfill the unfinished promise of SIDS women's right to health, including full access and attainment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We remind SIDS of the hard-won SRHR gains of past decades, important promises unfulfilled, and the need for clear and unequivocal focus at the SIDS 3rd Global Conference to prioritise SRHR as a core development, human rights and social justice issue.

Lastly, we call with SIDS states for the strongest action on climate change as integral to sustainable development, and the Post 2015 Development agenda. For small island states it is already clear there is no division between the climate change and sustainable development agenda, and this is the case for many more States also facing the extreme effects and impacts of extreme weather events, climate change and ocean acidification.

The WMG closes our statement to the First Prep-Com by recalling that the SIDS 3rd Global Conference in September 2014 is the best venue to strongly envision political partnerships on societal wellbeing and sustainability. SIDS states can lead on global

recognition of the interdependence and interlinkage of marine, atmospheric and terrestrial ecosystems. As SIDS well know, what happens on air, land and sea is inherently connected, influencing planetary systems driving weather, water and food systems, biodiversity and ultimately determining the extent to which sustainable development is possible.

Distinguished delegates, strong and durable partnerships require participation and inputs from civil society. While many colleagues are unable to here in person today, knowledgeable and active people are already engaged on SIDS at local, national and international level – the diverse perspectives they bring are crucial to success of the conference, and to future of SIDs. We urge Member States to proceed with a clear and timely NGO accreditation to allow the best and broadest participation and the strongest outcome possible .

For small island peoples, the existential threat to our islands and the current pressure from SIDS-specific social, economic and ecological justice concerns means that the upcoming SIDs 3rd global meeting is a once-in-many generations event, in that it is about the right to life, and the right to development as much as all other interlinked rights. That is why attention to oceans and seas is so important, and requiring a stand-alone goal as well as targets and indicators across ALL SDGs. It is also why a transformative approach to gender equality, social justice and human rights is urgent and necessary, because SIDs women must be able to experience all our human rights, in order to be able to deal with the complex, troubled times ahead. The 3rd Global SIDS Conference can help to ensure that women, girls and their communities from small island states are assured, ready and resourced for such challenges. This is the WMG vision for the 3rd Global SIDS Conference.

Thank you Chairs.

ends.

ANNEX 1.

Women's Major Group contribution for the Sixth session of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Goals (9-13 December 2013, NY)

Analysis and key recommendations on Needs of Countries in Special Circumstances - Small Island Developing States (SIDs)²

As acknowledged in the recent regional and interregional meetings of SIDS States, women from small island states possess complex knowledge and skills that are fundamental to social, economic and ecological sustainability. Women of all ages play critical roles in sustainable development; and organized women are at the centre of addressing issues on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); public health; education; empowerment; demilitarisation; food sovereignty; renewable energy; climate change; ocean acidification; biodiversity loss and ecological degradation; debt sustainability; land insecurity and land grabs, and other priorities.

² This WMG handout was collaboratively developed from the analysis and advocacy of Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Punanga Tauturu Inc, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, along with other allied SIDS groups including Pacific Youth Network, Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, Fiji, ISACI Inc, and others

Despite this, references to gender equality concerns are almost entirely absent in the UNTST issue brief on needs of countries in special circumstances. Gender is mentioned in passing in the discussion on progress toward achieving the MDGs. A brief reference is also made to positive progress on gender alongside 'health and certain educational and environmental goals.'³

The UNTST issue brief omits the fact that women play the largest role in unpaid work, the care economy and social reproduction in small island states. They are also crucial food producers and leaders in agriculture and fisheries. This is unfortunately consistent with SDG and Post 2015 text to date, where gender equality is inadequately framed as a mainstreaming concern, instead of as a core transformative aspect of sustainable development. In some instances it is almost completely invisibilised.

While we agree that the economic dimension of sustainable development is essential to eradicate poverty, and that to date it has not received sufficient attention in the SDGs and Post 2015 Development process, the WMG insists that in addition to foregrounding economic dimensions of sustainable development, we must be clear on the specific kind of transformative attention required. For example, we agree with the Issues brief on the importance of economic development to eliminate poverty but we note that they are vague on their exact proposals. The WMG is very clear that sustainable development must focus on redistribution of societal resources through a gender-equitable, rights-based, socially oriented and ecologically sound development framework.

This requires the underlying development paradigm to be redefined and renegotiated in the Post 2015 Development agenda - from one focused on economic growth to that which is based on economic justice.⁴ For instance, environmental degradation and climate change impacts can no longer be framed as an externality to economic development. Rather, claims of economic development cannot be named as such, if social and ecological costs are high.

This also underscores the important work toward alternative conceptions of development, and new indicators of sustainable development as begun by many states, in order to adequately define and describe costs and gains. But there is a cautionary note. Such alternate development paradigms and indicators may indeed call for profound economic changes, but they do not measure or address unfair distribution of wealth, assets, and power. They can also be embedded in persistent and intersecting inequalities and multiple discriminations based on age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity disabilities and other status.⁵

The Women's Major Group asserts that the current global development system plays a major role in exacerbating patriarchal inequalities. The small scale, ecological complexity and remoteness of most small island states add to the intersecting impacts on women, girls and their communities. Ordinary women in SIDs continue to bear the burden of unsustainable export-oriented economic growth, with environmental disasters exacerbating persistent poverty and rising social inequalities, human rights

³ Technical Support Team of the Sixth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, TST Issues Brief: Needs of Countries in Special Situations – African Countries, Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing Middle-Income Countries (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1678>)

⁴ The Bangkok Civil Society Declaration (<http://peoplesgoals.org/bangkok-civil-society-declaration-from-inclusive-to-just-development/#sthash.qgjJVIna.dpuf>)

⁵ Nabulivou, N. in *Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Priorities*, WMG. 2013: http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Womens_priorities_SDG.pdf

violations and discriminations. Women in the SIDS states face overall high levels of economic, social and environmental injustice. **Accordingly, SIDS-related WMG recommendations at OWG6 negotiations toward the SDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda are as follows:**

- As repeatedly conveyed to the UN Secretary General and Member States, WMG reiterate our unequivocal call for a “**stand-alone gender equality goal**” in the post 2015 development agenda, as well as, gender equality and women’s rights as a cross-cutting priority in all dimensions of sustainable development;
- Also calling for strongest action on SRHR including universal access to quality, comprehensive integrated sexual and reproductive health services, commodities, counseling and information for women, youth and adolescent girls, with respect for their human rights;
- Sustainable development must include the right to education, a human right that promotes all other rights. Women, adolescents and girls must receive comprehensive education and information services that respect their human rights throughout their life cycle. We therefore urge SIDS states to provide all forms of education, including non-formal and popular education for children, young people and adults as rights holders. The right to education throughout life should be an integral part of the definition of a new paradigm of development.⁶
- SIDS Constitutions, legislation, policies and programmes must also recognise and (re) distribute to women, equitable shares of decision-making and access to food, water, land, agriculture, fisheries, livelihoods, crafts, indigenous and other natural medicines, and other forms of wealth. This includes women’s land tenure and use rights including through land reform programs and ancestral domains regulation;
- The WMG affirms that care and social reproduction is intrinsically linked with the productive economy, and must therefore be fully reflected in both microeconomic and macroeconomic policy, with governments,, fulfilling their human rights,, obligations. Government must also advance the multiple dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated manner. At a minimum, governments must support their tax base through progressive policies and address gendered labour market segregation; ensure quality education and healthcare, full,, employment, decent work and a living wage. At the same they must also promote the re-distribution of unpaid care work among social actors inside and outside households;⁷
- WMG and regional civil society groups call on SIDS states to quickly phase out extractive industries including land and ocean-based mining and,, industrial bio-energy, and re-orienting national agricultural plans toward local small holder agro-ecology,, practices- including making women’s work and contributions,, visible, recognising their human rights, and,, guaranteeing their land tenure and food

⁶ Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: monitoring the development agenda post-2015 and Rio +20. Bogotá, March 2013

⁷ Women’s Major Group Strengthening Gender Justice: Recommendations,,for,,the,,Sustainable Development Goals and the,,Post-2015,,Development,,Agenda, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, September 2013.

sovereignty;⁸

- WMG calls for an adequate focus in the SDGs and in the post-2015 text of focus on added value within industrial production and distribution chains in SIDS, especially where women are represented in large numbers. Sustainable development in this area can take the form of renewable energy and energy efficiencies, appropriate and affordable technologies and capacity building and information as regards equitable licensing, marketing, finance, and trade.
- As well as land-based focus, the WMG also strongly calls for an SDG Goal on Oceans, and for healthy oceanic ecosystems to be a core aim of sustainable development;
- States must urgently initiate an implementing agreement to UNCLOS to address the survival, conservation and repair of already-heavily impacted marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. This includes specific attention to ocean acidification, heavy metal, mercury and plastics pollution, among other issues;
- Building on the work of the ad hoc working group and before the end of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, States also need to address the issue of rescue, repair and conservation of marine biological diversity, coral reefs and other ecosystems including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, by taking a negotiated decision on the development of an international instrument under UNCLOS;
- States must also promote and protect community-based governance models for marine protected areas and set targets for the implementation of the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries;
- On industrial fisheries, Pacific tuna stocks and in particular big eye and yellow-fin tuna, are at record low levels, an extremely concerning situation as the Pacific tuna industry is often termed, *'the last healthy tuna fisheries stock in the world'*. There are many who would now disagree. Therefore as integral to ocean governance, all States must eliminate subsidies for industrial fishing fleets and in particular end the exploitative use of purse seiners and fish aggregation devices. According to many SIDS, there may even be need for targeted high seas fisheries closures to ensure sustainable fisheries;
- Additionally, there is urgent need of resources toward strongest regimes for monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing vessels to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Large catch nations must be responsible for these costs. SIDS have already called for global compliance with national laws and for strengthened regime on fisheries security and conservation management measures at regional and international levels. This also requires compliance of market States, port States, flag States and coastal States with robust and accountable catch documentation throughout the market chain. In the upcoming 2014 Year of the SIDS, there is no better time to ensure the health and sustainability of SIDS fisheries.

⁸ Advancing Regional Recommendations on the Post2015DA -A Consultation with CSOs'; Report by UN-NGLS, for the UN Secretary General, General Assembly and the OWG on the Sustainable Development Goals. 2013

- Along with oceanic health, climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and SIDS continue to be leaders in the struggle to comprehensively address climate justice from the local to the global. This is because the threats are immense, and immediate. The WMG therefore calls for increased international resourcing of community adaptation, resilience and emergency plans for SIDS, LDCs, Coastal and other affected communities. This includes development and implementation of clear contingency plans to address climate change, sea-level rise including effects of king tides, ocean acidification, increased natural disasters and other associated risks including water supply, food sovereignty - as well as the deeper risk of loss of one's entire homeland;
- On climate change financing, the recent turbulent COP19 meeting was an indicator of the global struggle toward climate justice. This must include the implementation of a Loss and Damage mechanism dealing with much more than adaptation and mitigation. Rather, it must operationalise common but differentiated responsibilities and historical responsibility. What remains to be seen is whether these and other COP19 outcomes result in any new, unconditional and easily distributed climate funding.
- Wider on MOI, there is need for OWG6 text to advance the following: Honouring agreed ODA pledges including specific attention to LDCs; genuine aid for trade schemes without conditionalities that favour donor states; differentiated market access for states based on their special circumstances; removal of industry and fossil fuel subsidies by OECD states; sovereign debt relief and international debt resolution mechanism; FTTs, technical assistance and capacity building support provided as continued Agenda 21 obligations; increased technology transfer, and strengthened SIDs-SIDS and South-South cooperation.
- Across the economic South and with attention to special circumstances of States, natural disaster risk management must be integrated into all facets of national development planning, starting from policy formulation and development level to budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. SIDS must ensure in the context of climate change, that mechanisms are provided to alleviate the impact of extreme weather events and disasters including floods, tsunamis, storm surges, hurricanes and earthquakes such as the one that devastated Haiti in 2010, with other SIDS recently affected including Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Jamaica, Cuba, the Bahamas, Barbados and more recently, our neighbor in the Pacific - the Philippines. This includes implementing provisions to mitigate the impact of the displacement of populations and the availability of social safety net such as re-location expenses, compensation and unconditional grants for relief, rebuilding and recovery.
- Toward protection of SIDs communities, the WMG call for the strongest protection and defense of long-agreed key principles and commitments achieved at the UN Conference on Environment and Development 20 years ago, in Agenda 21, and reaffirmed and supplemented in follow up conferences including in BPoA and MSI *inter alia*, and overall reaffirmed in Rio+20 Outcome document, *'The Future We Want'*. These include sustainable development principles of critical importance to SIDs, LDCs and LLDCs such as the precautionary principle; common but differentiated responsibilities and historical responsibility. Also the polluter pays

principle; access to information, participation and justice; transfer of proven and appropriate technology; and free, prior and informed consent, of particular concern to indigenous people, women and girls, young people, children, people with diverse and non-heteronormative sexuality and gender identities, people with disabilities, and many others;

- Finally, as repeatedly articulated by States and civil society in recent SIDS regional and interregional meetings, the Post 2015 Development Agenda must include specific text on the needs of countries in specific circumstances at every OWG session, and indeed in every set of reports and negotiations. This includes attention to the special circumstances of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), African countries, Middle-Income countries and Small island Developing States (SIDS).
- **What is exceedingly clear to the people of small island states as with many others across the world, is that this Post 2015 Development Agenda must be sufficient ambition and scope to address the rapidly escalating scale and intensity of loss and damage to humans and the planet, where the goal is no longer sustainability but that of survival.**