

**Terms of Reference (TOR) for Organising  
Partners (OPs) of the Women's Major Group for  
Sustainable Development**

*Version May 2020*

*The Women's Major Group (WMG) for Sustainable Development (SD) is the focal point for UNDESA, ECOSOC and the GA for all UN Sustainable Development policies. The WMG for SD responsibility scope covers the Rio+20 outcome (SDGs, Financing for Sustainable Development, SIDS, SCP) and the 2030 Agenda and SDG process at global and regional policy processes of the United Nations. In addition, the WMG for Sustainable Development aims to cooperate closely with other Women's Major Groups and Women's constituencies linked to other UN policy processes.*

### **1) 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP Stakeholders engagement policy

<sup>2</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

- In case of network organization, the organization shall have procedures that give authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives.<sup>3</sup>
- 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 the 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 processes.<sup>4</sup>
- For regional OPs, ability to facilitate strategic discussions and share information in the key languages used in their region.

## **2) 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 expertise<sup>5</sup>
- Regional expertise
- Relevant thematic expertise<sup>6</sup>
- Organisational expertise (e.g. networking, advocacy, outreach, grassroots, capacity building)

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<sup>3</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

<sup>4</sup> UN processes on Agenda 2030 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

<sup>5</sup> UN processes on Agenda 2030 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

<sup>6</sup> Gender Equality, Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (SRHR), 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.

### 3) 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;<sup>7</sup>
- 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

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<sup>7</sup> DESA, [sustainabledevelopment.org](http://sustainabledevelopment.org), 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.
- Other responsibilities not mentioned here are likely to come up over the course of the term and OPs are expected to coordinate as a team to ensure that the responsibilities and burden of work are equitably shared among all OPs.

#### **4) Process for Nominations, Selection and Ending of OP position**

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) to represent the organization in 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 voting membership can elect a minimum of 4 OPs and maximum of 10 OPs, out of the nominated organisations. Terms are 2 years (generally beginning in January).

In total, we ideally strive to have 10 OPs: two global co-chairs (one North (based in NY)/one South preferably) and one OP per region in order to ensure geographical representation, selected from among the regions: (1) Anglophone Africa, (2) Asia, (3) Arab States (4) Europe & Central Asia, (5) Francophone Africa, (6) Latin America and the Caribbean, (7) North America, and (8) 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

o OPs may be re-elected for another term, up to 2 consecutive terms. An OP may be re-elected after 2 terms if they take a break for at least 1 term.

o Staggered elections are held to ensure knowledge transfer and continuity for the WMG community

*Note:* At this moment, the Asia-Pacific region and Europe and Central Asia are the only two regions that have an existing open and broad process to elect a regional WMG representative for the regional SDG policy process (UNESCAP and UNECE). Therefore only the Asia-Pacific region and the Europe and Central Asia region are invited to nominate one commonly agreed WMG OP, to avoid the doubling of the election processes. All other regions will be part of the election process.

***End/***

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## **Annex 1**

### **FAQ & Other concerns on OPs work**

#### *Financial transparency:*

- Does successful fundraising by the OPs mean that their travel expenses for WMG work are covered in full, and - that is the extent of the remuneration?

R/ Ideally OP fundraising efforts contribute to compensation for their time and travel expenses, but there is no guarantee that travel is covered in full.

- Do the OPs manage the finances for the WMG, keeping books, processing reimbursements, etc?

R/ Yes, through the administrator of the grant, unless they decide to subcontract that out.

- How are financial decisions made- by all the OPs? With advice from members of the WMG?

R/ Yes, financial decisions are made by all OPs. They may choose to seek advice from members.

- Are the books open to all members of the WMG?

R/ Summary financial information can be given on request. It is the responsibility of the OPs to keep accurate accounting of all finances, in accordance with WMG grant agreements. The grant administrator has final responsibility for reporting on WMG activities and finances.

- While financial clarity and transparency is important, if the WMG does not have anyone paid to do the work of bookkeeping, who does? and what about time and resources (not only financial)?

R/ The work of bookkeeping, accounting for the overall grant is done by the administrator and secretariat. The work of specific expense tracking is done by each of the organizations as funds are not sufficient in the case of smaller grants; when the grant exceeds USD500,000 then a separate consultant can be hired.

#### *On guiding WMG:*

- How does the OP balance the weight of member voices coming in via email, or other distant communication with voices at face to face meetings, including with expertise that the OP has?

R/ Every effort is made to balance the voices coming in via all media before a meeting. Once negotiations or meetings begin, those members present (and when possible, those who have elected to be on the meeting-specific listserv) need to have authority to make decisions as needed – based on agreed positions by the WMG and taking into account the progress at the meeting.

- How is consensus reached, and what concessions are needed for time sensitive issues?

R/ Strive to reach consensus, aiming for the most ambitious position possible. If there are clearly dissenting voices but a small portion, then their voice will be acknowledged as input but not reflected in the consensus. And then they may speak in the name of their own organization, or place a document on the WMG website in the name of their own organization.

- What is the process of/ who is responsible for making sure new women/members are directed to the existing WMG positions, while honoring the experience and expertise that they bring?

R/ Women/members who come to participate at the different sessions will need to be aware of the different documents that the WMG has produced. These are available on the WMG website. Additionally, morning meetings during the different in-person sessions (e.g. HLPF) will also help 'newcomers' guide throughout the process and to get clarity on the WMG positions that have

been reached by consensus.

- How do the OPs seek to build the leadership shared among the WMG, continue bringing in new members, and balance this with upholding existing positions, while communicating the constraints of the UN environment?

R/ Best practice: Encourage grassroots women and new participants – with as much diversity and broad participation as possible. Self-funded women are always welcome to join the WMG in meetings. In some cases, the point in the process requires that limited funding be spent on those who are experienced and able to integrate into the technical and advocacy requirements of the document/process under discussion.

- How are distant voices assessed, included or dismissed?

R/ This needs to be clarified by affirming decentralized leadership- the OPs are coordinators, but the work of the WMG can be initiated and headed up by a woman/member taking on that responsibility, writing up notes afterwards, so each individual leader (or small team) is responsible for hearing the voices and working to incorporate them. The multiple working groups support this process.

- How to assess that decentralized leadership is working, and encourage women to volunteer to lead pieces as they are able, ensure a grassroots justice based model, and to pick up any and all pieces that fall through cracks?

R/ The WMG strongly supports a model that encourages women/members to volunteer to lead pieces as they are able. With volunteering comes a level of accountability – to clearly communicate when the person is no longer able to lead.

- How do points made by WMG members get assessed, included or dismissed?

R/ OPs work to ensure that they, or deputies/supporting members, capture the inputs submitted as thoroughly as possible.

#### *OP Structure:*

- Which constituents and areas do regional OPs represent? Do they follow the UN regions?

R/ Regional OPs reflect how the regions, languages and communities can best contribute to the WMG and not necessarily subscribe to the regional division followed by the UN, while relevant OPs will coordinate for regional meetings