

Cluster 2 Focus Area Statement: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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Thank you Chair.

I speak on behalf of the Women's Major Group, the Major Group of Children and Youth, Local Authorities Major Group, the NGOs Major Group and Feminist Taskforce.

Regarding the focus area Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, we see that 2 key points from OWG8's summary have now been added to your focus area document, namely sexual and reproductive health and rights and unpaid care work. We welcome this, but would like to suggest further strengthening of this focus area.

We suggest that the Agreed Conclusions of the 58th Session of the Commission of the Status of Women are extremely helpful and can be fully reflected in your focus areas document.

Less than two weeks ago, countries at the Commission on the Status of Women agreed to call for a stand-alone goal of this agenda and to be integrated through targets and indicators. In the spirit of the Agreed Conclusions, we call for the following goal: "Achieve gender equality, women's empowerment and the full realization of women's human rights".

We acknowledge the inclusion of several critical areas of concern for the gender equality agenda in the focus areas document, such as reducing the burden of unpaid care work, the eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, ending child, early and forced marriage, and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. But we identify some missing links.

The Post-2015 Framework must address the unsustainable concentration of wealth and its socio-environmental impacts, including the disproportionate gendered impact of climate change and the increasing feminisation of poverty and growing inequalities in urban areas. Wealth must be sustainably distributed among and within countries, as well as among women and men, in all their human diversity, and throughout the life cycle. The framework must reflect the inter-linkages between gender equality and sustainable development (not economic growth) and the centrality of gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights to poverty eradication. Financial entities, infrastructure and development institutions, public and private, must operate according to the human rights framework and with a gender perspective.

We reiterate our call for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, including means of financing it, to be aligned with the international human rights framework, including gender equality and women's rights, and sustainable development commitments. In such discussion, we should not prioritize particular human rights at the cost of others, but rather, to identify the entry points to fully guarantee all rights. We refuse to see human rights negotiated or bargained in these discussions. All persons, women and men in all human diversity, throughout the life cycle, are entitled to their rights, and we must put a stop to all sorts of interpretations denying their full exercise

Our proposed targets for this focus area are as follows:

1) Extending on your point h: By 2030, all countries have:

- Reduced, and redistributed unpaid care and domestic work through shared responsibility by states, the private sector, communities, women and men,

- Care is incorporated into social protection systems through allowances, services and benefits that maximize women's autonomy, and guarantee their rights, dignity, well-being and enjoyment of free time.

2) Extending on your point b: By 2030, women's access to justice including the end to sexual and gender-based violence has been achieved

3) Extending on your point i: By 2030 Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the need to ensure that women can exercise sexual and reproductive autonomy and have control over all aspects of their sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination and violence, is achieved.

- including removal of legal and policy barriers that hinder access to sexual and reproductive health care services, and eliminate laws and harmful practices that criminalize sexuality and reproductive autonomy.

4) Extending on your point a: By 2030, elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender, including laws, policies and practices that contribute to gender inequalities, inhibit access to services and rights, and criminalize or stigmatize young people, women, people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and others has been achieved.

5) Extending on your point g: By 2030, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honor killings, child labor and trafficking of children, especially girls have been eliminated;

6) Extending on your point j: By 2030, full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls at all public and private spheres is achieved. This requires that women and men, in all forms of human diversity, take part in a parity scheme in all decision-making spaces, public and private, especially in financial and environmental fields.

7) Extending on your point k: By 2030, financial resources from all sources, including domestic resource mobilization and allocation, and increase priority to gender equality in official development assistance, as well as the creation of voluntary innovative financing mechanisms, have been mobilized.

We also propose the target that:

8) By 2030, women's equitable rights to, access to, control over and ownership of land, productive assets and natural resources that promote fair asset redistribution is realised.

It is time that we address the present challenges for a transformational, sustainable and equitable future for all.

Thank you very much.