The World We Want for Girls Beyond 2015
A policy paper from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

Executive Summary

As the leading voluntary organisation for girls and young women, with 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 145 countries, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) calls for recognition of girls and young women as central to the new global development agenda beyond 2015. For the new development agenda to be truly transformational it has to build on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals, address the underlying structural barriers to gender equality, and deliver meaningful and lasting change for all girls and young women. Girls and young women must be also recognised as agents of change and have a say in the design and implementation of the new development agenda. Underlying these efforts is the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all girls and young women.

> *The new agenda must ensure the equal rights of women and girls, their full participation in the political, economic and public spheres and zero tolerance for violence against or exploitation of women and girls.*
>
> *UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Report "A Life of Dignity for All"*

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have lifted many people out of poverty since their inception in 2000. The inclusion of MDG 3 focusing specifically on gender equality and empowerment has been particularly essential in recognizing gender equality as a critical aspect of development. But whilst acknowledging their contribution to ending global poverty and the impact they have had on the lives of girls and young women across the world it is also essential to reflect on the gaps and omissions. This conversation is particularly important as we approach 2015. One crucial omission from the MDGs are the particular needs of girls and young women. Whilst gender equality targets helped to address issues such as gender parity in primary education, they did little to tackle the systematic discrimination girls and young women face on a daily basis.

There are 1.8 billion young people in the world today, and over 600 million of them are adolescent girls, who are the world's most economically vulnerable group, significantly more so than adult women or adolescent boys (Fewer, Ramos, Dunning, 2). Persistent discrimination and entrenched gender disparities remain a major driver of poverty for these girls and young women. Today, one in three girls and young women are still affected by gender-based violence in their lifetime, almost half of all sexual assaults are committed against girls under the age of 16 (UN Women), one in three girls in the developing world are victims of early marriages (Plan 2011: 4) and around 800 women die every day in pregnancy and childbirth with pregnancy and child-birth related complications being the leading cause of death among adolescent girls.

World Association
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and Girl Scouts

Yet, girls are key to meeting the promise of the MDGs. Providing a better future for these girls and young women is not only an important goal in itself, but it will also have a multiplier effect on their families and communities. Ensuring inclusion of their needs and priorities in the new development agenda will mean both ensuring the human rights of a new generation of girls and young women, and generations after, and harnessing an as yet untapped development asset. An increasing number of development organizations, such as OECD, UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank and ODI now recognize the importance of achieving gender equality as a prerequisite for achieving all MDGs.

The post-2015 development agenda represents a vital opportunity to bring about a transformative change in the lives of girls and young women. The key priorities emerging in this paper are primarily based on conversations the World Association ran with girls and young women themselves to identify their priorities for the World they want to live in. The paper also draws on evidence-based research and resources produced to measure the progress of the Millennium Development Goals and their impact on girls and women, as well as the key reports on the development agenda beyond 2015.

The World We Want for Girls outlines eight thematic areas that emerged from conversations with girls and young women. These conversations revealed that more than half of them felt it was often or sometimes challenging to be a girl. Gender inequality might take different manifestations in different parts of the world but it is pervasive and affects girls and young women's lives and aspirations wherever they live. Girls and young women in all parts of the world talked about the way in which girls are valued (or not valued), the attitudes that individuals, communities and even states can adopt towards girls and young women and the lack of respect with which they were sometimes treated. **Reforming negative social norms, attitudes and existing practice, addressing harmful portrayals of girls and women, providing girls with the skills and opportunities to lead and participate in their communities and creating safe spaces to nurture girls and grow their confidence and self-belief were as important to girls and young women as meeting more practical and basic needs**. Education was crucial to the process of changing this systematic discrimination and underlying structural barriers, but in order for education to reform attitudes, a more holistic and integrated approach to education was important – one that incorporates both formal and non-formal education, and that includes education on human rights, respect, equality and sustainable development.

In light of these conversations this policy paper reviews the gaps and omissions from the Millennium Development Goals, and suggests how the priorities and aspirations of girls and young women could be better reflected in a new development agenda. It makes three recommendations for ensuring that this agenda better serves the particular needs of girls and young women, and consequently their communities and nations.

1. **A new development agenda must leave no one behind, and acknowledge the centrality of human rights, gender equality and sustainability to any meaningful agenda.**

The MDGs have had uneven progress, and resulted in growing disparities both within and between countries. A new development agenda needs to be human rights centred, value equality and ensure that it is reaching the most vulnerable. It must be anchored in existing international human rights obligations. The new agenda must also address the challenge of ensuring that the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social are equally addressed.

2. **A new development agenda must address the structural barriers to gender equality through inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality with specific targets on gender-based violence, economic empowerment, equality in decision-making in both public and private domain, as well as mainstreaming gender throughout the framework.**

Gender inequality is ever-present for girls and young women. A new development agenda must transform the root causes of gender discrimination by building the assets (social, political and economic) of girls and young women from an early age and reforming attitudes, beliefs and practices that systematically discriminate against girls and women. A new development agenda should help to shift the existing paradigms of gender inequality and allow girls and women to occupy an equal place as decision makers, development partners and agents of change. This shift must be facilitated by ensuring both a stand-alone goal on gender equality, which looks to transform the root causes of discrimination, and by mainstreaming gender throughout the new framework.

3. **Girls and young women must be recognized as central to development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of a new development agenda.**

Girls and young women are more than just objects of a new development agenda – they are a source of potential and an untapped asset. They are innovators, agents of change and leaders. As part of the 'Millennial generation' they will also be the ones delivering the new agenda and ultimately accountable for its successes and failures. Unleashing girls and young women's potential by empowering them to be the leaders and innovators of this new agenda will be crucial to its success.

Three recommendations on how to embed the principle of gender equality in a new framework and harness the potential of girls and young women.
1. A new development agenda must leave no one behind, and acknowledge the centrality of human rights, gender equality and sustainability to any meaningful agenda.
2. A new development agenda must address the structural barriers to gender equality through inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality with specific targets on gender-based violence, economic empowerment, equality in decision-making in both public and private domain, as well as mainstreaming gender throughout the framework.
3. Girls and young women must be recognized as central to development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of a new development agenda.

Eight themes that need to be recognized in the post-2015 development agenda, as identified by girls and young women.
1. Attitude, behaviour change and fair portrayal of girls and young women
2. Quality education
3. Creating Safe Spaces for Girls
4. Eliminating Violence, early marriage and harmful practices
5. Girls and young women's voices, civic engagement and leadership
6. Comprehensive health
7. Decent Employment
8. Environment and Climate Change

Girls and young women are ready to take action and to lead change in their communities. The challenge for the new development agenda is to harness that potential and invest in it.

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Introduction

We dream of a world where all girls go to school, get information on the things that affect their lives and get respect from boys (Focus group participant, Kenya)

The world I want for girls is one of equality. It is one of respect for humans everywhere and one of development. It is a world without suffering, poverty and hardship. It is one where all children are educated and have access to health care. It is one where women are empowered and appreciated (Submission on the World we want for girls blog site)

The potential of girls and young women is currently undervalued and underutilised in current development programmes and policies. There are 1.8 billion young people in the world today (UNFPA), and approximately 600 million of these are adolescent girls, who are the world's most economically vulnerable groups, significantly more so than adult women or adolescent boys (Fewer, Ramos, Dunning, 2). Many of them live in widespread poverty with limited access to services such as health and education and are vulnerable to violence and discrimination (Fewer, Ramos, Dunning, 2) Investing in a better future for these girls and young women will translate into positive outcomes not only for the girl herself, but also her family, community and country. Ensuring inclusion of their needs and priorities in the new framework will mean both ensuring the human rights of a new generation of girls and young women, and generations after, and harnessing an as yet untapped development asset.

The Millennium Development Goals provided a tangible framework for ending poverty worldwide, but progress in delivering this agenda has been uneven, and too often it is girls and young women who have been excluded from development efforts. The MDGs did little to tackle the systematic discrimination girls and young women face on a daily basis, and the violation of their fundamental human rights. Additionally, barriers and constraints, such as violence against girls and young women, continue to further exclude girls and young women from development efforts.

A focus on girls has been consistently cited as key to a successful international development agenda. The Gender Inequality index shows that countries with high levels of gender inequality are also those with an unequal distribution of human development (UNDP). Numerous reports from organizations such as OECD, UNESCO, UNDP, The World Bank and ODI all stress the importance of gender equality as a pre-requisite to achieving the MDGs (Smee and Woodruff, 2013: 14). A recent report from the High Level Panel for Post-2015 development agenda promised an agenda that 'leaves no-one behind' (report of the High Level Panel of eminent personalities 2013: 8). To ensure this the need and priorities of girls and young women must be central to the new agenda.

The new post-2015 development agenda provides an opportunity to deliver significant and positive change. This paper provides recommendations on how a new development agenda can bring transformation change for girls and young women and tackle the root causes of gender inequality. It does this by reflecting on the gaps and omissions for girls and young women in the MDGs and considers research conducted with girls and young women themselves. It makes three recommendations on how to embed the principle of gender equality in a new framework and harness the potential of girls and young women. It then identifies eight emerging themes from conversations with girls and young women, and makes recommendations on how these can be integrated into new goals and targets.

Girls and Young Women and the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals provided an unprecedented framework for ending poverty and deprivation across the world. They also provided a framework that mobilised many civil society groups, including many Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, to take action on the Millennium Development Goals and to work with others to end poverty in their own communities across the world, with time-bound targets playing a critical part in mobilizing governments and civil society to take action on

global poverty issues. In part, the MDGs have been successful – helping to lift many out of extreme poverty, improving access to primary education and improving access to clean drinking water. At a global level extreme poverty has halved, two billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking water and the mortality rate for children under five dropped by 41per cent (Millennium development Goals report 2013: 5). The MDGs also recognised the importance of tackling gender inequality to end poverty, and a standalone goal focusing specifically on gender equality and empowerment has been particularly essential in recognizing gender equality as a critical aspect of development and galvanizing resources.

But progress has been uneven, and girls and young women are still losing out at a systematic level. Whether it is poverty, lack of schooling opportunities, experience of violence, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS or environmental degradation, the impact on girls and young women is far greater than on other groups. Access to primary education has improved and targets on gender parity in primary education are close to being achieved, but it is still the poorest children who are most likely to be out of school, and across all income levels it is girls who are more likely than boys to be out of school. This gender gap gets wider as children move to secondary school (Millennium Development Goals report 2013: 15) Once girls and young women have moved away from education to work, they are likely to hold less secure jobs, be paid less than men and have jobs with fewer social benefits (Millennium Development Goals report 2013: 21) The number of women in decision making positions, whilst increasing, is moving very slowly, with the global average of women in parliament standing only at 20 per cent (Millennium Development Goals report 2013: 18). Whilst gains have been made in reducing maternal mortality, the goal is currently far from being on target (Millennium Development Goals report 2013: 4), and there is still a large unmet need for family planning, with a high percentage of adolescent pregnancy.

There are a number of unique challenges that girls and young women face, but which are not covered by the Millennium Development Goals at all, but that place significant barriers in the way of progress. Violence and harmful traditional practices, for example, have a huge impact on girls and young women with 1 in 3 girls in the developing world being victims of early marriages (Plan 2011: 4) and almost half of all sexual assaults committed against girls under the age of 16 (UN Women). Adolescence should be a time where opportunities expand and social and economic assets are built upon. Adolescent girls should be given opportunities to become productive members of their communities who contribute to growth and development. But challenges and barriers that that girls encounter during childhood and adolescence restrict the options available to girls, and have a life long impact. For example, a girl who is married young is more likely to stay home from school and take care of household chores, limiting her opportunities for future productive work and contributions to her community, as well as limiting her ability to make decisions about her own life choices.

Non-formal education and the MDGs

Since the inception of MDGs Girl Guides and Girl Scouts worldwide have been working to help achieve the goals through innovative projects, campaigning and advocacy work and non-formal education. Non-formal education is part of the core business of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting, and through non-formal education, Girl Guides and Girl Scouts learn leadership skills and are

World Association
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and Girl Scouts

empowered to take an active role in their communities. They identify innovative approaches and solutions to community issues.

In 2011, WAGGGS launched an online survey 'We Can Save Our Planet' in over 100 countries. Respondents ranked non-formal education and formal education equally as sources for learning about climate change and environmental protection. They indicated though that is was non-formal education that afforded them the opportunity to translate their knowledge into action.

The MDG + 10 report produced by WAGGGS in 2010 outlined how non-formal education was enabling Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to take action on the MDGs. Among other things, it emphasised that greater recognition of non-formal education and the youth organisations providing it, is needed to support children and young people to reach their full potential.

To ensure that the next development agenda leaves no one behind it must build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals whilst also addressing the gaps. This means including the voices and priorities of girls and young women, and addressing the root causes of gender inequality. Recognising the role that girls and young women play as agents of change and leaders in their communities will impact not just on girls and young women themselves but will also have a ripple effect on their communities. Non formal education can play a huge role in enabling girls and young women to take on those leadership roles and bring change to their communities.

MDGs have also overlooked the tremendous role of volunteering, yet volunteerism played and continues to play a key role in contributing to MDGs implementation. Young people in every corner of the world contribute their knowledge, skills, time and efforts to make a lasting difference in their communities. The value provided by volunteers is often beyond the reach of national governments and international organizations. The role of volunteering therefore should not be overlooked if we want the development agenda to be more inclusive, people-centred and sustainable.

A Transformative Post-2015 Agenda for Girls and Young Women:

How do we ensure that the needs and priorities of girls and young women are recognised and that the leadership potential of girls and young is unleashed?

Analysis of both the gaps for girls and young women in the Millennium Development Goals framework, and the priorities and aspirations of girls and young women outlined in conversations pointed to three recommendations for a new framework to be transformative for girls and young women, their communities and countries.

1. A new development agenda must leave no one behind, with the principles of human rights, sustainability and equality central to any meaningful agenda.

How?

a. Leave no one behind

The Millennium Development Goals lifted many people around the world out of extreme poverty, but they also left many behind. The High Level Panel report promises a new agenda that leaves *'no one* behind.' The new agenda must therefore ensure that benefits are equally shared and that support is reaching those who are most vulnerable. Girls and young women are disproportionately affected by poverty, and this is often compounded by intersecting identities including ethnicity, disability and sexuality. The challenge for a new framework is to ensure that goals and targets are reaching the most vulnerable and disenfranchised members of society, which will often be girls and young women.

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b. Recognise human rights
The High Level Panel report stated that *new goals and targets need to be grounded in respect for universal human rights* (HLP 2013: 7) A new agenda must also ensure that everyone's rights are valued and that everyone has equal access to justice. Girls and young women highlighted that there are often barriers to their human rights being met and implemented within their communities. It is important to create a culture where girls and young women can speak freely and voice their needs and concerns. The Millennium Declaration was built on the human rights principles of universality, non-discrimination, indivisibility, accountability and participation. However, these principles were largely missing when the Declaration was translated into goals, targets and indicators. A human rights-based approach for the new development agenda would mean ensuring that no one is left behind and that social polarization is addressed

c. Place sustainability at the core of the global development agenda
The Millennium Development Goals were hindered by their failure to bring together the three pillars of sustainability - economic development, social equity and environment protection. Sustainable development coined by the Brundtland Commission as *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (Bruntland) should be at the core of the future development agenda.

Girls and young women are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, social injustice and economic hardship, whilst also being a valuable asset in adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as economic growth and social cohesion. Education for sustainable development can teach skills that ensure that girls and young women practice and advocate for a more sustainable future. The challenges of the future will be complex and uncertain. Young people and future generations need to be given the skills and attitudes to recognise emerging challenges and respond accordingly. In order to create a new society, young people need to develop the courage to think, to challenge, and to act differently in order to make lasting change.

2. Ensure a new agenda has a transformative impact for girls and young women and addresses both root causes of gender inequalities and practical needs. The impact of a new agenda on girls and young women must be tracked.

How?

a. Ensure a stand-alone goal on gender equality that prioritises tackling root causes of gender inequality and mainstreams gender throughout a new framework:

Specific focus on gender equality in the new development agenda should be maintained with a stand-alone goal on gender. However, for gender relations to be transformed and for gender inequality to be eradicated a new development framework must tackle both the root causes of gender inequalities as well as meeting the practical needs of girls and young women.

A recent report from UN Women highlights that a new goal on gender equality must build on the work done through the MDGs, whilst also addressing the failure of the MDGs to tackle the structural causes of gender inequality (UN Women 2013: 2) The goal should challenge the underlying structures that underpin gender relations and ensure the building of social and economic assets for girls and young women, which will ensure that they are on an equal and fair footing with boys and men. Specific targets to eliminate violence against girls and women, promote economic empowerment and equality in decision-making in both public and private domain, should be inherent to a stand-alone goal on gender equality.

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

However, the Millennium Development Goals have proved that having a stand-alone goal on gender equality is not enough. To ensure that this is a truly 'transformative' agenda, it is also essential to mainstream gender throughout the new framework. Gender mainstreaming ensures that the importance of gender concerns, and the voices of girls and young women, are recognised as central to achievement of all individual development goals. Failure to position girls and young women as central to all goals, will lead to exacerbation of existing inequalities and social polarization. In particular, girls' and young women's priorities need to be emphasised in the areas of education, health, employment and environment, and safe spaces for girls where they can access support and information must be created in girls and young women's local communities.

b. Ensure a 'data revolution' that tracks progress for girls and young women

The High Level Panel report rightly points out a 'data revolution' is needed (HLP 2013: 23). One that enables individuals to track progress and demand accountability of those who govern them. Crucially this data must be disaggregated according to both gender and age across all goals. At the moment it is all too easy for girls and young women to slip through the cracks of information monitoring, and for nations to meet targets even whilst ignoring their needs. For example, even where statistics are collected on the prevalence of violence against women and girls there is rarely any data that highlights the prevalence in certain age groups.

3. Girls and young women must be the subjects and agents, not the objects, of a new development agenda

How?

a. Consult and inform girls and young women

Ensure that consultation on a new agenda reaches even the most marginalised, using innovative methods of engagement such as girl-only consultations. Large web based initiatives are important, but the most marginalised girls and young women will not have internet access or the necessary information about why a new development agenda is important and how to engage. Consultation must go to them, conducted in spaces where they feel safe and in a language that is accessible.

b. Empower girls and young women to deliver, monitor and evaluate a new development agenda

The High Level Panel report rightly highlights young people as subjects and not objects of a new development agenda. This must be reflected in the delivery of a new agenda, in empowering girls and boys to be involved in the delivery and monitoring of the new framework. It should be recognised that girls will often have more barriers and constraints to their participation than boys. They will therefore need extra support and resources to ensure their full and meaningful participation. Community organizations working directly with girls and young women should be supported to enable them to participate fully, and further resource allocation is necessary to enable girls' and young women's participation.

c. Recognise the leadership potential of girls and young women

Girls and young women are already leaders in their communities. They are volunteers, youth leaders and innovators. A new development agenda must invest in their leadership potential, and empower them to be leaders and innovators of a new development agenda.

The World We Want for Girls

I don't want a perfect world, just an ideal one. Maybe I want a world where girls can be themselves. They can be who they are; they can stand up and speak out. If that happens we can have a good world (Focus group participant, the Philippines)

World Association
of Girl Guides
and Girl Scouts

"I wish a world would come where wings are not clipped just because you are a girl
Where laughter is not forbidden just because you are a girl
Where dreams are not stolen just because you are a girl…….."
(Submission on the World We Want for Girls blog)

Conversations with girls and young women

- WAGGGS World we want for girls survey completed by 476 respondents from 57 countries
- Global blog on WWWFG, with contributions from over 50 countries.
- 1750 completed the MYWorld survey for WAGGGS[1]
- Focus groups in Tunisia, the UK, the Philippines, Kenya, Australia, Canada and Bolivia with girls and young women aged between 11 and 25
- 24 hour online conversations on International Women's Day with about 1000 participants from at least 53 countries
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A transformative agenda for girls and young women must embed their voices and priorities. We asked what kind of world it was that girls wanted to live in. The conversations and consultations that we had with girls aimed to understand their aspirations for a better world, their experiences of being a girl in different parts of the world, the essential building blocks for the future development agenda, and the constraints and barriers that girls face to develop their full potential. These conversations and consultations employed a number of different methodologies to ensure that as many different voices were present as possible – through on and offline options including online chats as part of the international day of the girl, surveys on priorities for the world they want and a new post-2015 agenda, a Tumblr site with blog and picture submissions and in-person focus groups organised in each of the five WAGGGS regions.

Crucially more than half (51.5per cent) of those participating in the conversations felt that it was sometimes or often challenging to be a girl where they lived, and 45 per cent believed it was more difficult for girls than for boys to reach their full potential, and these numbers increased substantially when looking at girls and young women from the developing world[2].

Gender inequality might take various manifestations in different parts of the world but it is pervasive and affects girls and young women's lives and aspirations wherever they live.   Girls and young women in all parts of the world talk about assigned gender roles, social norms and expectations, and attitudes that individuals, communities and even states can adopt towards girls and young women. The world girls currently live in is far from ideal. But girls themselves have a vision and ambition about how it should, and could be. Whilst girls' experiences and aspirations are diverse, eight key themes have emerged from the conversations. These key themes (in no particular order) would help to put the building blocks in place for a more equal world for girls, and need to be part of any new development framework.

1. Attitude, behaviour change and fair portrayal of girls and young women
I dream of a world where the man's perception of the woman is based on her personality, her skills and her mentality not on her body (Focus group participant, Tunisia)

Girls and young women identified attitude as the most important 'building block' for the perfect world for girls. Girls speak about their right to be respected by boys their own age, by their families and their communities. Men and boys need to be involved in this change in attitude.

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[1]   This data is as of 14 August 2013

[2]   E.g. 78.5% of respondents from Africa said that it was more difficult to be a girl where they lived compared with 46% of respondents from Europe).

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Changing social norms, attitudes and behaviours is a time-consuming challenge. However, it is key to realising many of the aspirations girls and young women have for a better world. Once attitudes towards girls and young women are reformed it is more likely they will complete their education and less likely that they will be the victims of violence, they will have better chances in finding decent employment and less likely to marry at a young age.

Ensuring a change in attitudes must start with a fundamental shift in the way that girls and young women are perceived in their communities. This attitude shift should be facilitated by large-scale public awareness campaigns and ensuring an education that promotes equality, respectful relationships and awareness of and respect for human rights, and by ensuring that as a girl grows her social and economic assets are built rather than constrained.

One way in which attitudes can be reformed is through the ways in which women and girls are portrayed, and this was a key feature of all conversations. Consistently girls and young women emphasised that the way in which girls and women were represented had the potential to constrain their opportunities, and led to discrimination against them. On the one hand, girls and young women identified sexualisation and objectification of girls and women, especially in the media as the top issue facing them. On the other hand, they identified the need for positive female role models. Girls in Canada spoke about how there had only ever been one woman prime minister, whilst girls in the UK spoke about the pressures of body image and the expectations on them to be 'skinny'. When girls and young women are represented in a more holistic way it can be a building block for changing their opportunities and potential. For example, depictions of strong female role models in non-traditional career paths can help inspire girls to fulfil their potential. Strong role models are important for inspiring girls and young women to achieve more. One girl in the Philippines spoke about the inspiration her girl-scout troop leader provides: 'If she can do it, I can do it as well. She inspired me to take a degree in Education, and now I also dream to be a troop leader.'

<u>Addressing social norms, attitudes and behaviours is vital for change. The new development agenda must impose clear obligations on states and other actors to take action to transform existing practices, negative social norms and attitudes, existing gender stereotypes in respect to gender equality and girls' and young women's potential. To measure progress, the Post-2015 development agenda should incorporate indicators to measure change in attitudes.</u>

2. Quality education

Consistently girls and young women emphasized the importance of education.[3] While gender parity in primary education has improved, girls' education is still not on the same level as boys' education. The 2013 MDG Report stated that regardless of social and economic class, girls are less likely than boys to attend school, especially in lower secondary education. However, girls emphasize that education is not about mere access any more - behind the progress towards the global parity in primary education enrolment figures is a crisis in the quality of learning. There is a common understanding among girls that the quality, type of education, educational outcomes, as well as beyond secondary education are equally important.

Non-formal education, for example, can provide a space for girls and young women to learn about human rights, to educate, motivate and provide girls with the skills to be agents of change in their communities and embrace sustainable lifestyles, to develop their independence, aspirations as well as providing a non-judgemental space for education and discussion on sexual and reproductive health. It can also provide important role models for girls, especially in communities

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[3] Education came at the top of the World we want for girls survey, as well as was the most important priority identified as part of the WAGGGS constituency in My World survey.

where female leaders may be lacking and give girls the skills and confidence to become leaders in their communities.

Girls also emphasised that education can provide a space to transform gender relations and power dynamics – it helps girls to gain confidence, self-respect and self-belief. It can also help to address the unequal distribution of power by enabling more young women to enter fields where women are traditionally under-represented, such as politics. Further discussions revealed the importance of university education for girls and addressing social norms and expectations in the choice of school and university subjects for girls and young women. Girls shared that social norms and expectations in the choice of subjects at schools and further professions (such as "math and science are for boys") steer girls away from these subjects. Meanwhile there is a strong correlation between education and future employment perspectives and these traditional gender divisions limit career choices for young women in adult life, lead to gender pay gaps and explain why few women pursue science and engineering careers.

Furthermore, girls cited education as one of the best ways to combat gender inequality and issues such as violence against girls and young women. By teaching rights, values and equality alongside reading and writing, education can start a transformative shift in attitudes towards girls and young women.

Girls highlighted a number of barriers to girls' education, with challenges such as violence against girls and young women, early pregnancy and child marriage often preventing girls from attending school. Inadequate sanitation and other infrastructure facilities also act as further barrier to girls attending school.

We need a strong commitment to quality education beyond primary years, recognition of other types of education, such as non-formal education as key drivers of development, and a specific commitment to support and promote girl's education. Any goal on education should include gender and age-disaggregated indictors to ensure progress on education can be measured for the most disadvantaged. This needs to be underpinned by acknowledgment of education as a basic human right and build on the previously agreed goals and the successes of the UNESCO Decade for Sustainable Education 2004-2014, and ensure that the set standards are maintained.

3. Creating Safe Spaces for Girls

There is a huge lack of these physical spaces in our country. In the few public spaces, such as schools and hospitals, girls were discriminated [against]. Girls cannot play soccer on the public playing fields because boys don't let them. You can see girls that suffered violence almost everywhere, but there are no spaces for them to talk about this. (Bolivia focus group)

For now the place (physical spaces) we feel are safe for girls are the classes where we meet for our girl guide meetings or the field where we do girl guiding activities (Kenya focus group)

Safe spaces for girls and young women are another crucial building block in creating a better world. In the online survey girls prioritised the need to feel safe at home and in the community as the most important element for a perfect world for girls. Safe spaces for girls and young women can be anything from the opportunity for girls to take part in activities to build their life skills to confidential spaces where they can report violence or get advice on sexual and reproductive health. Girls emphasised that the spaces where they spend a lot of their time – such as school and home also need to feel safe. Unfortunately this is not always the reality for millions of girls worldwide. The overwhelming message from girls is that there are not enough spaces for girls and young women, and that when they need help or advice it is not always obvious where to go. Safe spaces provide an immense opportunity for personal behaviour change for girls and there is a

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

strong correlation between personal behaviour change and societal change. Through life skills and knowledge acquired in a safe environment, girls and young women help to lead change in their communities.

Safe spaces should be guaranteed for girls in every community where they can access confidential and non-judgemental support on issues such as reporting violence, receiving information on sexual and reproductive health or simply where they gather and learn from peers in an environment that supports their growth and development. Supporting the organisations already providing these safe spaces must be made a priority

4. Eliminating violence, early marriage and harmful practices
I dream of a world where there is no sexual violence against girls (Tunisia focus group)

In order for girls and young women to reach their full potential they need to feel safe in their homes and communities, but violence in its many guises was highlighted as a key barrier to this. Girls identified elimination of gender-based violence as a top priority for the future development agenda[4].

Girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to violence and harmful practices with issues such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence and harassment and violence in school having long-lasting impact on girls and young women. According to a recent report from the World Health Organization globally the rate of intimate and sexual violence against ever-partnered women is a shocking 30 per cent. The report also highlights how violence against girls and women starts young, with the rate of violence against adolescent girls aged 15 -19 being 29.4per cent. Nearly half of all sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16, whilst over the last decade more than 15 million girls aged between 10 and 14 have been married (WHO: 2013) Adolescence should be a time for making a healthy transition between childhood and adulthood and expanding the range of options girls have available to them, but violence curtails girls' life choices and expectations and reduces their social and economic assets – for example by preventing them from attending school, therefore robbing them of the future they deserve.

During online discussions on violence against girls and young women participants identified different levels at which violence could be caused. It was occurring in homes and communities, as well as being caused by larger structural factors such as poverty, lack of awareness of rights and laws not being guaranteed in the first place. Conversations about solutions with girls emphasised the importance of raising awareness on women's and girls' rights among boys and men and the importance of education as key to changing attitudes. Girls and young women also highlighted that the media can play a large role in raising awareness and challenging stereotypes, rather than perpetuating them.

The post-2015 development agenda needs to address violence against girls and women in its many manifestations as a specific target under the standalone goal on gender equality. This should pay particular attention to the types of violence and harmful practices to which girls and young women are particularly vulnerable, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation and sexual abuse. The new agenda should emphasize state responsibility to address violence through a comprehensive package of legislative measures, education and awareness raising whilst also ensuring better implementation at community level, for example by providing adequate support services.

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[4]   The World We Want for Girls survey identified elimination of gender-based violence as a top priority for the post-2015 agenda, whilst in the MYWorld survey amongst WAGGGS consistency, protection against crime and violence was priority number 3 (gender-based violence is not a MYWorld option).

World Association
of Girl Guides
and Girl Scouts

5. Girls and young women's voices, civic participation and leadership

Persisting discrimination and social barriers limit girls' and young women' ability to exercise their human rights, engage on an equal footing with boys and young men in society and exercise leadership roles. While this is applicable to adult women as well, double discrimination based on gender and age makes girls more vulnerable. Girls' opportunities to participate meaningfully are also often limited by their roles and rights in the private domain of the family. 70 per cent of respondents in WAGGGS International Day of the Girl survey on girls' leadership[5] shared that one of the unique challenges that girls experience with regards to realizing their leadership potential because of their age is the fact that girls are often under pressure to conform to stereotypes of "femininity" ("girlie characteristics") which do not value girl leadership, and often girls do not have the skills to enable them to resist the pressure to conform. For girls to become stronger and empowered women, effective interventions need to be made during their transition to adulthood, they need to have the support and acknowledgement of their families, communities and decision makers on the national and international level.

Girls and young women want to be heard, and to lead change in their communities. When asked in the survey which group could have the most significant impact on creating a better world for girls, respondents rated girls themselves as making the most valuable contribution[6]. However for girls and young women to make this impact their voices need to be heard, barriers to participation eliminated and their potential needs to be invested in. If they are invested in, they can become mentors and role models for other girls in their communities (Austrian 2012: 2), and once they are given these leadership positions they can challenge pre-conceived notions of what girls can achieve within communities (Austrian 2012: 2).

Being able to have their say and participating in the processes and decisions that affect their lives is critical to girls' empowerment. Girls and young women must have access to a 'seat at the table' in development discussions at local, national and global level. This will ensure decisions being made that will affect the lives of girls and young women also include their voices and priorities, and increases the chances of gender equitable outcomes.

This should involve the most marginalised girls and young women.

Girls and young women are already taking on leadership and volunteering roles within their communities. Through their volunteer efforts they have been contributing daily to achieving development outcomes for their communities. Civic participation through volunteering has a tremendous impact on reducing poverty and a significant role to play in building sustainable world and bring about the needed social change. However the potential of volunteerism in delivering the development agenda is yet to be adequately recognized. Now is the critical window of opportunity to call for a post-2015 agenda of people centred development where volunteerism has a specific role to play.

One of the shortcomings of the MDGs that girls highlighted was that people at large were not aware of what MDGs are and could not hold their governments accountable (only 45 per cent of the survey respondents were fully aware of the MDG framework). Girls and young women also spoke about ways to make a new development agenda accessible to girls and young women and young people in general – this should be through ensuring clear language is used to communicate it to young people, as well as ensuring a variety of ways and platforms to

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[5] International Day of the Girl 2013 Survey "Girls in the Lead" http://www.wagggs.org/en/news/22669

[6]   21% rated them as contributing the most, compared to 17.5% for government and 12.7% for families

communicate messages (such as through social media, but also offline methods) are used.

The Post-2015 development agenda should be built on the understanding that girls need specific commitment and support to assert control over their lives, articulate their needs and priorities, and participate in developing decisions that shape their futures. The key role of volunteering as an essential form of civic engagement particularly among young people and a major contributor to a truly sustainable development agenda should be clearly acknowledged. The standalone goal on gender equality should incorporate a specific target on gender equality in decision-making in both private and public life.

6. Comprehensive health

In conversations about priorities for a new development agenda, girls and young women emphasized health as a top priority for the post-2015 agenda. Comprehensive health would meet the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls and young women, addressing their needs for access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, and addressing issues such as adolescent pregnancy. Girls and young women also highlighted the need for better mental health care and concerns about the high levels of conditions such as eating disorders and depression.

Currently millions of girls and young women around the world lack access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health, lack basic nutrition or sustainable access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation, all of which are essential for the basic health of girls and young women. Global efforts to advance sustainable development must include education on sanitation and improve access to safe drinking water. Improving girls' health and well-being and providing access to age appropriate and youth friendly sexuality education has an impact on almost all other development goals, such as reducing maternal and child mortality, ensuring gender equality and empowerment, ending extreme poverty, and reducing HIV transmission rates.

Any goal on health in the Post-2015 development agenda should include the specific needs of girls and young women with a particular emphasis on delivering confidential and non-judgemental sexual and reproductive health services to all. Recommendation from the High Level panel report to integrate elimination of child marriage as a specific target under the stand alone goal on Empowering Girls and Women and Achieving Gender Equality should be enacted.

7. Decent Employment

Young people are currently suffering the brunt of a global financial crisis that has left youth unemployment at record levels, with a 2012 ILO report stating that four billion young people will come into the labour market in the next ten years, and that it is estimated that 73 million people are unemployed in 2013 (ILO 2013) Young women are particularly vulnerable to this employment crisis. Girls shared that lack of employment opportunities and discrimination on the basis of gender in the labour market were among the major obstacles to girls and young women reaching their full potential.

Conversations on employment emphasised the barriers that prevent young women from being employed, such as teenage pregnancy, child marriage, violence, balancing life and work responsibilities, as well as social norms and stereotypes that favour male employees over female. In the workplace young women face issues of discrimination and even sexual harassment. At work, young women continue to experience discrimination. Gender pay gap, lack of career promotion and professional development opportunities and leadership roles, unfair recruitment process are just a few of the manifestations of discrimination. Among major factors contributing to discrimination that girls and young women identified were: prejudices with regard to women's work related with "traditional" role of women as carers, housewives, balancing work and life with no/not effective support mechanisms in place (such as childcare, adequate maternity cover); occupational segregation (including horizontal and vertical), traditional gender divisions with regards to choice of

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

male and female subjects in schools and universities.

Education and skill building, especially for youth, is crucial for tackling youth unemployment, but the creation of new jobs and skills however cannot just be 'business as usual'. We need to learn our way to sustainable solutions.   To achieve sustainable development, we need investment in education, and creation of new jobs in the green economy to build a workforce which has the knowledge, skills and the determination to tackle sustainable development.

The Post-2015 development agenda should ensure that any targets on youth unemployment include a gender dimension that recognises the particular barriers and constraints faced by young women entering the labour market and measures the gender gap in pay. The new agenda should call for scaling up strategies that encourage girls' participation in science and technology and promote vocational programmes which prepare girls to a wider choice of professions. Investing in the education, training and skills of young people as the generation that will lead sustainable solutions is key.

8. Environment and climate change

We can all agree that sustainability is the way to make long term change. Sustainable to me means partnership and innovation…I do think there is an element to a sustainable development goal that deals with the here and now problem- and then the second element- is thinking far into the future for a long term solution. (Participant in online discussion on the Post-2015 agenda)

Online discussions around a new post-2015 framework highlighted sustainability as a key to ensuring the success of a new development agenda. A sustainable agenda needs to ensure that all the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - are tackled in equal measure, and that girls and young women play an equal and productive role in this transformation. New ways of thinking and innovation must be created and nurtured, especially amongst young people to understand and care about the resources of our planet With regards to the third pillar of sustainability, girls and young women are disproportionately affected by climate change. A study by the London School of Economics (LSE) analyzed disasters in 141 countries and concluded that gender differences in loss of lives due to natural disasters are directly linked to women's economic and social rights. Boys are likely to receive preferential treatment in rescue efforts, and in the aftermath of disasters both women and
girls suffer more from the shortages of food, lack of privacy and safety of toilet and bathing facilities.

While girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to climate change consequences, they also have the skills and potential to be at the forefront of adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The Post-2015 development agenda should recognise the disproportionate impact of climate change on girls and young women. The new development agenda should be ambitious in its targets, calling for no more than 1.5 degree increase in global warming threshold of and invest in education for sustainable development.

Conclusion

Gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment should remain a strong priority for the new development framework to address the pervasive injustice faced by millions of girls and women around the world.

The new development agenda will fall short if it does not harness the unique potential of girls and young women. This means listening to their needs and priorities, recognising and investing in their

World Association
of Girl Guides
and Girl Scouts

potential as development partners, ensuring that a new development agenda builds their social, political and economic assets and removes the structural and social barriers and constraints they face in order to harness that potential.

Crucially this will mean ensuring that the root causes of gender inequality are targeted by a new framework. This paper calls for a three pronged approach in order to make this happen – **embedding equality, human rights and sustainability within a new framework; ensuring both a stand-alone goal on gender equality and mainstreaming gender throughout the framework; and investing in the leadership potential of girls.** It also highlights eight focus areas, based on the priorities of girls and young women themselves. These priority areas should be visible within the new goals and targets.

Girls and young women are ready to take action and to lead change in their communities. The challenge for a new development agenda is to harness that potential and invest in it.

For more information, please contact comms@waggs.or or visit www.wagggs.org

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Appendix 1 – Methodology

This policy paper was written through analysis of primary and secondary data sources.

Part 1: A review of secondary literature, including the most recent MDG report, the WAGGGS report 'MDG +10', as well as supporting evidence on the situation of adolescent girls from recent research, helped to identify where the gaps for girls and young women were in the current MDG framework.

Part 2: Research was conducted as part of WAGGGS' 'The World we want for girls" campaign. WAGGGS undertook research on a perfect world for girls - asking girls and young women what a perfect world for girls would look like. This was conducted in two parts. Firstly online surveys – the World we want for girls, and WAGGGS input into the MY World survey helped to outline some of the most important issues for girls and young women. Secondly online and in person conversations then helped to contextualise these and give more nuance and detail around girls' experiences and the kinds of constraints and barriers they face in their every day lives.

The World we want for girls blog was also created, where girls and young women shared their drawings, films, photographs and stories and shared their vision of the world they want. Evidence from all these sources was analysed and categorised under themes. The key emerging themes were then outlined in part **2.**

Part 3: After analysing both the data on gaps and omissions from the MDGs as well as the key themes identified through conversations with girls and young women, key recommendations were made on what a post-2015 framework should contain to be transformative for girls and young women.

Appendix 2 – Further information

If you would like more information about WAGGGS' work on the post-2015 agenda you can follow http://www.wagggs.org/en/post2015agenda on WAGGGS website.

Beyond 2015 is a global campaign aiming to influence the creation of a post-2015 framework. Find updates on how civil society is influencing and involved with the creation of a new framework and make links with other organisations: http://www.beyond2015.org/

World We Want is a platform created by the United Nations and civil society to amplify people's voices in the building of a new agenda. Find out about opportunities to join consultations and read reports on thematic areas consultations: http://www.worldwewant2015.org/

YouthPost2015 shares the results of global youth consultations on the post-2015 agenda and highlights the ways young people can get involved in the conversation http://www.youthpost2015.org/

A recent position paper from UN Women calls for a transformative agenda for girls and women in the post-2015 framework: http://www.unwomen.org/2013/06/un-women-launches-global-call-for-a-transformative-agenda-to-make-womens-rights-a-reality/

You can also read the report of the High-level Panel on post-2015 development agenda: http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf

Appendix 3 – Acknowledgements

This report is based on the insights and contributions from thousands of girls and young women around the world. It was written by Katy Chadwick, in collaboration with the WAGGGS advocacy

team – Anush Aghabalyan, Andrea Boyle, Rebecca Munro and Harriet Thew.

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