

To the attention of: Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Ban Ki Moon

6. September, 2013

Re: Secretary General's report to the 68th Session of the GA on the Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, "A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015"

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

On behalf of the Women's Major Group (WMG), representing 500 women's organizations from all around the world, we thank you for your report "A Life of Dignity for All: Accelerating progress towards the MDG's and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015." As the WMG, we attach a great importance to your report as it will form the basis of political debates at the UN General Assembly Special Event in September 2013 on the MDG's and the post-MDG framework. Clearly, your report is a culmination of all other reports you have commissioned, including the Report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on post MDGs; the Report of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN); and the Report on Corporate Sustainability of the Global Compact. We welcome the effort you have made to bring these different contributions together. Your report, and the priorities highlighted within it, will play a major role in shaping the post-2015 International Development Agenda. Although we recognize the challenges inherent in the drafting of a report of this nature, we are concerned that it does not fully reflect the clear asks of many civil society organizations, specifically with respect to gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights and health, peace and security and economic transformation.

We would like to call attention to 4 key points:

1) Gender equality: In Section III.A of your report, "Vision and transformative actions of the agenda," you call for "Empowering women and girls." We are concerned that this wording is too vague, and would prefer to see it replaced with a call for a "stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's human rights in the post 2015 development agenda, including elimination of all forms of discrimination against women". We regret that nowhere in the report is it recognized that in order to achieve gender equality, transformational shifts are required, which include challenging existing gender norms and stereotypes, the importance of which is repeatedly emphasized by the CEDAW Committee. Additionally, we urge you to call for other strong goals and targets addressing specific women's rights, as stand alone and cross-cutting throughout the post 2015 agenda, such as i.e. on elimination of all forms of violence against women (VAW).

2) Sexual and reproductive health and rights: In your report, you have opted for using a rather restrictive term - 'sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights' in describing the vision for the Post-2015 agenda. While we appreciate your support for this more limited agenda,

we feel that it does not go far enough, and we ask for the inclusion and protection of universal access to "sexual and reproductive health and rights," encompassing among others, holistic and comprehensive and good quality sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion, contraception, maternity care, and prevention and treatment of STIs and HIV and comprehensive sexuality education. This ask was supported in the outcomes of the recent ECE and ECLAC ICPD+20 regional conferences, and we urge you to follow the lead set by these regions.

3) Women, Peace and Security: We welcome the link established between peace, development and women's empowerment in the report. However, the report fails to make the connection between these issues. Gender equality and women's right to full and equal participation in decision-making, including in peace processes, is intrinsic to peace, security and sustainable development. We urge all relevant UN bodies and Member States to recognize the connections between the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Post-2015 processes, and to ensure that discussions of the Open Working Group and other relevant processes reflect this in their work.

4) Profound economic transformation: We are highly concerned that despite acknowledging the need for profound economic transformation, the report fails to provide for a truly transformative approach to the prevailing macro-economic model based on unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, the privatization of public services, thereby exacerbating exploitation and unequal gender and social relations, particularly for poor and marginalized women. A post 2015 framework can only deliver a new vision if it revisits how economies are sustained and who does and does not have access to and is able to benefit from economic resources. We would particularly want to call for a shift in economic power, opportunities and entitlements in favour of the poor and marginalized, especially women and girls. This would need a.o. legislation to end dispossession, disinheritance, and eviction of wives, sisters, and daughters in favour of male relatives and financial mechanisms that enable women to buy land and access the resources needed to be economically productive. "Inclusive economic development" – as you have called for section III.A.90 of your report – cannot happen unless women are empowered to drive changes in economies, access decent work opportunities and benefit from these, and unless unpaid care work is taken into account and responsibilities redistributed.

Finally, we call on you to ensure that **human rights** are firmly placed at the centre of the new development paradigm and to warrant that any new framework should be fully coherent with existing international agreements and processes on (women's) human rights.

Yours sincerely,

Pinar Ilkkaracan (WWHR) and Sascha Gabizon (WICF)

on behalf of:

Members of the Women's Major Group¹ and the Post-2015 Women's Coalition;

WWHR - Women for Women's Human Rights (Turkey)

IWHC - International Women's Health Coalition

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

¹ The Women's Major Group brings together over 500 women's organisations globally to contribute to the United Nations processes on sustainable development including the processes on the Post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (www.womenrio20.org).

IPPF - International Planned Parenthood Federation
ACPD - Action Canada for Population and Development (Canada)
ARROW (Malaysia)
GeED - Gender Empowerment and Development (Cameroon)
WEP - Women Environmental Programme (Nigeria)
International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) Asia Pacific
ICAE International Council for Adult Education
Women International for a Common Future – WECF International
WEDO - Women's Environment and Development Organization
DAWN – Development Alternatives with Women for a New era
Global Forest Coalition
Global Policy Forum
IWRP – International Women's Rights Project (Canada)
Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer –FEIM (Argentina)
International Aids Women Caucus - IAWC
CoopeSoliDar R.L (COSTA RICA)
SIGLO XXIII (EL SALVADOR)
FOKUS - Forum for women and development (Norway)
REACCIÓN CLIMÁTICA (Bolivia)
Women's Earth and Climate Caucus (USA)
The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests - REFACOF (Cameroon)
WOCAN - Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
Indigenous Information network (Kenya)
African Indigenous Women's Organization- East Africa
International Pan African Network for Environment and Development in the XX1st century
Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment – SWAGEN (Uganda)
Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women (Trinidad & Tobago)
RESURJ - Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice
Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres de Latinoamerica y el Caribe REPEM LAC
CEAMUJER (Nicaragua)
Suma Veritas Foundation
One World Awake
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
Forum maghrébin pour l'environnement et le développement, FMED (Marocco)
Niger Delta Women's movement for Peace and Development (Nigeria)
IPAS
AWID – Association for Women's Rights in Development
World Future Council
ActionAid
FEMNET - African Women's Development and Communications Network
Huairou Commission
WOREC Nepal and National alliance of women human rights defenders network - NAWHRD (Nepal)
Asociacion Raxch' och' Oxlaju Aj - Tierra Verde 13 Aj (Guatemala)
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
Institute of Environment and Water Management (Kenya)
International Women's Anthropology Conference
STSCRW, College of Plant Protection, Northwest A & F University (China)
SWAN - South Asia Women's Network
Rutgers WPF (Netherlands)
AIWC All India Women's Conference (India)
Bangladesh Indigenous Women Networks (Bangladesh)
Adéquations - Groupe français Genre et développement soutenable (France)
Coordinadora de la Mujer (Bolivia)
Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University