



## Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 Presents a Bold Vision for Women and Girls *Advocates Gear Up for Work to Come*

UNITED NATIONS—The Women’s Major Group, made up of more than 600 women’s organizations and networks from around the world, recognizes the historic agenda for global sustainable development that 193 governments agreed to on Sunday. At the center of this broad and ambitious plan are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be formally adopted by Heads of State in September at the UN General Assembly. The SDGs chart out global development across social, environmental and economic areas for the next 15 years, and if fully implemented could be transformative for women and girls everywhere.

The Women’s Major Group has been actively participating in negotiations on the SDGs for the last several years, pushing for gender equality to be a priority and for a greater emphasis on human rights. The Women’s Major Group has also called for unequivocal action to transform global political and financial systems that disadvantage developing countries and cause economic, environmental and climate crises that disproportionately affect women. Unlike with the Millennium Development Goals—which expire this year—civil society groups have been actively involved in negotiations around developing this new global agenda, which is universal and involves all countries.

The new global development agenda includes commitments to expand women’s economic opportunities; recognize and value the burdens of unpaid care work; eliminate gender disparities in schools; end discrimination and gender-based violence; eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation; and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care and women’s and girls’ reproductive rights, among other key actions. The Women’s Major Group was able to ensure that the political declaration for the new agenda contained language committing to realize human rights for all people.

Governments also committed to address a range of social, economic and environmental issues that impact women and girls, including economic inequality, agriculture, energy, biodiversity and climate change, and peace and security. "One key success of the SDGs is that many ‘environmental’ Goals recognise that they have a gender dimension," said Sascha Gabizon, Women in Europe for a Common Future. "Indeed, women's access to land, water, sanitation and energy are strongly defined in the targets of the 2030 Agenda," commented Priscilla Achakpa of Women Environmental Programme.

“The 2030 Agenda addresses climate change, which is already rolling back development gains and exacerbating gender inequalities,” said Eleanor Blomstrom of Women’s Environment and Development Organization. “We have a climate goal and a threshold for temperature rise, but it’s still not ambitious enough, for women and girls, and for the world, to tackle the drivers of climate change and launch a transformation toward energy sources that are not only sustainable but also safe and gender-responsive.”

There are several weaknesses to the plan, according to the Women's Major Group. "The Agenda 2030 fails to address the concentration of wealth from a progressive redistribution approach, and therefore it still focuses on extreme poverty, while leaving aside its true causes: the fact that almost half of the wealth in the world is in the hands of 1% of the population, with no mechanisms to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of their actions; and, the fact that 60% of the value that circulates in the world is generated by women's unpaid work. This means that women subsidizes the entire economy! The 2030 Agenda does too little to rectify this injustice, missing a historical opportunity to make a shift towards a new macro-economic approach", said Emilia Reyes, from Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia. Moreover, to implement the SDGs, governments are relying on the extremely [weak outcome](#) of the recent Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, which means there is a radical shortfall in the financing necessary to bring the goals and targets to fruition.

They also argue that the new global agenda ultimately does not redress a deeply flawed and inequitable global economic system. "The agenda is not ambitious enough to shift the global trade, finance and taxation arrangements that entrench inequalities and have caused multiple global financial crises. Further, it empowers the private sector as a key actor in this Agenda, despite its role in creating and profiting from many of the crises that we currently face," said Tessa Khan of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development.

According to the Group, moving forward the next priority will be ensuring that the ambitious agenda is fully funded, countries develop effective plans and measurements of their progress, and governments are held accountable.

"This is a major accomplishment and could be a major turning point for women and girls," said Shannon Kowalski of the International Women's Health Coalition. "But the commitments require action by governments at all levels, effective financing, and a continued role for women's and feminist groups in planning and decision-making. Our work is just beginning."

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#### **Notes:**

Transforming our World - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations website  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/negotiationsoutcome3>

The role of the Women's Major Group is to assure effective public participation of women's non-

governmental groups in UN policy processes on sustainable development and environmental matters,  
<http://www.womenmajorgroup.org> a role recognized by the United Nations.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women>