

UK NGO CSW Alliance

c/o NAWO, the National Alliance of Women's Organisations

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The **UK NGO CSW Alliance** consists of some 100 networks, women's and development NGOs and INGOs that together represent about 200 organisations and many hundreds of thousands of women. All are based or have offices in the UK; some focus on the domestic, others on the international - both in the field and in relation to politics everywhere. All recognize the fundamental importance of achieving substantive gender equality of global development, peace and security are to be achieved.

Gender Equality: Priorities for a Post-2015 Agenda

This paper revises an earlier version (February 2014) of the UK NGO CSW Policy Working Group, *Priorities for the MDGs and a Post-2015 Framework*, prepared as a lobbying tool and to influence the UK Government and the EU at CSW58. It represents an initial comment on the Zero Draft prepared by the co-chairs of the Open Working Group on the Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post-2015 Agenda. Given the zero draft was not published until 2nd June, and the policy group was unable to meet before 6th June, shortness of time prevents us doing more than express some key concerns but by no means all.

Recognising this is a critical phase in the negotiations of the OWG sessions, this paper seeks to inform and influence the discussions of the UK government and other important stakeholders in the post-2015 process. We urge your detailed consideration of our priorities that represent the considered and powerful views of many NGOs, INGOs and civil society from around the UK. We are presenting this revised document now because of **the absence of key women's human rights (and SRHR) and key concerns about the need to mainstream gender equality in the major goals and targets in the post – 2015 agenda**. In particular, while we welcome the presence of a stand-alone gender equality goal, we are concerned that its wording is not as strong as we had hoped: i.e. it does not call for a rights-based transformative stand-alone gender equality goal, with a powerful VAWG component, to be **mainstreamed** throughout all other goals, with relevant targets and indicators.

The paper has been drafted specifically for the UK government, in light of the EU position paper (*EU Commission document COM(2014) 335 final of 2/6/2014*), but is to be widely disseminated to inform the discussions around the world. We hope it will be useful in the informal consultations between the OWG Co-chairs and the Member States taking place from 9-11 June 2014 in New York.

Drafting, with comments and contributions, has been undertaken by Alliance policy group members and the whole edited by Annette Lawson (NAWO; and Co-Chair, the UK NGO CSW Alliance). NAWO provides the Secretariat for the Alliance;

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A. The paper's focus is on the gender equality goal in the zero draft and it is through this lens that we set out the key concerns of Alliance members.

Goal 5 - 'Attain gender equality, empower women and girls everywhere'

Persistent Global Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a global challenge of huge proportions. In many countries the prospects and life chances of millions of women and girls are stunted because of persistent and widespread discrimination and inequalities based on gender. And everywhere women remain disadvantaged.

Across the existing MDGs, the goals that are most off-track and least likely to be reached are the ones that most depend on achieving gender equality. The new post-2015 agenda seeks to build on the knowledge gained from the successes, failures and challenges of the MDGs.

Serious issues affecting women around the world were left entirely untouched by the MDGs, such as rampant and widespread gender-based violence, including during armed conflict, revolution and sectarian violence, and also the impacts on women of prevailing economic development models. It has been recognised that **without a strong gender mainstreaming component**, little in the way of tangible progress can be achieved – anywhere.

There is no direct reference to women's rights.

We consider this to be a regression from what has been consistently agreed at CSW and in the Beijing Declaration.

Reflecting the overall paragraph on gender equality and women's empowerment, in the EU Commission document, we support and emphasize the importance of the link the Commission points between the achievement of gender equality and achieving **all** other goals; this recognizes the crucial position of women's advancement and empowerment in order to achieve a sustainable development agenda. However, there is some regression in the language used and in the lack of an adequate emphasis on gender mainstreaming. In order not to regress, we expect the UK Government and the EU to stress that human rights are rights for all women and all girls and note that 'empowerment' is a weak goal for women, many of whom are already empowered but face barriers to their advancement. [It is especially to be regretted that within the zero draft the phrase appears: women's empowerment and girls' rights, as if once a girl is a woman she loses her rights and can only be empowered.]

We urge governments to adopt the language agreed at CSW 58:

Proposal: insert 'A. Realizing women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights', in particular, but not excluding any of the other paragraphs therein or in the Beijing Platform for Action: CSW 58: paragraphs A (b), (c), (d) (k), (l), (o), (p), (s), 43.

These clearly articulate not just empowerment but the realization of and full enjoyment of all human rights for both women and girls. We urge governments to recognize that targets need to be *transformative* and that their full implementation is dependent on a sustainable *approach*.

Proposal: the gender equality goal / targets / indicators to be action orientated and measurable

We strongly encourage governments to reaffirm the Beijing declaration, and in particular paragraphs 23 and 24 thereof.

Gender-based violence “in public and private spaces” is addressed under gender equality, proposed target 5.2. However, prevention is not specifically addressed.

We strongly urge governments to retain a strong and effective target ending Violence against Women and Girls with a strong prevention component.

Proposal: a Multi – sectorial, holistic and integrated approach to tackle VAWG

We support Oxfam’s proposals:

http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bn-close-gap-violence-women-2015-110314-en_0.pdf

Politically, a long-term transformative agenda aimed at effecting lasting change and eliminating violence against women is needed.

- a **stand-alone gender equality goal** accompanied by a specific target on violence against women in the post-2015 agenda.
- In order to fully eliminate violence beyond 2015, Oxfam has proposed a **Comprehensive International Action Plan**. This would act as a much-needed roadmap for taking forward interventions by operationalizing them and establishing urgently needed monitoring mechanisms.
- **Focus areas for the Action Plan should include:**
 - Develop and strengthen **laws for women’s rights** and gender equality;
 - Prioritize and reallocate **financial resources** to end violence against women;
 - Make the elimination of violence against women top-level **government business**;
 - Fragile states must develop strategies for organizing responses to **VAW [and Girls] in conflict settings**.

B. Our second most critical concern centres on the absence of effective transformative mechanisms to achieve gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights of both women and girls

1. Gender mainstreaming is not mentioned at all in the Zero draft

Proposal: insert CSW 58 A (qq)

2. Active participation in decision making on all levels, including formal and informal structures; full participation and active decision making (including social, political and economic) at all levels and in the range of structures (formal and informal). This includes the right to reject and tackle **discriminatory social norms** by women of all ages.

Proposal: insert CSW 58 B (mm), (rr) (ss) (vv) C (ccc).

C. Our third key concern regarding the Zero draft is the absence of strong indicators for achieving the targets on gender equality for *all* goals for a sustainable inclusive and transformative approach, especially if there are going to be only a few targets.

Proposed target 5.3

We are concerned that the Zero draft only refers to ‘harmful’ as opposed to ‘harmful **AND** traditional practices’

Proposal: insert CSW (l) and/or the Beijing Platform for Action paragraph D.118.

D. Our fourth key concern is the absence of the promotion, protection and fulfillment of women’s sexual and reproductive rights, including access to free, safe abortion; and the development of preventive strategies, with protection and monitoring systems

Proposed target 5.8 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD

Proposal: By 2030 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights ***free from stigma, violence, coercion and discrimination for all women and girls of all ages*** in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

E. In addition we have a number of other concerns that all refer to the lack of gender mainstreaming because they fail to mention any requirement to particularly focus on women’s and girl’s participation or a focus on their needs. This includes an overarching concern that Goal 5.6 mentions unpaid work but it is not referenced in poverty or elsewhere where it would be of particular relevance, especially to women.

(i) We are concerned that the zero draft includes the three health targets that are amongst those most off-track but fails to mention a particularly need to focus on women and girls.

Proposed targets: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.

Proposal: all health targets must contain a strong, measurable and effective gender-mainstreaming component.

(ii) We are concerned that without further clarification with regard to how they will enhance gender equality, the following targets will lead to the regression in women and girls' human rights:

Proposed target 10.6 Promote and respect cultural diversity

Proposal: delete this target unless it specifies the target is there to empower and transform through promoting and respecting cultural diversity and the human rights of women and girls.

Proposed Goal 16 on Rule of law, effective and capable institutions

(iii) A key component of the Rule of law is access to justice and the provision of effective remedies. Therefore there need to be:

Indicators/targets concerning how women and girls can have full access to justice in all its forms and secure effective remedies - including restitution.

Proposal: grant full access to justice for all women and girls and implement effective, transformative remedies, including restitution.

(iv) We are equally concerned that some targets are dangerously weak and vague because they allow for broad and varied interpretations that could impede progress, including, but not only:

Proposed Targets: 8.9; 8.10; 8.11; 8.16; 9.

Proposal: strengthen all targets by using measurement tools and mechanisms, taking full account of gender inequalities.

Proposed Targets 1.3; 4.7; 9.2

(v) We are alarmed that national and/or cultural social norms are referenced in the zero draft without specifying how they advance equalities, especially gender equality and access by women and girls to their human rights.

For example under poverty: **1.3; 4.7** education; **9.2** under promote industrialization;

(vi) We are alarmed that disaggregated marital status is missing from any target.

Disaggregation by gender, location, age, people living with disabilities, and relevant social group is recommended in the HLP report and is within the Zero draft. Yet, marital status is a key determinant of ability for women to realise their rights: young unmarried women may face restricted access to contraceptive services, and widows are specifically targeted for violence and control of their land, property and children.

5.10, 10.7 and 17.36 all refer to disaggregated data, but not by marital status;

Proposal: insert 'marital status'.

We ask governments to pay urgent attention to these proposals.