

**Priorities for the Post-2015 Agenda:  
Developed by the Policy Working Group of the UK NGO CSW Alliance**

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*“The message is simple. Women who are safe, healthy, educated, and fully empowered to realize their potential transform their families, their communities, their economies and their societies. We must create the conditions so they can do so.”* The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2013

This paper sets out the policy position of the UK NGO CSW Alliance as developed by its post-2015 Policy Working Group in preparation for the UN CSW 58th Session. The Alliance, co-ordinated and led by NAWO (the National Alliance of Women’s Organisations), represents a range of women’s and development NGOs and networks based in, or with offices in the UK. This paper represents a consensus within the policy working group while recognizing that some organisations may also wish to contribute individually.

## **Background**

In February 2014, the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take as its priority theme, “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls.” This CSW, falling during the period of negotiation before decisions are taken on the framework to replace the current MDGs when they expire in 2015, marks a crucial opportunity for governments, in partnership with women and women’s organisations, to set out their expectations for how this process can best deliver progressive change.

## **Persistent Global Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality is a global challenge of huge proportions. Around the world the prospects and life chances of millions of women and girls are stunted because of widespread discrimination and inequalities based on gender.

- 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.
- 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, but also the impacts on women of prevailing economic development models.
- Overall, the MDGs failed to fully secure women’s rights or release the potential for women to transform their economies, societies and the environment.

## **Report of the High Level Panel**

We congratulate the UK government on the leadership they have shown to-date to ensure the inclusion of ambitious targets for women in the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We recognise the danger for these targets to be weakened during international negotiations around the final framework and urge the Government to work with us to ensure the retention and inclusion of the following points at all costs.

## **Non-Negotiable sections from the High Level Panel Report**

### **Structure**

To ensure that there is a stand-alone goal on Women and Girls as well as gender-specific targets integrated across other goals

### **Key Sections**

o Goal 2 “Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender Equality”. Women and girls make up half of the world’s population and yet disproportionately shoulder its burden of poverty, inequality and injustice. It is right and fitting that this

be reflected in a specific goal and that women's and girls' rights are not subsumed under a wider or more general goal on inequalities. Failure to make progress on realising the rights of women and girls will act as a significant barrier to progress on all other goals.

o Target 2a. "Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against girls and women". One in three women worldwide will be raped, assaulted, or physically or sexually abused in her lifetime. Such violence is an abuse of rights, drains public resources, undermines human capital and lowers economic productivity. Half of the world is unable to fully meet the challenges of the day because they are fighting for their safety. Realisation of this target will have a strong catalytic effect across all the goals and greatly accelerate global development, justifying both its retention and its positioning high in the list of targets.

o Target 2c "Ensure the equal right of women to own and inherit property, sign a contract and, register a business and open a bank account and 2d "Eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic life". The UK government should push for strong indicators under both these targets, including indicators under 2d building on the progress made on representation of women in parliament but going further to ensure they are able to organise and be effective in their roles, to look at proportions of women holding ministerial positions, and consider how to improve representation of women among senior judiciary, other senior decision-making roles and on company boards.

In addition, indicators should also be included that aim to ensure inclusive economic development and address women's unequal responsibility for unpaid care work. Many women living in poverty contribute to the economy through their unpaid work either in a family business, as smallholder farmers or as primary caregivers for their families. Women's unpaid work is not captured in national statistics and as a result governments do not allocate resources and public services to support women in these activities.

Coupled with deep-seated gender discrimination within labour markets, women are overrepresented in low- paying unskilled jobs in the informal sector.

o Target 4c "Decrease the maternal mortality ratio to no more than x per 100,000" and ensure this target is considerably more ambitious than that set out in the current MDGs. No woman should die giving life and we urge the government to call for improvements in maternal health coverage to those currently achievable in the world's most prosperous countries.

o Target 4d "Ensure universal sexual and reproductive health and rights". Women's ability to control their own fertility and enjoy good sexual health is fundamental to their ability to enjoy all their rights and find and keep decent jobs and livelihoods. We urge the government to take a robust stance in support of women's right to contraception, safe abortion and post-abortion care and push for ambitious indicators on these.

o Target 11b "Ensure justice institutions are accessible, independent, well-resourced and respect due process rights". While this target is marked as gender-disaggregated, it is vital that specific indicators are set that recognise the severe structural and cultural barriers women around the world currently experience in accessing justice. Women are more likely to experience violence and other rights violations and it is vital that they are able to seek restitution through formal justice systems that recognise and meet their requirements.

o Target 11d "Enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of security forces, police and judiciary" and call for this target to be gender disaggregated and include strong indicators on how these services are fulfilling their obligations to meet the specific needs of women. This target was not marked for gender disaggregation in the High-Level Panel report and we believe that such disaggregation is warranted given the significant role that security forces, police and the judiciary play in realising the rights of women and girls, but also recognising that these are often the perpetrators of rights violations, particularly violence against women and girls, and measures must be taken to address this.

### **Further Disaggregation**

o Advocate for all the targets outlined above to be disaggregated by marital status. The High- Level Panel report recommends disaggregation by gender, location, age, people living with disabilities, and relevant social group. For many women their marital status is a key determinant of her ability to realise their rights, for example young unmarried women may face restricted access to contraceptive services and widows are often specifically targeted for violence.

11<sup>th</sup> July 2013.