



UK NGO CSW Alliance

Review theme for 61st session of the Commission on Status of Women focuses on the 2030 Agenda

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The Report of the Secretary-General for the Review theme for the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls (Agreed conclusions of 58th session)

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2017/4

has a strong focus on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). It includes information received from Member States; the Secretary-General's report on progress towards the sustainable development goals (SDGs); and voluntary national reports (VNRs) submitted to the high-level political forum (HLPF). (paras 1 & 5) The voluntary presentations by Member States identifying progress, gaps and challenges at the 61st session of the CSW will also contribute to the review. (para 4)

Conclusions, recommendations and future priorities (Section V)

The following conclusions, recommendations and future priorities are made based on Implementation of the wide-ranging actions of the agreed conclusions, with key lessons from the MDGs being prioritized in the early implementation of the SDGs, eg gender equality concerns and mainstreaming gender equality. Overall implementation has, however, been uneven, with limited focus on the effectiveness of actions. (para 62)

- A comprehensive approach should be taken that recognizes the synergies and interdependence between different dimensions of gender equality and addresses the links between SDG5 and all other SDGs. Greater effort is needed to address gender equality in the environment dimensions of sustainable development. (para 63)
- Governments should expand legal reforms to implement a full range of measures to achieve substantive equality for women, focusing on achieving equality of outcomes. National implementation should build on the lessons from CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing PfA) implementation, with the CEDAW concluding observations and reviews of the implementation of the Beijing PfA being used by

governments in developing implementation plans for the 2030 Agenda and previous agreed conclusions of the CSW. (para 64)

- Governments should focus on multiple and intersecting discrimination as it is pertinent in ensuring no one is left behind. In the 2030 Agenda “all goals and targets should be met for all nations, all peoples and all segments of society.” Reaching and tackling inequalities of the most marginalized groups is a distinct feature of the 2030 Agenda. (para 65)
- Greater focus is required on “policies that address the structural, power and political dynamics that push particular groups further behind and deepen inequalities”, eg macroeconomic frameworks, trade and investment policies, labour policies and anti-discrimination legislation. Universal and targeted policy measures can ensure access for previously excluded groups, while building inclusive health and education systems. (para 66)
- Adequate resources for gender equality commitments in the 2030 Agenda is challenging, especially for developing countries, with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimating an annual investment gap of \$2.5 trillion. In addition, the lack of adequate resource for national action plans is a challenge for all countries. The impact of allocations in gender-responsive budgeting can be limited when overall budgets for gender equality are grossly inadequate. (para 67)
- Greater efforts are required to mobilize additional resources for gender equality, prioritized across all sectors including social protection, health, education, care services and water and sanitation. Gender equality-focused ODA is important, particularly for developing countries. (para 68)
- Insofar as the 2030 Agenda emphasizes national ownership with SDG accountability being at the national level, gender mainstreaming dovetails with its implementation. Yet there is insufficient information as to how gender perspectives are integrated into national sustainable development strategies and plans, and national gender equality mechanisms and national human rights institutions remain under-sourced and require strengthening. Gender equality is also a priority for implementing and monitoring the SDGs and there should be greater investment in gender statistics. (para 69)
- Women’s organizations can play a key role in ensuring that global commitments are translated into national priorities, despite constraints on the ability of civil society to hold governments accountable. Spaces should be available for women’s CSOs in all aspects of decision-making for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. (para 70)
- The agreed conclusions of the 58th and the Political Declaration of the 59th CSW sessions provide a foundation for increased commitment, resources etc to turn the SDGs into action. States should urgently accelerate implementation efforts to realize

the 2030 Agenda, while empowering women and to enjoy their human rights. (para 71)

Summary of key areas included in the Secretary-General's Report

II Influence and impact of the agreed conclusions on the global normative framework

The agreed conclusions reinforced importance of linkages between MDGs, Beijing Declaration and PfA and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and note the strong relationship between development and

human rights of women and girls. (para 6) They called for a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the SDGs, as well as mainstreaming, noting that gender equality issues are insufficiently addressed in MDGs. The SDGs are more comprehensive on gender equality and the empowerment of women. (paras 7 & 8) The report outlines the targets under Goal 5, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as gender equality priorities across other SDGs, eg SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 16. (para 9)

The agreed conclusions made further normative advances that are also important elements of the 2030 Agenda, insofar as it is universal and interconnected, while noting concern at the lack of progress for women and girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and inequality and the 2030 Agenda commitment to “leave no one behind”. (para 10) The contribution of women’s organizations and feminist groups should be taken into account in implementing the 2030 Agenda, which places emphasis on open, transparent and participatory processes to oversee the implementation, follow-up and review of SDGs. The strategic priorities and concerns of women must influence decision-making and the evidence base should be strengthened, together with the availability and use of gender statistics. (paras 11-12)

III Context for the implementation of the agreed conclusions

There has been progress in areas such as gender parity in education, but it has been slow on gender equality and women’s empowerment on other MDG targets, including decent work; increasing women’s representation in decision-making; reducing maternal mortality and ensuring universal reproductive health; and access to education. (para 13) The Secretary-General’s first report on the SDGs emphasized the global nature of gender inequalities (para 15), while highlighting the unfinished business of the MDGs, such as the maternal mortality ratio; the unacceptably high levels of child marriage and gender-based violence as well as increases in women’s participation in decision-making. (paras 16-17) In addition to the impacts of the economic crisis, climate change and natural disasters, there are continuing high levels of youth unemployment. Recently there have also been massive displacement of populations and related humanitarian catastrophes. (paras 18-19)

IV National implementation efforts

SDGs implementation is primarily at the national level requiring a diverse range of policies and interventions as well as regular and in-depth monitoring. (para 21) Several countries emphasize the SDGs as a priority at the national level with some reaffirming the importance of integrating gender equality across the three dimensions of sustainable development. (para 22)

A Realizing women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights

The full implementation of commitments includes eliminating violence against women; promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work. Full realization of women's and girls' human rights is vital for achieving progress in the SDGs. Rather than focusing on basics or numerical objectives, policies and programmes should not be divorced from human rights. For example, to reduce maternal mortality, a comprehensive approach to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, addressing the structural drivers (such as child, early

and forced marriage, FGM, adolescent pregnancy and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services and information) should be used in preference to focusing only on skilled attendance at birth. (paras 23-25)

Some countries are aligning their national gender equality policy frameworks, based on the Beijing PfA, with the SDGs. (para 26) Others also noted the importance of CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention etc, as well as legal and constitutional frameworks. SDG target 5.1 on ending all forms of discrimination against women is singled out for greater urgency. (para 27 & 28) A number of countries responded on laws on violence against women in the context of SDGs 5 and 16, and on reform to labour laws and those to improve women's economic rights. (para 29 & 30) Other countries have worked on gender equality legislation and a number on gender identity. (para 31)

B Strengthening the enabling environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Other factors and conditions that have an influence on gender equality are addressed, including ensuring gender mainstreaming across social, economic and environmental policies and actions, climate change and peace-building. Systemic gender-mainstreaming is required, particularly in the context of the SDGs. The role of national gender equality mechanisms is recognized, as are the influence of trade regimes and raising levels of GDP. (paras 33 - 37)

C Maximizing investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women

There should be increased investments; fulfilled ODA commitments; institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting; costing national action plans for gender equality; and increasing funding for women's organizations. (para 39) Noting the lack of resources to implement the MDGs, adequate resources should be mobilized for the more ambitious 2030 Agenda, and in the context of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Improving the

efficiency of revenue collection can mobilize additional domestic resources. (paras 40 & 41) Gender-responsive budgeting is used by some countries to scrutinize the allocation of public resources or through regular gender analysis of budgets. (para 42 & 43) Some countries have ring-fenced resources including for women's civil society organizations and on women, youth and people with disabilities. Other countries have increased tracking of ODA for gender equality. (paras 44 & 45)

D Strengthening the evidence-base for gender equality and the empowerment of women

For the 2030 Agenda, relevant and quality gender-sensitive indicators are an urgent priority, as there are many gaps. Increased political will and technical and financial support will be required. Disaggregated data should address and identify multiple forms of discrimination, eg women with disabilities; older women; Roma and other ethnic minorities; and lesbian, bisexual and trans women. Some governments provide technical and financial capacity-building for their statistical systems through their national statistical offices etc; others have developed and enhanced standards and methodologies to measure gender inequality. Meanwhile few countries acknowledge challenges in so doing. Many Member States

produce regular reports and gender equality indexes on key areas and electronic databases are being developed. (paras 46-53)

E Ensuring women's participation and leadership at all levels and strengthening accountability

The agreed conclusions call for Member States' action, including temporary special measures, and to ensure the participation of women's organizations in implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda. They highlight the importance of accountability in achieving gender equality. While women's participation and leadership across all regions remain at low levels, Member States action has primarily focused on quotas and other affirmative action measures and by demonstrating many examples of actions taken, eg new action plans and national gender equality councils. (para 54-58) Some countries have ensured women's involvement in working groups for SDG national action plans. Open, inclusive and participatory structures involving civil society are also recognized as critical for ensuring gender equality is a priority as SDG implementation accelerates. (para 60)

