



Expert Group Meeting

Building sustainable and resilient societies through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5-6 June 2018, Nairobi

CONCEPT NOTE

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), will organize an Expert Group Meeting on “Building sustainable and resilient societies through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, as a contribution to the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and addresses new and emerging challenges, promotes the science-policy interface and enhances the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The HLPF also plays a central role in overseeing the network of follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.

In 2018, the HLPF, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will consider the theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. The HLPF will conduct an in-depth review of progress made, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the following set of goals:

- SDG 6: ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- SDG 7: ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- SDG 11: make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient and sustainable;
- SDG 12: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- SDG 15: protect, store and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The HLPF also reviews on an annual basis SDG 17: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The theme of the 2018 HLPF provides an opportunity for the international community to explore how the use, consumption and management of resources impact the lives of women and men socially, economically and environmentally. The unsustainable use of water, energy, and terrestrial resources, across the urban-rural continuum, has contributed to increased water scarcity, desertification and climate change.

The challenges associated with the unsustainable use of resources requires accelerated efforts to strengthen the resilience of societies around the world. The lack of, or reduced access to water, energy, and terrestrial resources, across the urban-rural continuum, is leading to increased social and economic

inequalities and jeopardizing global efforts to end poverty and hunger. These challenges are likely to further exacerbate gender inequalities and delay the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment all women and girls. The Expert Group Meeting seeks to contribute to the work of the HLPF by exploring how gender-responsive policies and strategies can accelerate progress toward sustainable and resilient societies for all.

Objective

The Expert Group Meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss good practices, implementation challenges, lessons learned, as well as the ways and means for the achievement of sustainable and resilient societies through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15. The meeting will also discuss key interlinkages between the implementation of SDG 5 and the SDGs under review at the 2018 HLPF.

Participants

Participation will be at the technical/expert level and include representatives of Member States, United Nations entities, academia, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

Date and Location

5-6 June 2018, Nairobi, Kenya

Format

The Expert Group Meeting will take place over the course of two days and include focused discussion of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15. Discussion of each SDG will be framed by a short expert presentation, followed by interactive dialogue among experts. All sessions will aim to discuss financing the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, multi-stakeholder partnerships and gender statistics.

Outcome

The Expert Group Meeting will develop a set of actionable recommendations to support the accelerated gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recommendations will be submitted to the HLPF as a contribution to the HLPF's role to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

Selected reference documents

- UN Women flagship report: "Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report>
- UN Women research paper: "Towards a gender-responsive implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification" <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-un-convention-to-combat-desertification>
- CSW 60 agreed conclusions on women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016/session-outcomes>
- Report of the expert group meeting (UN Women & UN DESA) in preparation for the 2017 HLPF: "Strategies to Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls through the Gender-responsive Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development": https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17068Report_of_the_EGM_on_SDG_5_2017.pdf
- Report of the expert meeting (UN DESA & UNIDO) in preparation for the 2017 HLPF: "Readying institutions and policies for integrated approaches to implementation of the 2030 Agenda": https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12704Report_Vienna_meeting_FINAL.pdf

- Report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18541SG_SDG_Progress_Report_2018_ECOSOC.pdf
- Report of the Secretary-General. From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities: https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/SG_Report_on_2018_ECOSOC_main_theme.pdf
- Input from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the 2018 HLPF: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18205CEDAW_HLPF_submission_2018.pdf
- Input from the Commission on the Status of Women to the 2018 HLPF: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18457CSW_Input_to_2018_HLPF.pdf
- Input from the Women's Major Group to the 2018 HLPF: www.womenmajorgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/WMG_HLPF2018_Combined_final.pdf

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-un-convention-to-combat-desertification>

Discussion Notes and Guiding Questions



Over the past several decades, significant progress has been made in expanding access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities. In 2015, 6.6 billion people used improved drinking water sources and 4.9 billion people used improved sanitation facilities. Despite this progress in ensuring the availability of improved water sources and sanitation facilities, challenges remain. In 2012, an estimated 1.8 billion people were using unsafe water sources. More than 2 billion people globally are living in countries with excess water stress, which is expected to increase over the next several decades. In addition, as of 2015, 2.4 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities, many of whom live in rural areas.¹

Lack of access to safe and affordable drinking water requires individuals in the household to fetch water daily, which is typically done by women and girls. Women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work (SDG 5) significantly constrains their completion of or progress in education (SDG 4), women's entry and re-entry as well as their advancement in the labour market and economic opportunities (SDG 1 and SDG 8), and can result in gaps in both social protection and pensions (SDG 1 and SDG 10). For many women and girls around the world, access to safe and affordable drinking water is therefore directly linked to their empowerment.

The lack of gender-responsive sanitation facilities, whether separate facilities for girls in schools or facilities in public spaces such as markets, can result in parents choosing to keep girls out of school or limit women's ability to engage in economic and political activities. The interruption in girls' education, especially once they enter puberty, can limit their future economic opportunities, thereby undermining efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5), promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG 8) and reduce inequality within and among countries (SDG 10).

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What legal and/or policy measures are required to ensure universal and equitable access to safe, affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation for all by 2030?
- What kind of institutional arrangements and/or mechanisms are needed to enhance integrated and gender-responsive approaches in the water and sanitation sector and services?
- What types of measures can ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated into the provision of water and sanitation infrastructure and services so that women, girls, boys and men have non-discriminatory and equal access in public and private spaces? How are governments/municipalities innovating in this regard?
- How are national/local level governments collecting and using data to enhance water and sanitation programming and monitor results?
- How are UN entities supporting water and sanitation programmes and service delivery at the national level? What efforts are being made to ensure such programmes and service delivery are gender-responsive?

¹ Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", E/2016/75; see also report by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation (A/HRC/33/49)



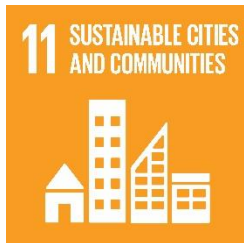
Access to electricity has consistently increased globally over the past several decades, with approximately 83 per cent of the global population having access in 2014. However, gaps in access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy exist both between and within countries. As of 2012, an estimated 1.06 billion people did not have access to electricity, most of whom live in rural areas. Limited progress has been made in expanding access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking, with approximately 3 billion people relying on polluting and dangerous fuels for cooking, such as solid fuels including bio fuel, and kerosene. Although important progress in the consumption of renewable energy has been made, intensified efforts are needed to increase the share of renewable energy in the heating and transport sectors, which together account for 80 per cent of global energy consumption.²

The lack of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy often results in women and girls spending hours each day collecting fuel to cook and heat their homes, which increases their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work (SDG 5). Many suffer poor health through indoor air pollution generated, for example, by a rudimentary stove that smokes heavily as it burns wood or animal dung (SDG 3). Although women are often the primary energy managers in households, they are largely excluded from participating in energy related decision-making processes (SDG 5). Women also comprise only 20 per cent of the workforce in industries that produce renewable energy.

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What legal and/or policy measures are required to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all?
- What are the barriers that women face in access to energy? What are promising solutions that can address women's energy needs?
- What kind of institutional arrangements and/or mechanisms are needed to enhance integrated and gender-responsive approaches in the energy sector and services?
- What types of measures can ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated into the provision of energy infrastructure and services? How are governments/municipalities innovating in this regard?
- How are national/local level governments collecting and using data on access to energy to implement programmes and monitor progress?
- How are UN entities supporting energy programmes and service delivery at the national level? What efforts are being made to ensure such programmes and service delivery are gender-responsive?

² Ibid



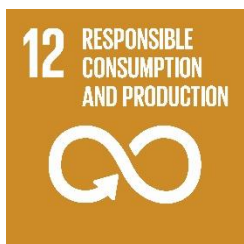
Currently more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and this share is expected to increase to 60 per cent by the year 2030. While urban planning and design are steadily improving, in 2014 approximately 880 million people lived in slum-like conditions.³ Urban population growth is already outpacing available land in many areas. The rapid expansion of cities beyond their formal administrative boundaries creates significant new challenges for efforts to promote sustainable water and sanitation management (SDG 6), affordable and reliable energy (SDG 7), the effective use of resources (SDG 12) and effective land management (SDG 15). Although cities can promote productivity and social, human and economic development, the rapid expansion of cities can also lead to economic exploitation (SDG 8) and social exclusion (SDG 10).

Persistent gender inequalities can be magnified in urban contexts. Women and girls in urban areas often experience discrimination (SDG 5.1) and violence in public spaces, including sexual violence (SDG 5.2), which can affect their everyday lives and restricts their freedom of movement in the city. Women and girls living in urban slums often lack access to infrastructure and public services (SDG 9), including education and health and sexual and reproductive health infrastructure and facilities (SDG 3). Although women in cities have more opportunities for gainful employment than women living in rural areas, they continue to earn less than men. Poor women, especially those living in slums, are disproportionately employed in low-wage, low-skilled and often home-based jobs in the informal sectors or unpaid sectors (SDG 8).

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What legal and/or policy measures are required to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable?
- What kind of institutional arrangements and/or mechanisms are needed to link the implementation of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda? How can integrated and gender-responsive approaches be enhanced?
- What types of measures can ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated into urban planning, implementation and evaluation? How are national governments/municipalities innovating in this regard?
- How are national/local level governments collecting and using data on urban planning to enhance programming and monitor progress?
- What accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that cities deliver for women and girls? How are women's organizations and grassroots women contributing to this regard?
- How are UN entities supporting programmes and service delivery in cities? What efforts are being made to ensure such programmes and service delivery are gender-responsive?

³ Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", [E/2017/66](#)



Sustainable development requires minimizing the impact of natural resources and toxic materials used, and the waste and pollutants generated, throughout the entire production and consumption process. The consumption of material in developed countries remained significantly higher than in developing countries.⁴ Sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), including through sustainable tourism (SDG 8), agriculture (SDG 2), infrastructure (SDG 9) and public procurement, not only contributes to reducing the levels of material consumption but can also contribute to poverty reduction (SDG 1), the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10), and to productive employment and decent work (SDG 8).⁵

Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns requires empowering women and enabling them to make sustainable choices. Since women are the primary household managers and the world's dominant consumers, accounting for 65 per cent of global consumer spending in 2010,⁶ providing women with sustainable lifestyle options and education (SDG 4) can substantially increase net positive contributions to resource efficiency (SDG 7), biodiversity conservation (SDG 15) and poverty reduction (SDG 1). Beyond the individual level, governments and businesses have an essential role in promoting sustainable production practices, sustainably using natural resources and fostering innovations that support sustainability throughout the supply chain, all of which will benefit women and girls in different ways.

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What legal and/or policy measures are required to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns?
- What are the gender perspectives of SDG 12 with regard to food waste and management of chemicals?
- What kind of institutional arrangements and/or mechanisms are needed to link the implementation of SDG 12 with other SDGs? How can integrated and gender-responsive approaches be enhanced?
- What types of measures can ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated into the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and in legally binding chemicals conventions?
- How are national/local level governments collecting and using data on consumption and production patterns to enhance programming and monitor progress?
- How are UN entities supporting programmes on sustainable consumption and production at the national level? What efforts are being made to ensure such programmes address gender perspectives?

⁴ Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", E/2016/75

⁵ Note by the Secretary-General, "Progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns", E/2017/63

⁶ Diane Mac Eachern, "Women, Consumption and Sustainable Development" in *Powerful synergies Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability*, (United Nations Development Programme, 2012) 69-80
<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/Powerful-Synergies.pdf>



Progress has been uneven in promoting the sustainable use of land. Global net loss of forest areas is slowing, having declined from 7.3 million hectares per year in the 1990s to 3.3 million hectares per year during the period from 2010 to 2015. However, land degradation and desertification has led to persistent and declining trends in productivity, which undermines the security and development of all countries. Continuing declines in the quality of soil, water, and/or vegetation have significant impacts on efforts to achieve food and nutrition security (SDG 2). Climate change (SDG 13) is compounding land degradation and increasing uncertainty of food systems.⁷

Women account for approximately 43 per cent of agricultural workers globally and up to 70 per cent in some countries. However, despite the important role women play in the management of natural resources, discriminatory laws, policies and practices that deny women the right to have access to, own and have control over land (SDG 5), undermine their important contributions in the sustainable use and management of land and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15). Without equal ownership of and control over land, women are often excluded from participating in programmes that support access to education and skills training (SDG 4) and financial services (SDG 8), and to promote agricultural productivity. These persistent gender inequalities prevent women's full and effective participation in decision-making, thereby potentially reducing agricultural productivity. Reduced agricultural productivity can significantly hamper efforts to reduce poverty (SDG 1), promote food security and improved security (SDG 2), the sustainable use of water resources (SDG 6), and climate change adaptation and mitigation (SDG 13).

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What legal and/or policy measures are required to protect, restore and promote sustainable use terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss?
- What actions are needed to effectively address relevant biodiversity considerations in national and local development plans, including gender equality and poverty reduction strategies, and associated budgets?
- How do gains in respect to women's rights and gender issues in the contexts of agricultural productivity and sustainable land use correspond with improvements in meeting biodiversity objectives?
- What are the barriers to women's receipt of equitable benefits from biological resources (including payment for ecosystem services schemes)? How can these best be addressed?

⁷ Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", [E/2017/66](#)