

Panel 1: Institutional arrangements for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Thank you very much Mr. Moderator.

The topic for this panel has two main aspects.

- A first aspect refers to the **national response, or implementation of the Agenda**. Such implementation is expected to build on existing national policy frameworks, development strategies and normative instruments.
- Countries are now taking steps to integrate the agenda for sustainable development in their existing national development plans and strategies. As these processes accelerate, all countries need to prioritize gender equality across the entire implementation effort, in a comprehensive manner.
- The use and alignment of national gender equality strategies and action plans is a critical step in this process. Based on the Beijing Platform for Action, national action plans or strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment are in place in very many countries. Many of these plans and strategies are regularly reviewed, and lessons learned, new trends, opportunities and challenges are incorporated in new and updated plans.
- As national policy frameworks and strategies are being adapted to respond to the universal, transformative and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, full advantage should be taken of national action plans for gender equality. 167 countries conducted Beijing+20 reviews in 2014 and 2015, which means that up-to-date status assessments together with lessons learned are available that can effectively feed into the alignment process.
- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda should strengthen the response to gaps and challenges that have emanated from the national Beijing+20 reviews. For example, the Beijing+20 review revealed that the target of removing discriminatory provisions against women by 2005 has not been achieved and remains long overdue. This is now also called for in target 5.1 on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- A second aspect of the topic of this panel refers to the **institutions** necessary to lead and coordinate implementation of the Agenda at national level, including review processes.
- Because of the 2030 Agenda's integrated and cross-sectoral breadth, all parts of government will be involved in its implementation; effective and inclusive national institutions will be essential for achieving all the Goals and targets. National institutions

across all branches and sectors of government will have to ensure that planning, decision-making, policy action and budgeting, as well as monitoring and reporting reflect gender equality considerations and benefit all women and girls.

- National gender equality mechanisms are the principal governmental body charged with policy coordination for gender equality and women's empowerment and realization of their human rights. They oversee, facilitate and monitor the formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes on gender equality, and coordinate with line ministries and different branches and levels of government. They also collaborate with civil society organizations, especially women's organizations, towards common goals. They need to be an integral part of such national institutional arrangements.
- They need to be strategically positioned and equipped with authority and power, as well as funding and capacity, to ensure that gender equality considerations are systematically addressed in implementation, across sectors, at all levels of government and by all actors. Such attention needs to extend to decentralized subnational and local levels, where gender focal points or working groups in provincial, municipal and local governments will be indispensable to ensure coordinated implementation on the ground. Parliamentary committees or caucuses for gender equality should also be part of the institutional landscape that promotes and oversees gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The questions that this panel may address deal with these two aspects.

- Firstly: How are countries aligning existing national strategies and policies to the 2030 Agenda, and what steps and measures can be taken to ensure that full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is an integral part of these efforts?
- Second: What steps are being taken to ensure that inclusive, effective and accountable institutional mechanisms are in place for localizing the SDGs – for planning and implementation, and for monitoring, review and follow-up – that include national gender equality mechanisms? What opportunities are being created for women's organizations to contribute to these processes and efforts?
- And third: What challenges are being foreseen for implementation of SDG 5 and for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? How can those challenges be tackled? What lessons can be learned and used from the implementation of the MDGs?