

## **Multi-Stakeholder Forum 2016**

### **Panel 4: *Participation and leadership of women's organizations and gender equality advocates in the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***

**Lopa Banerjee, Chief, Civil Society Section, UN-Women**

2015 has been a year of extraordinary gains and extraordinary challenges in the gender equality movement.

We have seen huge shifts in the normative and political intentions of world leaders towards the achievement of gender equality. The gains were many but let me cite but 2 examples: Of course the momentous, unanimous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and their far reaching aspiration for equality including gender equality and prosperity for all people on this planet, barring none.

And also the Global Leaders Meeting at the 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, where some 70 heads of state and government made concrete commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

These gains and others, notwithstanding, we have also seen devastating setbacks in the form of the crystallization of a discourse of violence and exclusion, which has put women's rights squarely in its crosshairs. We have seen, in different parts of the world, the squeezing of civic spaces and opposition to democratic, public debate and critique that is vital to women's rights and social justice movements everywhere. There has been increased regulation of access to funding coupled with chronic underfunding, and restrictions on women's human rights organizations and their mobility and ability to function.

We are now standing at a place where the leadership and strength of the transnational women's movement will be critical to take us up the path towards gender equality. Because partnerships are going to be essential for the road to a 50-50 planet.

Having voice and participation in the political processes and decisions that determine their lives is a fundamental dimension of women's and girls' human rights. Consequently, strong coordination with civil society organizations, especially women's advocacy and human rights groups, will be indispensable for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The women's movement has had a historically crucial role in promoting reform, influencing policies, participating in monitoring and upholding accountability. Women's organizations and gender equality advocates can support national mechanisms for gender equality, strengthen national and decentralized planning and policy formulation, implement programmes and projects, monitor progress on commitments across sectors and hold duty-bearers to account. They can support the development of new data and statistics to regularly monitor all of the targets, with indicators disaggregated by sex and other criteria.

Implementation efforts will benefit from the experience and leadership of women's rights and gender equality advocates at all levels, including in national parliaments, trade unions, cooperatives and community associations.

Gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs leadership by women as well as the full and effective participation of women's civil society organizations, for which renewed and strengthened support and substantially increased funding is required.

What is now required is to:

- Enable women's leadership and full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development;
- Support women's organizations and gender equality advocates everywhere so that they can fully participate in the implementation and follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda;
- Adequately fund and resource women's organizations and gender equality advocates at local, national, regional and global levels.
- Support the participation of civil society organizations, including women's human rights groups and gender equality advocates, in the follow-up and review and accountability processes of the 2030 Agenda;

Therefore, it would be good to hear from the panel their ideas on:

- What actions should governments take to ensure that women's organizations are involved in setting policy priorities and monitoring progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How can national machineries for gender equality effectively work with women's organizations to amplify the gender equality agenda across the entire 2030 Agenda across different parts and levels of government?
- What strategies can be used, by governments and women's organizations, to ensure the participation of marginalized women and girls in an effort to ensure that all women and girls are empowered and 'no one is left behind'?