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**An analytical review of national post-2015 consultation reports
from a gender perspective**

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* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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Introduction: National Post-2015 Consultations

In the lead-up to the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, the UN system, in collaboration with stakeholders around the world at regional, national and local levels, is working to assess the progress that has been made in achieving the MDGs and to determine the development priorities for the future. Civil society and national-level consultations have provided the opportunity for broad conversations to help determine the post-2015 development agenda. These forums prioritize the exchange of ideas in the search for a shared vision of ‘The World We Want’. The consultations have occurred in advance of governments sitting down to negotiate and finalize a new development agenda. The goal is to ensure that the consultations provide evidence and fresh perspectives to governments as they determine new priorities and reinvigorate their commitment to existing priorities, in an effort to improve the lives of individuals and communities around the world.

This analytical study focuses on the national consultations and analyzes the final reports that were produced as outcome documents to these consultations. So far, UN Country Teams have supported 88 countries in convening national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. These consultations have sought to bring together governments, civil society, the private sector, media, marginalized communities and universities as stakeholders in a discussion about development priorities for the future. The goal has been to bring together groups and individuals who may not usually be involved in policy-making processes, but who can provide critical input on the needs and experiences of a diverse group of people.

The specific focus of this study looks at how gender equality and women’s rights have been addressed in the reports on the national consultations. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were incorporated into the MDGs, primarily with respect to Goals 3 and 5. Not only should gender equality and women’s empowerment be prioritized as a standalone goal, but also it is essential to the realization of all other development goals. Through country reporting on progress and setbacks in achieving the MDGs, it has become clear that gender equality is a cross-cutting priority that must be mainstreamed across any development agenda; not merely isolated as a standalone goal. What is more, any new standalone gender goal must address the structural and root causes of gender inequality, or gender equality is unlikely to result from any national and global efforts to achieve this goal.

Thus, this study looks to determine how and when gender equality and women’s empowerment are prioritized in the reports of the national consultations. It looks at discussions on a standalone gender goal and also how gender equality features as a cross-cutting issue in consultations on other priority policy issues. It outlines the key issues and thematic priorities that have been raised in relation to gender equality and women’s rights across the consultations. It synthesizes the discussions on how gender equality fits into the post-2015 framework that is presented within these reports, including the proposed goals and targets that could be adopted. This study concludes that gender equality issues have been raised by national stakeholders as central to the global post-2015 development agenda and as an essential component for the realization of all development goals. However, gender mainstreaming is still extremely limited in several of the consultations, with the reporting on some issue areas, such as energy and food security, making very little – if any – mention of gender equality or women’s rights issues.

Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the National Consultation Reports

Methodology

While so far there have been 88 national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, not all of the consultations have resulted in a final overall report and some final reports have not yet been released to the general public. As a result, this study analyzes 35 final reports that are available publicly online. Of these 35 reports, there is some regional variation: 10 reports each from Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; 3 report from the Middle East and North Africa; and 2 reports from Latin America and the Caribbean. The analysis was guided by some key questions, including:

- How have gender equality and women's rights been addressed in the context of a standalone gender goal and throughout other goal and policy areas?
- How were women and/or women's rights organizations as stakeholders involved in the national consultation process?
- What issues emerged as important for the achievement of gender equality? What issues were missing from this discussion?
- What should a gender-sensitive post-2015 framework look like, including goals, targets, and indicators?

Many of the national consultations occurred along thematic lines, with discussions specifically focused on the following policy areas: inequalities, health, education, growth and employment, environmental sustainability, food security and nutrition, governance, conflict violence and disaster, population dynamics, water and energy. Discussions of gender equality were formally included within the 'inequalities' consultations and were informally addressed within most other consultations. There was no explanation as to why the issue of gender equality did not receive a separate consultation process. Some reports explained that their national consultations occurred divided along the lines of stakeholders, with specific discussions, for example, for groups of women, youth, and other marginalized communities. The difference in consultation strategy resulted in a difference in reporting: the reports do not consistently address each of the issue areas, but are sometimes grouped according to the priorities of different stakeholders.

For clarity, this analysis is divided according to the aforementioned thematic distinctions, as a way to better understand how gender has been mainstreamed into the different policy areas. However, in many cases, there is crossover in terms of where a particular discussion fits into the thematic breakdown – whether as part of a standalone gender goal or as an example of mainstreaming within a policy area. For example, in many of the national consultations featuring groups of women, the priorities were not necessarily related to explicitly 'gender' issues. These women-only consultations highlighted, for example, women's priorities in addressing poverty through increased employment opportunities and better access to health and educational opportunities. These contributions were primarily grouped into the analyses of how gender has been mainstreamed throughout policy areas. Ultimately, every effort has been made here to clearly reflect how these consultations have differently unfolded, while prioritizing the broader questions of focus within this analytical report.

Participation of Women and Women's Organizations in the National Consultations

The national consultation reports highlight the considerable effort that was put into creating a broad and inclusive consultation process in all countries. According to the consultation reports, the UN Country Teams across all regions worked in partnership with local authorities, civil society organizations, private sector, youth and others to ensure that as many voices as possible were heard through this process. Various UN entities such as UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNAIDS also worked to ensure that stakeholders from marginalized communities that are usually excluded from decision-making processes could participate. The number and size of the consultations varied by country. For example, in Costa Rica over 600 people participated in workshops, focus groups and interviews that targeted groups who live in conditions of exclusion and vulnerability in the country. In Serbia, 28,000 people were directly included in the national consultations with over 3,500 people participating in an online survey, 21,500 people participating in social media discussions, and more than 3,000 people participating in field surveys, workshops and discussions.

All of the consultations describe efforts that were made to include women from various communities. The reports explain that women and women's organizations were key stakeholders in these discussions, although there is no way to verify the extent to which women and women's organizations were included. Several reports highlight that women's civil society organizations were included as a way to represent the interests of a broader subset of women, such as the Gender Alliance for Development Centre (Albania) and the Kosovo Women's Network. Government ministries that focus on women were also central to the process including, for example, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare in Malawi.

Individual women were also invited to participate in some of the consultations. Some consultations were designed to address women's additional intersectional difference. For example, in Costa Rica, there was a workshop for rural Gnobe indigenous women of La Casona Territory and in India, conscious efforts were made to include Dalit, tribal and Muslim women in the consultation. In Tajikistan, consultations with women included representatives from women's associations, women leaders and labor migrants' wives and in Togo, women in the consultations represented different socioeconomic groups from all regions. In Azerbaijan, UNDP led a specific consultation on empowering rural women that focused on the particular barriers to economic growth that these women face, as well as their experiences of migration. Ultimately, the consultation reports point at efforts to ensure the participation of a broad range of women from different social, cultural, ethnic, economic and political backgrounds. If these efforts have been as successful as the reports suggest, this inclusivity will likely benefit the post-2015 development agenda by ensuring that diverse voices have contributed to its progression.

Gender Equality as a Priority Issue

Throughout most of the national consultation reports, inclusive development as a result of equality for all was cited as a priority. Several reports, such as those from Albania, Montenegro, and Bhutan, explained that inequalities based on socioeconomic, geographic, ethnic or gender factors limited the possibility of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Most reports that prioritized equality as a broad overarching issue for the new development framework

highlighted that gender equality in particular is a priority. The report from Vietnam explained that inequality manifests itself in many different ways, but that gender inequality in particular is a key theme that requires specific investment and institutional change.

Gender inequality emerged as one of the most important priority issues in Turkey, Costa Rica, Malawi and Saint Lucia, among other reports, cutting across all aspects of the new development agenda. The report from Costa Rica highlighted how gender equality was essential to numerous policy areas, including economic growth, health and education, and explained that changing sexist and patriarchal education is key to transforming “the cultural patterns that reproduce and reinforce gender discrimination” (Costa Rica). The report from Malawi articulated that there is a need to focus closely on empowering women to be self-sufficient and have their voices heard, as well as to emphasize and prioritize greater effort to enforce policies and laws that protect women and girls (e.g. also Moldova).

The national consultation reports highlight the structural forces at the root of gender inequality and point out that, by not addressing these underlying forces, progress on achieving gender equality cannot be made. For example, while Bangladesh has made great strides in achieving gender parity in education under MDG 3, and while women in the country have made progress in enhanced mobility and visibility, the report explains that women continue to face entrenched barriers to development and insecurities in their personal and public lives. The report argues, “by not addressing the structural causes of gender inequality or tackling major gender-specific injustices such as violence against women, the MDG framework missed opportunities to further improve the position of women” (Bangladesh). Other reports also highlight the structural power imbalances that keep women in a subordinate position in the family and the community, and that impede developmental gains at all levels, including Ethiopia, Turkey and Saint Lucia.

The post-2015 discussions around gender equality as a priority issue show an evolution in thinking from the way that gender issues were incorporated into the reporting on the MDGs. While the consultations generally emphasized the need to continue efforts in achieving the unmet MDGs, including around gender equality, and their continuing high relevance, the national post-2015 consultations also raised concerns that the MDGs’ translation of global goals into internationally applicable targets was inappropriate and highlighted concerns over the absence of a strong cross-cutting focus on gender (e.g. India; Kazakhstan). While education remains a priority in achieving gender equality, the MDG 3 target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education by 2015 is recognized in the reports as limited. The report from Ethiopia explained, “while education is instrumental for changing the power relationship and empowering women, women need more affirmative action and support to participate in the economic and productive sectors” (Ethiopia). More generally, most reports highlighted the need to ensure that gender-based violence was a central issue addressed in any new development agenda, an issue that was notably missing from the original MDG framework.

The consultations emphasize the need to both have a stand-alone gender goal, that covers important issues such as violence against women, women’s involvement in all levels of decision-making process, and women’s access to assets and resources, and to have a policy of gender mainstreaming throughout the post-2015 agenda, including sex-disaggregated data, targets and

indicators (e.g. Bangladesh). Several reports also highlight the need to focus on policy solutions that do not perpetuate inequalities and discrimination throughout all policy areas (e.g. India). There was very little disagreement on this matter and very few tensions in the reports regarding how and whether certain gender issues should be addressed. Instead, most reports listed multiple gender-related priority issues to address in the future.

However, while the majority of the reports show a clear inclination towards gender equality as a priority theme, this is not the case in all reports. Three reports make almost no – if any – substantive mention of women or gender issues, including Timor Leste, Tanzania and Turkmenistan. There is no explanation within these reports for their lack of attention to gender issues. Additionally, the reports from Moldova and Serbia, explicitly mention that an end to gender inequality is not a priority theme that emerged during the consultations. In Moldova, when gender inequality was discussed in the consultations, respondents agreed that gender discrimination exists but “not everybody was ready to give a solution or to insist on its elimination, mentioning the ‘traditional society’ and the ‘long way to go before there is a change’” (Moldova). In Serbia, gender equality is not broadly perceived as a priority theme, except by “some women, feminists and civil society organizations” (Serbia). In fact, this report explains that specific hardships that have marked the last two decades in Serbia “have resulted in a relatively low awareness about some development priorities, such as environmental protection or gender equality” (Serbia). While the reports that fail to prioritize gender equality are in the minority, they illustrate a lack of consensus overall on gender equality as a global priority.

A Standalone Gender Goal Expanding on MDG 3

This section analyzes the key issues that were raised during the national consultations in relation to a standalone goal on gender equality for the post-2015 development agenda. Perhaps due to the nature of the consultations, in terms of participants’ abilities to speak to all of their priorities without restriction, there were very few explicit controversies or tensions that arose in these reports around questions of women’s rights and gender equality. A key finding across many of the consultations is that any standalone goal on this issue should be expanded beyond the original MDG framework to include issues such as violence against women, women’s equal employment and wage equality, and access to credit and resources. Many of the issues raised in discussions around a standalone goal are concurrently relevant to other policy goals, but were portrayed in the reports as particularly important for the achievement of gender equality.

The current MDG 3 target and indicators remain important to a standalone gender goal, but did not receive extensive attention in the national consultations reports. For example, there was actually a very limited focus on the importance of gender parity in education. This may be because many of the countries reporting on consultations have already achieved gender parity in education or perhaps because the consultations are responding to the fact that an exclusive focus on this target has not led to extensive shifts in gender equality in society. Where education is mentioned, an emphasis is placed on ensuring the high quality of education, including training in leadership skills for girls (Azerbaijan); greater access to higher education, vocational and technical training, and policies such as scholarships to encourage excellence for girls in scientific training (Gabon); and reinforcing the quality of education by increasing the capacity of qualified teachers (Senegal).

With regards to the MDG 3 indicator on women's political participation, the national consultations also broaden the scope of this issue to address women's participation in decision-making more broadly in all public and private domains. The report from Albania explains that women's representation in decision-making is very low compared to men because the patriarchal mentality undermines women's empowerment. Specifically, women's roles as mothers and wives are considered primary, directly influencing her level of involvement in the public sphere (Albania). In Morocco, the consultation discussed the desire for elected officials to be sensitized about gender issues and women's participation in political spheres to improve women's decision-making capabilities. A discussion of decision-making within these national consultations also goes beyond women's political participation, to women's participation in public, union and private sectors. Tajikistan calls for soft and hard quotas for women in managerial positions in all branches of power and Niger, amongst others, goes even further to suggest that increasing women's control over decision-making in the household is essential for gender equality, a reduction in poverty and better prospects for the future.

Just like the expanded discussion of the indicator on women's political participation, the national consultation reports go beyond the focus on women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, to address deeper root issues that limit women's employment and economic opportunities. Many women in the consultations expressed the desire for equality of opportunity in employment, where there are still major barriers that remain (e.g. Burkina Faso). The report from Malawi explains that there is a need to empower women in activities such as agriculture and entrepreneurship. Women often lack the capacity, in terms of skills and knowledge to venture into certain spheres of employment, and women also need business services, markets and support, to participate in the economy (Malawi). Additionally, there is a need to focus on the gender pay gap in both private and public sector, and also a need to focus on women's informal/unpaid work (e.g. Albania). Women's unpaid work in the house does not adequately reflect women's contributions, and where women work informally, they lack access to vital social services and security (Albania).

One key issue raised in the national consultation reports, which spans beyond the original MDG 3, is women's access to credit and to resources like land and property. Discrimination against women in property rights can limit women's ability to make a living for herself and her family. Even when there are laws in place for women's land ownership, custom and cultural norms can threaten women's access to this resource (e.g. India; Burkina Faso). Land is essential for agricultural purposes, as well as residential use, and is essential for women's livelihoods. Having access to land can also help women get access to credit, a separate but equally important form of discrimination that many women experience. Accessing material resources such as land, property, and financial resources are inter-linked and these issues are a priority for women across the national consultation reports (e.g. Togo). The report from Ghana highlights that working capital and/or loans are crucial to start or expand businesses. The majority of the 'women-only' consultation in Ghana focused on jobs and employment issues, highlighting the need for women's better access to loans through group-loans and better banking policies.

A central priority for the standalone gender goal, which spans almost all of the reports, is the issue of ending violence against women. Multiple forms of gender-based violence, including

domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment, are raised as important issues across the reports (see e.g. Moldova; Papua New Guinea; China; Azerbaijan). The reports make the connection between gender-based violence and gender inequality in society. The report from Serbia explains that violence undermines women's life chances, capabilities, freedom of choice and self-confidence and the report from Costa Rica explains that violence in the family is a result of patriarchal structures. Several reports comment on the fact that women are resistant to reporting violence (e.g. Costa Rica; Egypt). The report from Malawi commented that there was a "general outcry throughout the consultation process against the abuse of women, girls and children" and that gender-based violence is an impediment to women's enjoyment of their human rights (Malawi).

There was important discussion on how post-2015 efforts can begin to shift cultural practices and entrenched attitudes about stereotypical gender roles. A number of reports discuss the negative attitudes, cultural practices and beliefs that limit development (e.g. Malawi; Mauritania). Sustainable change in gender relations will require changes in laws and policies, but also change at the individual and family level (e.g. Tajikistan). As the report from Mozambique explains, "gender relations are still tied to an enormous weight of customs and traditions, which does not allow especially girls and women in rural areas to decide about their own lives" (Mozambique). Many of the women and girls who participated in the national consultations aspire to greater freedom, respect and equality (e.g. Mozambique; Morocco). Ultimately, the focus of many of the national consultation reports, when discussing a standalone gender goal, was how to move beyond the MDG framework to set goals that target the root causes of gender inequality in society.

Gender Mainstreaming Across Policy Areas

This section analyzes how gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights feature in the national consultations on a broad range of priority issue areas. Most countries had specific consultations on a range of policy issues, such as inequalities, health, education, growth and employment, environmental sustainability, food security and nutrition, governance, conflict violence and disaster, population dynamics, water and energy. Throughout these consultations, gender equality was sometimes featured in great detail, and sometimes not at all.

Inequalities

The national consultations included a fairly extensive discussion about the intersectional inequalities that women experience, including rural women, women with HIV, widows, disabled women, lesbian and transgender women, elderly women and women from various ethnic or caste groups (e.g. Albania; Kosovo). An explicit discussion of class inequalities was not common throughout the reports. The report from India explained that "women who belong to socially excluded groups are subject to the worst forms of violence" and discrimination in society (India). Women who experience intersectional discrimination on the basis of their gender and other factors such as their ethnicity, sexuality, disability or age, have heightened problems regarding the availability of and access to basic quality social services and essential goods, such as health, education, water and sanitation (e.g. Mozambique; Niger).

Intersectional inequalities that women experience were discussed within the national consultations. Costa Rica, Philippines and Turkey, for example, discussed the need to protect the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, including prioritizing non-discrimination on the basis of sexuality and access to inclusive and high quality health services. Malawi emphasized the plight of widows and single/divorced women as a key group that requires attention and protection. Several reports highlighted the experiences of women from ethnic minorities and indigenous groups. Costa Rica hosted a separate consultation for its afro-descendant and indigenous communities. One interesting finding here was that while the workshops open to all women in Costa Rica highlighted the gender and development agenda, in the workshops with specifically indigenous women and women living in poverty conditions, the concerns were strictly related to poverty. The Philippines and Vietnam also emphasized the relationship between gender inequality and women from ethnic minorities. Vietnam explained that women from ethnic minorities often have a very high workload, bear more children, lack fluency in Vietnamese, and have a higher burden within the household.

Several national consultation reports highlighted the particular challenges faced by rural women and the inequalities between urban and rural women (e.g. Mauritania). Azerbaijan had a specific consultation that addressed the issues of rural women, including a discussion of the large gaps between female and male employment, unfavourable business opportunities and underlying cultural barriers. There is an important link between rural women and migration patterns, as well as lack of access to essential services like health and education, and higher rates of domestic violence (e.g. Azerbaijan, Niger, Moldova). Women from rural areas in Moldova say that the most significant problem they face is related to access to health services.

Finally, a number of national consultation reports highlighted the challenges faced by people with disability, including women. The report from Niger explained that “the disabled woman is much more disadvantaged because of its double handicap (disability and the situation of women)” (Niger). Tajikistan explained that inequality by gender, by disability status, and by age were the forms of inequality that received the most attention in the post-2015 consultations. During the national consultation on the theme of gender in Turkey, the challenge of people with disabilities was raised as a key barrier and participants asked for improved accessibility for people with disability to essential services and employment opportunities. Vietnam highlighted that women with disabilities face stigmatization because of the widespread belief that they are unable to have families and become mothers, and it mentioned that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Health

Within the national consultations reports, the discussion of women’s health concerns centered around two key issues: women’s sexual and reproductive health needs and women’s access to health services. First, sexual and reproductive health issues featured in many of the reports as essential to the post-2015 development agenda. These issues were framed as health service requirements rather than as ‘rights’ (with the report from Costa Rica as the exception). Family planning and increased sexual education for girls and young women was raised in several consultations as an important way to promote gender equality and to improve the overall health of the population (e.g. Azerbaijan; Costa Rica). Sexual and reproductive health education is connected to a reduction in high-risk births and unsafe abortions (Azerbaijan); a reduction in

early pregnancy, STIs and HIV/AIDS (Niger); and an increase in the use of contraceptives (Malawi).

While the ‘feminization’ of HIV/AIDS means that this epidemic must increasingly be addressed using a gendered lens, very few reports highlighted the particular needs of women in addressing HIV/AIDS in the post-2015 agenda. The report from Papua New Guinea highlighted the connection between gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the report from Vietnam explained that women living with HIV/AIDS are often encouraged not to have children, rather than being coached on how to have a safe pregnancy that protects the health of the child.

Second, the national consultation reports emphasized the need to focus on women’s access to health services and facilities more broadly. A key priority in Benin is access to a better healthcare system, regardless of sex, location, disability, education or age. The report from Morocco emphasized the desire of respondents for universal and free medical coverage and Mozambique also highlighted the need to improve access to quality health services for all, particularly ‘humanized’ services for women, especially in rural areas. The provision of health services in a number of countries faces barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of medicines, lack of trained personnel and poor access to maternal health services (e.g. Malawi). There is still a need to improve maternal health care services (e.g. Malawi; Niger; Senegal).

Education

Gender parity in education is highlighted in the national consultations reports, but as was previously mentioned, it does not assume the same central position as in discussions of the MDGs. Several reports highlight the continuing need to focus on equality for all in access to quality education (e.g. China; Philippines; Costa Rica). Several Sub-Saharan African countries emphasized that gender parity in education has still not been achieved, and that the quality of education – such as the quality of teachers, school materials, girls’ safety, and distance to schools – needs to remain a priority intervention in the new development agenda (e.g. Ethiopia; Malawi; Gabon).

Several reports from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region also mentioned the importance of gender parity in education. The report from Serbia noted that part of the reform in education curricula should include attention to gender equality principles. In the consultations in Tajikistan, women, youth and civil society participants emphasized gender inequalities in access to education, citing early marriage and societal gender norms as underlying barriers. Some proposed solutions include extending compulsory education from grade 9 to grade 11, or taking specific steps to address early marriage (Tajikistan). There is also a need for informal or non-traditional forms of education for girls and young women. The report from Turkey also highlighted the disparities in access to education on the basis of regional differences and also that the lack of education available in the mother tongue of many students limited their educational opportunities.

Growth and Employment

The focus on gender equality in the domain of economic growth and employment was substantial within the national consultations reports. Not only did women from all regions identify this issue as one of their key priorities, but also equality of opportunity and access was identified within

the reports as essential to sustainable economic growth and a reduction in poverty for all. Full and productive work and decent work opportunities for women was a priority across almost all of the reports (e.g. Costa Rica; The Philippines; Morocco; Benin). Women face particular kinds of discrimination in access to decent employment, including discrimination in job training or in seeking promotion (Vietnam); gender stereotypes and traditions (Tajikistan); and discrimination in the recruitment of new employees (Serbia). Several reports suggested that the inequalities that underlie women's low levels of employment should be addressed via a coherent framework for action on the part of the government (e.g. Turkey) and new strategies to prioritize employment creation as a central development objective (e.g. Tajikistan; Serbia; Kazakhstan).

Women's work in the agricultural sector was also addressed throughout some of the reports (e.g. Togo). Women tend to gather in agricultural work because it is one of their only available options. Agricultural work can be low-paid, informal and insecure for women, and many women working in this domain are unable to qualify for employment insurance and social security schemes (e.g. Azerbaijan; Turkey). The insecurity and informality of the agricultural sector for women often remains invisible within policy-making on employment, and needs to be addressed within the post-2015 development agenda to ensure that women are better protected. Another issue raised in the domain of employment is the gender gap in wages and the need to ensure equal salaries between men and women. Gender inequality is reflected in the well-documented wage differentials that continue to exist between men and women (e.g. Montenegro; Tajikistan; Moldova).

Overall, there is an emphasis in the national consultations being placed on the need for inclusive economic growth to ensure that all citizens benefit from economic growth and a reduction in poverty (e.g. Bangladesh; Saint Lucia). Poverty remains a key issue to be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda, and the 'feminization' of poverty means that this issue is particularly critical for and to women (e.g. Vietnam; Senegal). Strategies that promote economic growth in the future should prioritize creating full employment and decent work for women and disadvantaged groups (Saint Lucia). A weak economic environment heightens the insecurities that women face, in part due to the low quality of work, limited protections and limited access to basic rights at work (Samoa). A number of actions should be taken to secure women's equitable access to the labour market; to introduce regulatory controls; and to challenge social norms and practices that limit women's full participation in processes of economic growth (e.g. Bangladesh).

Environmental Sustainability

The attention to gender issues within the consultation discussions on environmental sustainability were very limited, but a small number of reports did emphasize the importance of including attention to women's experiences and needs within this policy domain. The report from Azerbaijan noted that climate change is beginning to present problems in the country, including steady temperature warming, land degradation and increased aridity, and highlighted that the poor and female-headed households will bear most of the burden of environmental degradation.

The report from Bangladesh was the only report that addressed the gender components of environmental sustainability in substantial detail. It noted that climate change particularly affects

women, who rely on dwindling harvest and livestock for access to diverse nutritious food; that male migration, accelerated by climate change, places a burden on women who become the sole breadwinner in the household; and that fresh water scarcity makes women's work more time-consuming (Bangladesh). The report highlighted that Bangladesh has prepared a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) to meet the immediate needs and challenges of climate change, and that two pillars – food security and social protection and health – identify gender equality issues as a priority (Bangladesh).

Food Security and Nutrition

Very few national consultation reports emphasize, or even mention at all, the intersection between food security and nutrition, and gender equality and women's empowerment. Two exceptions would be the aforementioned report from Bangladesh, highlighting how gender equality is a priority in the food security pillar of their national Climate Change policy; and Benin, where the report explains that food security and nutrition are a priority need for pregnant women. While there are no explicit explanations for this missing issue, it is possible that food security fell implicitly under discussions around poverty and economic growth, and that they were not explicitly raised as concerns amongst the participants in the consultations.

Governance

The consultations on the topic of governance particularly emphasized the need for governments to develop frameworks for action and policies that will support gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's human rights. Accountability mechanisms strengthen the ability of politicians and leaders to promote and sustain gender-sensitive strategies (e.g. Philippines). Good governance and gender-sensitive policy-making are not only good for women, but are also good for development overall (e.g. Benin). Some consultations mentioned governance issues that undermine gender equality, such as a failure to rectify the human insecurity that comes through regional disparities (Egypt) and the failure of governments to account for the position of women, instead opting for 'gender neutral' policies that obscure women's particular needs and experiences (Moldova). Part of the problem is that women remain excluded from decision-making positions in the governance domain (e.g. Montenegro; Vietnam). The consultations report that it is important to ensure that legislative frameworks are in place to protect women and that governance institutions function under a coherent gender-sensitive strategy to ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all policy areas (Serbia).

Conflict, Violence and Disaster

There was a very limited amount of discussion within the national consultations on gender equality in the context of conflict, violence and disaster. This may be because many of the reports came from countries that experience relative peace. It may also be because the focus on violence against women was framed in many of the reports as a separate and distinct issue to address in the post-2015 development agenda. Thus, while violence against women received a fair amount of attention – as has already been mentioned – there was a limited focus in this domain on gender equality in the context of peace and security, and natural disasters. The report from Papua New Guinea identified a priority issue being action on ending gender-based violence, tribal warfare, child abuse and all other forms of violence and exploitation. The report from Saint Lucia highlighted additional forms of violence, such as trafficking in human beings, torture, sexual abuse and labor exploitation.

The report from the Philippines offered one of the only discussions of the need to engender peace and security through an explicit discussion of gender equality in the peace and security domain. It argued that dominant security paradigms are either unresponsive to women's needs or perpetuate gender inequality, and that inclusive security and safety should be promoted (Philippines). It discusses the successful implementation of the Bangsamoro peace agreement, which includes a more gender-responsive Shari'ah court system (Philippines). It explains that to engender peace, women's contributions to peace and security should be valued; women's rights and gender equality should be part of the political agenda; women's representation in politics should be increased; and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 should be fully implemented (Philippines).

Population Dynamics

As part of the consultations on population dynamics, there were two key issues raised that incorporated an explicitly gendered lens: family planning and migration. First, many of the countries reporting on this issue are currently experiencing a shift in fertility rates. On the one hand, in Turkey, fertility in general is decreasing and a new pro-natalist discourse is being launched to increase fertility rates. On the other hand, the Philippines is experiencing a high fertility rate, and especially amongst the poor. In both cases, it is necessary to ensure women's access to effective family planning and reproductive health information and services that would allow women and families to plan the number and spacing of their children (Philippines; Turkey). Access to family planning and reproductive health services was raised as an important issue for women in several reports, including in Malawi, where most policy frameworks, national programmes and district development plans do not reflect population challenges such as rapid growth, inadequate reproductive services and gender disparities in access. Family planning was raised as an important issue in Niger due to the relationship between early marriage, early delivery and high fertility rates among young people, which can also lead to heightened rates of maternal mortality.

The issue of migration was also raised within several national consultations on population dynamics. In the case of the Philippines, overseas Filipino workers make a significant contribution to the domestic economy through remittances. Considering that a significant proportion of these workers are women, who are employed in jobs that may not offer security or social protection, the consultation called for the implementation of strong gender-responsive social protection interventions for migrant workers (Philippines). Similarly, the report from Vietnam noted that female live-in domestic workers are often exploited, sexually harassed and have unsafe working environments. From the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region, the report from Moldova noted that while men mostly migrate for seasonal work, women tend to migrate for longer-term periods. Even when men leave and women remain, women take on additional burdens in the household (Azerbaijan). One significant problem for migrants is lack of access to health care, especially when influxes of migration result in illegal employment (Turkey).

Water

A small number of national consultation reports, primarily from Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted the relationship between gender equality and access to clean water and sanitation. In Benin,

access to clean water is the third priority area for development in the post-2015 period, and the report notes that this priority is greater for females than for males. The report from Mauritania explains that better access to clean water is essential, especially for rural women. An improvement in equitable access to quality water in both urban and rural populations is a priority in the consultations in Mozambique, especially where “women and children are the ones who suffer the most to gain access to this precious liquid” (Mozambique). Respondents in the consultations in Malawi indicated that long distances that women travel to fetch water have been detrimental to health and to productive activities, and that infrastructure should be put in place to save women the time and effort of water collection as a means to improve childcare, education and economic development. Beyond Sub-Saharan Africa, the report from Philippines explains that poor access to water and sanitation often places a high burden on women who manage households, and that water, sanitation and hygiene targets should aim to reduce inequalities and should reflect human rights obligations to women.

Energy

The reporting on the national consultations on energy was very limited in its attention to gender equality and women’s rights. The report from the Philippines explained that universal access to sustainable energy cuts across the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, and that it is linked to the country’s other priorities such as improving the welfare of women and children. The report from Ghana noted that fuel wood is an important area for discussion due to the acute fuel wood shortage, and because women have to travel long distances and spend a significant amount of time searching for firewood as fuel. The reporting on the relationship between gender equality and energy could have been significantly elaborated in the consultations, especially considering the productive role that women play in the household in many countries. However, because the reports reflect the priorities of the people involved in the consultations, this failure to address gender equality and energy indicate that this may not yet be a key priority area for some/many people.

What should the post-2015 framework look like?

This section analyzes some of the more specific suggestions given as to what the post-2015 development agenda should look like. Many of the reports did not explicitly suggest goals, targets and indicators that should be adopted by the global community. Where national consultations determined specific goals and targets, they are included here. However, this section also looks at broad trends that arose in many of the reports, such as a call for ensuring the collection of sex-disaggregated data. It also highlights some of the discussions from the reports on how the post-2015 goals should build upon or differ from the MDGs.

Given that gender equality was identified as a priority issue across most of the national consultations reports, these same reports identified ways that the post-2015 agenda should incorporate gender equality as a central pillar. Specifically, gender equality should be mainstreamed throughout the entire agenda, with clear gender-based indicators (e.g. China; India). The post-2015 agenda should incorporate a human rights-based approach to development, based on the principles of CEDAW (India). A priority issue should be the collection of sex-disaggregated statistical data and gender should be mainstreamed through all of the targets and indicators (Azerbaijan; China; Costa Rica; India). Government budgeting should focus on how to

incorporate gender equality into all development activities, to ensure that this issue remains a priority and receives the necessary funding (Malawi; Costa Rica). The post-2015 agenda should also consider the intersection of oppressions and discrimination that women face (Costa Rica).

Several reports noted how the post-2015 agenda should build upon or differ from the MDGs. The report from Bangladesh noted that the priority for the post-2015 agenda is ‘unleashing human potential for sustainable development’ but that it should “avoid duplicating a critical MDG misstep: while inclusiveness, human rights, equity, dignity and gender equality were ubiquitous in the language around the Goals, they were lost in the translation into the Goals themselves” (Bangladesh). As such, the MDGs missed a crucial opportunity to address the structural causes of gender inequality, to facilitate sustainable development (Bangladesh). Likewise, the report from Vietnam noted that the challenge for the post-MDG framework is how to represent complex issues related to human development as quantitative and aggregated targets. For Vietnam, it is essential that the post-2015 agenda rectifies some of the drawbacks of the MDGs, such as its failure to represent domestic and sexual violence within the targets. It also called for the new framework to better reflect how inequalities within countries can be recognized and reflected in the new targets (Vietnam). While the MDGs, with their measurable and time-bound goals and targets were very relevant to many countries (e.g. Papua New Guinea), any new development agenda must also take into account how the context for development has changed since the agreement on the MDGs (India).

Some national consultations reports went further to highlight the actual goals, targets and indicators that could be used in the post-2015 agenda, which are highlighted here where gender or women were featured. China suggested a goal to ‘ensure women can enjoy a certain quality of health care services, especially reproductive health and planning services’, and ‘protect the education rights and opportunities for women’. India recommended a goal that ‘all people, irrespective of economic, social and physical ability, gender and sexual orientation have access to resources and respect’. Several reports recommended indicators on gender-based violence (Kazakhstan; Senegal). Costa Rica recommended a change in focus from ‘empowerment’ to ‘women’s emancipation’, and suggested the inclusion of sexual and reproductive rights and women’s land rights and access as part of the new agenda. India also recommended that the framework look at asset creation for women, such as land titles and livestock ownership, and also inheritance rights.

The report from Bangladesh offered the most comprehensive listing of what the standalone gender goal could include. In its goal to ‘achieve equality between women and men’, the report outlined the following proposed targets and indicators:

- Target 1: Eliminate violence against women and girls
 - Proportion of women over 15 years old (by age, rural/urban location) subjected to physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months by perpetrators
 - Percentage of people (by sex, age) who think it is never justified for a man to beat his wife/partner
 - Proportion of women over 15 years old (by age, rural/urban location) subjected to physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months who reported it to the justice system

- Proportion of police officers who are women (rural/urban)
- Target 2: Promote the human rights of adolescent girls
 - Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18
 - Maternal mortality ratios for girls 18 and under)
 - Transition rates from primary to secondary education of adolescent girls from the two lowest wealth quintiles
 - Proportion of secondary school teachers who are women
 - Rates of sexual, physical or psychological violence experienced by adolescent girls in the previous 12 months, by location or perpetrator
 - Percentage of girls participating in collective activities or organizations that are not linked to the family or required by the school
- Target 3: Women and men benefit equally from the economy
 - Average number of weekly hours spent on unpaid domestic work, by sex and age
 - Average number of weekly hours spent on unpaid agricultural work, by sex and age
 - Percentage of adult population owning land, by sex
 - Proportion of women in the labour market who are in the lowest income category compared to the proportion of men
 - Share of women graduates in higher-paid trades and occupations (such as science, commerce, engineering, construction) at secondary and tertiary levels
- Target 4: Women have an equal say in decisions that affect their lives
 - Percentage of women who have a say in household decisions regarding purchase, own health, contraception and visiting relatives
 - Percentage of women aged 20-24 who had a say in when and whom to marry
 - Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments
 - Proportion of seats held by women in local governments
 - Percentage of private-sector managers who are women
 - Percentage of media professionals who are women

This level of detail in terms of outlining the specific goals, targets and indicators was very rare in the national consultations reports and most reports did not go so far as to outline an explicit vision for the future, beyond a thematic discussion of what issues should generally be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.

Some reports also included goals and targets for policy areas beyond a standalone gender goal, and demonstrated how gender could be mainstreamed through these targets. Bangladesh noted that a goal on ‘inclusive economic growth’ could include the target to “ensure full employment and rapid growth in decent work and secure equal pay for equal work for men and women at home and abroad”, including sex-disaggregated indicators on labor market participation, percentage of workers within the informal sector, and ratio of women’s to men’s median wage (Bangladesh). Costa Rica suggested that the goal on employment should include sex-disaggregated data on wages, to determine inequality in wages. The Philippines suggested that national targets on employment should provide sex- and age-disaggregated indicators to address women and other vulnerable groups’ special needs in employment, and to measure the ratio of participation in agriculture and in the informal economy. This report also mentioned that a goal

on full and productive employment should include access to social protections and services (Philippines).

Bangladesh recommended a target to improve dietary diversity, including an indicator on the proportion of women aged 14-19 years taking more than 5 out of 9 food groups per day. In environmental sustainability, Bangladesh seeks ‘to implement, strengthen and promote accountable decision-making institutions, employing an inclusive and participatory process involving women’, and also to ‘promote the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, using community-based approaches targeting women and young people’.

Conclusion: Moving Forward with the Post-2015 Agenda

In conclusion, the reports from the national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda are important for determining the real-life priorities that could improve the lives of local people and citizens around the world. The broad-base approach of the consultations meant that many different stakeholders were able to engage in discussion and conversation on what they see as the key development priorities for the future. Women and women’s organizations were reported to be central to these consultations and played a key role in contributing to discussions about what the post-2015 framework should look like. The efforts of the UN and governments to incorporate women, youth, and marginalized groups into these processes has broadened the findings and has provided a more accurate reflection of the needs and experiences of diverse stakeholders across societies.

One finding is clear from these consultations: a focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment has become a central priority for many people around the world. People around the world are increasingly recognizing that sustainable development depends on equitable and inclusive policies and strategies. These consultations present countries with the opportunity to listen to the voices of their people when they say that gender equality and women’s empowerment need to be central in any new development agenda, especially because a failure to meet the gender equality MDG and to mainstream gender equality into the original MDG framework, has limited their overall ability to meet these development goals.

However, despite the progress that is clearly being made overall in making gender equality a central concern in any future development framework, gender mainstreaming was still limited in many of the thematic consultations and in some of the national consultation reports. While this doesn’t necessarily mean that gender equality will not be incorporated into whatever framework is finalized, a discussion of how gender equality is essential for consideration in any discussion of energy, food security, macroeconomic policy, and governance policies was very limited within the consultation reports. Obviously these issues were not the priorities of the participants in the consultations, who emphasized the importance of access to health and education, and especially decent employment. However, overall, it is promising to see how most discussions around the new post-2015 development agenda are prioritizing the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Annex 1: List of Country Consultation Reports Used in this Analysis

Albania	Montenegro
Azerbaijan	Morocco
Bangladesh	Mozambique
Benin	Niger
Bhutan	Papua New Guinea
Burkina Faso	Philippines
China	Saint Lucia
Costa Rica	Samoa
Egypt	Senegal
Ethiopia	Serbia
Gabon	Tajikistan
Ghana	Timor Leste
India	Tanzania
Kazakhstan	Togo
Kosovo	Turkey
Malawi	Turkmenistan
Mauritania	Vietnam
Moldova	