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## Commission on the Status of Women

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

## **Managing the transition from Millennium Development Goals to sustainable development goals: lessons learned for gender equality from the Millennium Development Goals and galvanizing transformative change**

### **Chair’s summary**

1. On 19 March 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women convened an interactive panel discussion on the topic of “Managing the transition from MDGs to SDGs: Lessons learned for gender equality from the MDGs to galvanize transformative change”. The meeting was chaired by Mohamed ElBahi, Vice-Chair of the Commission, Sudan. Senior Research Fellow, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, and former United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, moderated the discussion. The panellists were: former professor of public policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and adjunct professor of global health and population, Harvard University, Gita Sen; Noelene Nabulivou, of Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, Fiji, and associate of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era; president, Center for the Study of Justice and Resolution 1325, Democratic Republic of Congo, Irène Esambo; and, UN Senior Coordinator, “Fit for Purpose” for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, John Hendra. Contributions to the discussion included interventions from 17 Member States, one regional group and two civil society organizations. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, provided closing remarks.

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2. Participants in the interactive panel discussion focussed on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from a gender perspective and identified priorities for ensuring the effective implementation of the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for women and girls.

***Gender equality as a central priority for the Sustainable Development Goals***

3. There was widespread confirmation for gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls to be a central priority in the future SDGs. Participants agreed on the need for a standalone goal on gender equality that expands on the areas covered by the MDGs. In this respect, many participants highlighted the importance of completing the unfinished business of the MDGs, with reference to areas such as maternal mortality, access to family planning, women's political participation, water and sanitation, poverty eradication, access to decent work and quality education for all. Looking ahead, there was support for a more comprehensive approach to gender equality in the SDGs, as reflected in the proposed SDG 5 of the Open Working Group on "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls".
4. Participants emphasized that to achieve sustainable development and human rights for all, gender inequalities must be addressed in all three dimensions – economic, social and environmental; and that systematic gender mainstreaming through goals, targets and indicators across the framework was essential to ensure the integration of a gender perspective more broadly.
5. Participants agreed that it was important for the future agenda to look beyond national averages to ensure that the goals and targets are implemented and monitored for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
6. Several participants highlighted the importance of all human rights to be central to the implementation of the SDGs. Specifically, the importance of aligning with and building on existing frameworks such as the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was emphasized.

***Stronger monitoring and accountability mechanisms as a priority***

7. Participants emphasized need for stronger monitoring mechanisms and systems of accountability to ensure global commitments on women and girls are realized in the post-2015 context. There was a particular emphasis on mechanisms to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming across all policies and programmes. Examples of effective accountability systems and mechanisms of monitoring raised include parliamentary reviews, peer-review mechanisms, inter-ministerial taskforces for monitoring of goals and robust systems of national reporting. Participants also recommended that human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Universal Periodic Review could be used more effectively in monitoring efforts.

8. A view was expressed that a significant challenge for effectively monitoring progress towards gender equality, women's empowerment and the human rights of women and girls, is the lack of quality sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics. In this regard, the need for investments to increase statistical capacity for measuring and understanding gender inequalities in a comprehensive manner and to monitor progress and evaluate the implementation of all the SDGs for women and girls was proposed. Disaggregation by multiple factors to monitor progress for the most marginalized groups of women and girls was also mentioned.
9. Participants also acknowledged the role of the United Nations system in supporting all countries, in delivering on the SDGs for women and girls and called on the United Nations system to support national planning and reporting to implement the SDGs as well as the establishment of partnerships.
10. Participants also confirmed the vital role of women's civil society organizations in raising gender-specific concerns and monitoring the implementation of policies and programmes. Several participants acknowledged the need to increase the space, resources, and support for women's civil society organizations.

***Investments needed to match the ambition of the future agenda***

11. The lack of resources for the implementation of the MDGs for women and girls was highlighted as a major obstacle for achieving the targets. Participants gave examples of insufficient resources allocated to the implementation of gender equality laws, policies and national action plans, as well as for national gender equality mechanisms. They also noted low levels of resources allocated to sectors such as social protection, health, education and water and sanitation.
12. Increasing investments in gender equality was emphasized as an urgent priority for effectively implementing the SDGs. Participants agreed that the future agenda requires domestic resource mobilization to increase allocations to gender equality across all sectors in national budgets, as well as the increased official development assistance for gender equality. The importance of south-south cooperation was also highlighted.
13. Participants also raised the need to ensure greater alignment between macroeconomic policies and gender equality and sustainable development outcomes. Participants stressed the need for macroeconomic policies to expand fiscal space to increase investments in gender equality. Gender-responsive budgeting and planning was highlighted as an effective strategy for monitoring investments in gender equality and ensuring transparency.

***The need for an enabling environment for gender equality***

14. Participants emphasized that creating an enabling environment for gender equality needs to be a crucial priority for the SDGs to be effectively implemented for women and girls. Participants drew attention to the negative impacts of the 2007/2008 financial crisis on the achievement of the MDGs for women and girls and stressed the need to build a global economic architecture, including a fair and equitable international trade and financial regime that enables all countries to achieve gender equality and sustainable development outcomes. Participants highlighted the need for gender perspectives to be

integrated in future commitments around global partnership, technology transfer and capacity building.

15. Participants warned about the current and future challenges posed by climate change, particularly for the most marginalized women and girls. In this respect, several participants emphasized the importance for the new climate agreement to effectively address gender equality. Ensuring the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – in the implementation of the SDGs was also highlighted as a priority.
16. The specific challenges of meeting with MDG targets for women and girls in countries affected by conflict were raised by participants. In this respect, participants proposed that the implementation of the future Sustainable Development Goals be aligned with key global commitments on women, peace and security, such as the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.