

Multi-Stakeholder Forum on “Implementing the 2030 Agenda to Accelerate Realization of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.”

21 January 2016

Opening Remarks

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Leaders from Civil Society,
Colleagues and Friends,

I welcome you to UN-Women’s Multi-Stakeholder Forum in the lead-up to the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60), which will convene under the priority theme of “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”. We are heartened to see such a high level of interest and participation.

I thank the many distinguished Permanent Representatives for accepting our invitation to contribute as moderators, panelists or lead discussants.

I also thank civil society leaders and colleagues from the UN system who have joined us today. Together, we can bring about real progress for women and girls.

CSW60 will be the first session of the Commission after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The priority theme of CSW60 is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so that we can ensure that the new universal agenda for sustainable development is indeed implemented in a gender-responsive manner.

Such an early focus on implementation is especially timely as countries are now putting in place their plans, structures, institutions, resources, and timelines towards achieving the SDGs. We must fully seize this opportunity.

Normative achievements

CSW60 can and must build on the significant normative achievements from this past year. Indeed, 2015 was a remarkable year of commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights. It was a year that highlighted as never before that realizing gender equality and women’s empowerment is not only a goal in itself but crucial to all human endeavour: for achieving sustainable development; for realizing peace, security, and humanitarian action; for realizing human rights.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development prioritized gender equality and women's empowerment in clear and explicit ways. They did so also in response to the Political Declaration adopted by Member States on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, at CSW59. Together, these commitments gave new momentum for accelerated implementation. This momentum was further carried towards action at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which UN-Women co-organized with the People's Republic of China on 27 September 2015. 64 Heads of State and Government vowed to "step it up" by taking concrete actions to implement the Beijing Platform in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In total, 140 countries participated in the event, as did leaders from civil society and the private sector. Also of historic importance was the 15-year review of Security Council resolution 1325, and the global study, which gave impetus to resolution 2242 vowed to integrate WPS monitoring and accountability systematically into the working of the UNSC itself. The Paris Agreement also constituted a breakthrough: for the first time, a Climate Treaty in its Preamble commits Parties, when taking action to address climate change, to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, as well as on gender equality, and the empowerment of women.

Taken together, the centrality and priority of gender equality and women's empowerment in the normative framework must now be followed with gender-responsive implementation. Words must be followed by deeds – clear, tangible, measurable action that is monitored and evaluated, with accountability to the world's women and girls.

Such action is more urgent than ever before: the Beijing+20 review process revealed that there has been progress, but it is uneven and unacceptably slow and many structural barriers remain. Full, effective and accelerated implementation requires strengthened laws, policies and programmes and their translation into practice; transformation of discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes; significantly increased investment to close the gender resource gap including through prioritization in domestic resource mobilization and allocation and in official development assistance (ODA). Such implementation also requires strengthened data, monitoring and accountability processes; and last but not least, significantly strengthened national gender equality mechanisms. Civil society and women's organizations must be able to play their key role as advocates and champions.

Excellencies,
Dear friends,

As we prepare for CSW60, let me emphasize that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the Beijing Platform for Action as a foundational framework for sustainable development. This means implementation of the Platform for Action is thus a decisive contribution to the goals of the Agenda. From a gender equality perspective, the Agenda's universal, indivisible

and human rights-based approach, and the promise to “leave no one behind” is not only of fundamental importance, it is a necessity.

“Sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.” The stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG5) has targets that address many important barriers that need to be removed in order to achieve the goal. Gender equality is also integrated across 11 other SDGs including on poverty, hunger, health, education, water and sanitation, employment, just and peaceful societies, sustainable cities, and economic growth. Data and follow up and review are to be gender sensitive.

Looking Ahead

CSW60 has not only the opportunity – indeed this is the expectation – to help transform the lives of women and girls everywhere. For this to happen, it is imperative that as countries proceed with “localization” of the SDGs, all strategies, policies and programmes, constitutions, laws and regulations, funding and institutions are aligned to support realization of the gender equality commitments.

CSW60 should therefore identify the urgent actions and key enabling conditions needed for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It should provide concrete guidance on how to translate the commitments and gains from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and its own 2015 Political Declaration into concrete steps and measures towards realizing ‘Planet 50-50’ by 2030.

As we prepare here in New York, regional consultations are taking place in Addis Ababa – indeed as we speak, hosted by UN Women and ECA. Next week, ECLAC and UN Women are hosting an event in preparation for CSW60 in Santiago Chile. And UN Women Asia Pacific Office will host an event later in February.

Today’s Forum is a stepping stone towards the session. We are proposing four key areas for discussion that are also addressed in the Secretary-General’s report for the priority theme, which is expected to be issued soon. They are in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform for Action. These areas are key to gender-responsive implementation:

- How can institutional arrangements ensure gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How do we achieve financing gender equality and women’s empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- How do we strengthen the evidence for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- And how do we ensure participation and leadership of women's organizations and gender equality advocates in the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

We have four panels to address each of these areas. I encourage panelists and participants to highlight key areas for implementation and commit to further action. We are looking to your leadership and commitment today and at CSW60, and will count on you as champions for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and for a successful CSW60.