



TOWARDS PLANET 50-50 BY 2030

UN WOMEN GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE: GALVANIZING ACTION
FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT



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CIVIL SOCIETY SECTION
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
TOWARDS PLANET 50-50 BY 2030	4
I. Context and Background	4
II. What did we hope to achieve?	4
III. What happened? Earthquakes, disruptions, dreaming and action	4
IV. Key Themes in the Discussions	5
V. Engaging Allies and Strategic Partners: Changing social attitudes, challenging cultural obstacles and securing new space to achieve gender equality	10
VI. Commission on the Status of Women 60: New approaches for the future	12
VII. The Way Forward: Concrete Steps for Taking the Agenda to 2030	15
VIII. A New Compact for Action	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A VIEW FROM THE TOP

The Global Civil Society Dialogue took place in New York, on 23-24 November 2015. The Dialogue was the culmination of a series of regional consultations throughout 2015, led by UN Women, with Civil Society Advisory Group members (CSAGs) and other local constituencies. The Dialogue in New York brought together members of the CSAGs as well as other civil society, social justice and gender equality stakeholders from each region of the world, to discuss prioritized actions with the aim of eliciting concrete and innovative recommendations for the accelerated achievement of the gender equality agenda by 2030.

The discussions were organized into regional groups, including Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean and a Global group that comprised participants from developed countries. Breakout discussions were also organized around key themes which have been distilled over the course of the global consultations, including the contraction of democratic spaces for civil society, bridging the funding gap for gender equality, working with men and boys as partners for gender equality, developing a feminist faith discourse on gender equality among others.

Over the two-days a number of strains emerged across both the regional and thematic discussions: *Intersectionality; leading from the ground; the inter-linking challenges facing gender equality and the broad and complex SDG agenda; the diminished space for civil society; the importance of revitalizing the global women's movement; shifting funding priorities and the inadequate fiscal attention to gender equality; optimizing UN Women's voice and influence within the UN system and the international community; the need for more data to strengthen political attention to gender equality and the role of women in peace, security and humanitarian agendas.* Discussions also touched on engagement with key allies such as the private sector, parliamentarians and governments, faith-based organizations, men and boys, youth movements and the media. In addition, there was a session dedicated

to making CSW more relevant to the needs and demands of women's organizations in the 21st century.

Several topics emerged repeatedly throughout the discussions, such as the need for stronger coalitions and networks, increased collaboration with and support from UN Women on strengthening the women's movement, and the crucial interplay of the gender equality agenda with the SDGs and other global agendas.

“In this moment, I think we need to work not only as separate sectors—indigenous women or feminists or left[ists] or funcionarios...We need to build [a] common vision about the human rights, as persons, as peoples and as women. Women in different levels of education or position. Women with different cultures, with different point[s] of view, maybe with different cosmovisions.”

— Tarcila Rivera Zea, Executive Director, Chirapaq; Member of UN Women Global CSAG

The discussions were both broad and deep, and in addition to a wide range of general suggestions, participants put forth several top-level, concrete, innovative recommendations, including:

- Creating a Grand Coalition of Member States for Women's Rights

- Mobilizing for a 5th World Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Rights
- The Creation of a High-level Independent Commission on Financing for Gender Equality
- Making Gender Responsive Budgeting compulsory in specific contexts
- A variety of mapping mechanisms for knowledge development, monitoring and accountability
- Developing operational guidelines for governments on gender-responsive SDG implementation
- Creating localized five-year action plans towards SDG achievement
- Creating a network of student-led UN Women Campus Chapters at universities

“The way all empowered women were together, and the way we all are all planning the strategies to bring change and to make this place a better place for women to live, it was great! The Planet 50/50 concept, the idea, is brilliant and everybody's working towards this...Being a Belochi girl, when I came here what I noticed was how people are so willing to bring that change for women. What I'm going to take back is that hope, that there is something big which is happening here, and people are there to help us. I think this is the need of the hour, this one hope for many women in Pakistan will change their life.”

– Muniba Mazari, UN Women National Ambassador, Pakistan





“We can only dislodge patriarchy’s stubborn hold if we abandon incremental change and coordinate the bold and the big steps we are itching to take. We need an equivalent of that apocryphal story when all the schoolchildren in China jumped together and created an earthquake. We need a series of earthquakes that bring down a pillar of patriarchy every time we jump together, on the same issues and at the same time, in every corner of the world.

There is a critical difference between a thousand women jumping separately and millions of women jumping together at the same time. The first is a fragmented series of small actions. The second can cause an earthquake to make the patriarchal pillars crumble.”

– Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women



TOWARDS PLANET 50-50 BY 2030

UN WOMEN GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE: GALVANIZING ACTION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT

I. Context and background

The Global Civil Society Dialogue comes at a time of extraordinary gains and extraordinary challenges in the gender equality movement. 2015 has seen transcendental shifts in the normative and political *intentions* of world leaders and societies towards gender equality. We only need look at what was achieved at the 70th General Assembly and the recent Global Leaders Meeting, where some 80 heads of state made concrete commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. This transcendental shift is further evidenced in the momentous, unanimous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their far reaching aspiration for prosperity for all people on this planet.

Our celebration is tempered by the devastating setbacks we have experienced in the form of the crystallization of a discourse of violence, exclusion and hate, which has put women's rights squarely in its crosshairs. In the last few years, we have seen societies turning inward and governments shifting to the right. Meanwhile, more and more states are becoming increasingly authoritarian, squeezing civic spaces and cracking down on the dissent and critique that is vital to women's rights and social justice movements everywhere.

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: [Planet 50/50 by 2030](#). While the successes of the women's movement have been hard fought and significant in terms of normative policy gains, real change has come more slowly, and is not yet irreversible. At this moment, there is broad recognition that

alliance building in feminist advocacy and in political engagement, in order to influence the international agenda and realize women and girls' rights at the national level, is imperative.

II. What did we hope to achieve?

As the culmination of a series of consultations with civil society members, we hoped to continue to flesh out the decisive themes that will lead action around common, agreed approaches for reaching gender equality. Through the Dialogue, we aspired for the continued exchange of knowledge, ideas and opportunities and the emergence of a shared vision. Our aim was to come out of the Dialogue with concrete recommendations for prioritized plans for advocacy and implementation on the ground that will ultimately realize the Planet 50/50 by 2030 agenda. The resulting outcomes will also help inform the CSW60 intergovernmental discussions taking place in March, 2016 and provide valuable guidance for UN Women to take its work forward toward 2030.

III. What happened? Earthquakes, disruptions, dreaming and action

It was this powerful imagery that helped set the tone for the next two days. The shared determination of all those in the room to seize this moment and make

"It is our time. It is time to pull from the learning, draw from the dream and set the stage for what we are going to do individually, collectively and as a movement."

— Mallika Dutt, Executive Director, Breakthrough

sure that their voices were heard and their messages were amplified—within the conference walls and beyond—was palpable.

The discussions were vibrant, passionate, pragmatic and, at times, tense and critical. But the result was to help establish new ways of thinking and concrete proposals for joint action by UN Women and civil society organizations (CSOs).

“A lot of work remains to be done on fully comprehending the meaning and relevance of intersectionality. Structures of inequality interrelate and need to be understood as such to lead us...with effect and lasting impact.”

– Purna Sen, Director, Policy Division, UN Women

IV. Key themes in the discussions

Intersectionality and leaving no one behind

From the very outset, the importance of creating a wholly inclusive agenda which puts the voices and needs of those marginalized—women and girls who suffer from multiple and intersecting disadvantages and discrimination—was identified as a critical priority. Speakers in the plenaries and participants in break-out sessions alike were quick to point out that failing to put first the needs of the most marginalized will ultimately undermine the larger equality agenda. Several participants challenged all in attendance to look honestly at who is at the table, and who isn't, before calling on all to bring those women—poor, rural, grassroots women, women from different castes, classes, ethnicities, religions, races and sexualities—to the fore.

Leading from the ground

There was wide recognition that it is civil society, working in concert, which will drive the normative change crucial to women's rights, and lead the charge to hold governments accountable to implement policies and decisions taken at the national, regional and international levels. Participants called on UN

“We cannot leave anyone behind, most importantly because those who are most discriminated...are the targets of the pervasive patriarchy that we've talked about, and they must be at the forefront of attacking that patriarchy.”

– Hakima Abbas, Director of Programmes, AWID

Women to leverage its power, capacity and resources to enable monitoring, scaling and cross-pollination of civil society knowledge and expertise, and to play a stronger role in supporting the pathways for idea-sharing, south-south collaboration and the linkages among the grassroots, national, regional and international levels. Many repeated the need for more local, national and regional meetings and face-to-face dialogues in preparation of international convenings to bring organized, inclusive messages and frameworks for action to international fora. Participants called on UN Women to work with civil society actors to assess more robustly, the efficacy of current programmes and interventions, and to recognize that decisions taken at the UN Women level aren't always representative of the realities on the ground nor are they always inclusive of local CSOs and their experience and knowledge.

Interconnectivity of challenges and the broad agenda for gender equality by 2030:

The challenges facing women and the agenda for gender equality are interconnected and multiplying. Women are at the core of these challenges, which emanate from economic crises and the government responses to them, threats to security including violence, conflict and terrorism, the slow pace and ineffectiveness of political reforms and degradation of the environment. To meet the complex challenges, participants agreed that rather than multiple siloes and competing agendas, more effort is needed to 'knit' together the SDGs, CEDAW,¹ the Beijing Platform

¹ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.



for Action,² the WPS resolutions,³ regional conventions and other instruments into a cohesive and inclusive strategy. Discussions centered on the need for information and technical capacity to understand these links and make connections so that responses can be both strategic and tactical, and will maximize limited (and shrinking) resources by hitting on multiple indicators at once.

The SDGs featured heavily throughout the two days, as these globally agreed Goals will shape the development discourse and agenda for the next 15 years. The SDGs themselves are broad and meant to be universal and indivisible. However, many in attendance shared

² The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was the result of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in September 1995, in Beijing, China. Over 17,000 participants from 189 government delegations, lobbied by over the over 30,000 activists attending a parallel Forum, worked to reach an unprecedented global commitment and blueprint to work towards gender equality.

³ The Women, Peace and Security resolutions are a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions which mandate that women and gender should be considered in all aspects of peace and security, and are aimed at addressing how women are affected by violent conflict. As of October, 2015, there are now seven WPS resolutions, starting with resolution 1325 (2000) and followed by 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

“UN Women is clear: Planet 50/50 by 2030 is not going to be achieved without the wisdom, scholarship, experience, actions, advocacy and mobilization of civil society.”

– Lopa Banerjee, Chief, Civil Society Section, UN Women

concerns that there is a fundamental lack of understanding of the SDGs and their indicators among civil society and citizens—and even among the governments who agreed on them. Civil society members called on UN Women to play a catalytic leadership role to help Member States establish civil society working groups in each country (these could be the CSAGs, where they exist) that would advise governments on implementation over the next 15 years, provide policy guidance, and ensure a universal, gendered comprehension of the SDGs across actors.

The need for more data

A great deal of emphasis was placed on the importance of showing governments concrete data on their own progress towards gender equality indicators as critical for accountability. Similarly, funders need to see the data on how the interventions they fund are changing women’s lives for the better. Participants agreed that civil society can play a much stronger role

in data collection and evaluation and that UN Women could work in partnership with CSOs to establish 'data observatories' where States' progress towards reaching commitments can be monitored, evaluated and communicated effectively. UN Women was also called on to work directly with Member States to strengthen national statistics offices and facilitate greater cooperation among these offices, women's civil society groups and UN Women Country Offices in identifying indicators and gathering and analyzing data.

“Talking about shrinking democratic space at #GCSD2015, importance of WHRD networks and how UN women can amplify the solidarity.”

– AWID @AWID Nov 23

The contracting space for civil society

In plenaries and break-out discussions, participants identified multiple and overlapping factors that are constricting democratic space and limiting critical civic engagement, resulting in a dynamic where, in virtually every corner of the globe, the space for women's CSOs to operate is in decline and increasingly under attack. The challenge is for civil society and activists to bridge sectoral and thematic divides that distinguish their work and come together to find creative, multidisciplinary and heterogeneous approaches to reopen and bolster democratic spaces. While UN Women can play a central role in facilitating the kind of cooperation and collaboration needed, attendees stressed that it is important for UN Women to also call out and challenge States whose actions limit and attack CSOs. As one participant stated, “where civil society space is shrinking the most is where we need UN Women the most.”

The shrinking pool of funding for the women's rights agenda

Financing for women's rights has contracted dramatically in recent years, and there was much concern about governments and donors cutting financial support to women's rights, shifting away from core funding towards project-based funding, increasingly prioritizing the immediate response to the European refugee crisis at the risk of failing to address long term

and structural issues including gender equality that have resulted in the crisis; and, in the wake of terrorist threats, focusing resources away from supporting civil society as governments pivot towards securitization. Attendees also discussed a troubling 'new normal,' which is seeing ever more donors funding large private funds such as the Gates Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative over directly financing women's and feminist grassroots initiatives.

In this context, participants were adamant that women's civil society must reject the rhetoric of scarcity that privileges pouring more resources into public-private partnerships. Instead, there is an essential need for a counter-narrative that advocates for establishing and strengthening long-term public funding mechanisms, and highlights both the benefit of funding the women's rights agenda, as well as the consequences of not doing so, especially in terms of economic and social losses.

The discussions also called for CSOs to work across government sectors, engaging with Parliaments and finding allies among parliamentarians, as well as working with Ministries of Finance and others, to leverage 'new' sources of funding for gender equality. UN Women was urged to help build capacities among CSOs to secure resources from non-traditional sources, and to do more to strengthen Women's Funds globally.

Finally, participants urged everyone to move beyond looking at 'micro' financing as a viable strategy and instead focus on macroeconomic agendas and macro solutions for gender equality financing.

“We must find a very strong narrative to articulate the importance of investing in women in a way that is very different than ever before.”

– Participant, Global Civil Society Dialogue

Revitalizing the global women's movement

Together, the challenges outlined above have had a detrimental impact on the global women's movement. The discussants underscored that priority must be

“The feminist movement is the longest, largest, most comprehensive movement for equality and justice in the world, and it can be the fiercest bulwark against the hatred and discrimination, the conflict, xenophobia and racism that we see in the world today.”

– Lopa Banerjee, Chief, Civil Society Section, UN Women

given to strengthening existing national, regional and international coalitions and networks. Moreover, thematic, issue-based and inclusive coalitions that cross boundaries of geography, subject, constituency and objective and that expand into new spaces and forge new alliances are all essential to meet the overlapping and interconnected challenges facing women—and the world—today. UN Women can help foster such coalitions. Although there was a great deal of discussion around cooperation and collaboration, there was also talk about identifying the ‘non-negotiables’ both within broadening and diversifying coalitions and within evolving feminist movements.

Women, peace and security and Humanitarian agendas

Amid the current setting of global conflicts and environmental disasters, the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian (WPSH) agenda has taken center stage. While there was recognition that UN Women can do much to promote the WPSH agenda, it was clearly felt that civil society members must lead the charge to hold Member States and UN actors alike accountable to their commitments to women, peace and security and humanitarian goals.

For example, attendees identified that more awareness-building is needed about 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security resolutions generally and specifically among grassroots and conflict-affected women, and in the context of all other peace-making efforts. They also suggested that UN Women advocate for the inclusion of a quota on women’s participation in the composition of any negotiation or peace process, including both UN-led and bilateral processes. UN Women should also document and share best practices, key lessons and strategies for WPSH across countries and facilitate regional exchange through

face-to-face forums. In addition, UN Women should prioritize broad dissemination and uptake of findings and key recommendations found in the 15 year review of resolution 1325, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*.

There was much concern around increasing militarization, as well as the reluctance of intergovernmental organizations—including, at times, UN Women—to address the ways in which militarization and arms-exporting countries undermine the WPSH agenda. Participants also called on the UN System as a whole, and UN Women in particular, to play a stronger role in protecting women’s human rights defenders who are at risk from local regimes. Finally, UN Women and CSOs alike must do more to differentiate between victims and survivors of natural disasters, internal and cross-border conflicts, IDPs and refugees, and create different and localized strategies for each.

“Our primary task is imagining a different world; a world without war, without rape, without violence says Purna Sen, UN Women @ #GCSD2015”

– AWID @AWID Nov 23

Optimizing UN Women within the UN system

UN Women should be the recognized expert and accepted lead on action and advocacy on gender equality. More needs to be done with Member States to bring UN Women to the center of activities and interventions, and position UN Women more powerfully within the agencies of the UN system for synchronized actions on women’s rights and gender equality. Attendees also called on UN Women to keep challenging the rigid structures within the UN system that keeps civil society shut out of meaningful dialogue with Member States and of agenda setting at the international level.



“UN Women is the only agency that has the power to shift gears and lift up the voices of the most marginalized.”

– Asha Kowtal, General Secretary, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch; Member, UN Women India MCO CSAG

V. Engaging allies and strategic partners: changing social attitudes, challenging cultural obstacles and securing new space to achieve gender equality

Just as the SDGs require strong intersectoral partnership, so too does the larger agenda for achieving gender equality by 2030. The emerging recognition and emphasis on intersectionality has opened the door to forming new strategic alliances with other social justice movements such as environmental organizations, faith-based organizations, men and boys and youth movements. These alliances and their concerted action will form the lynchpin to securing irreversible and sustainable equality and respect for the rights of all. Building on the earlier regional civil society dialogues, participants discussed ways to engage with these allies and work strategically towards a common goal.

Working with the private sector

There was broad recognition that the private sector has not always been a champion of equality for women, and, in many places, has worked explicitly or implicitly against policies that would promote women’s rights. However, there was equal recognition of the private sector as a valuable partner for empowering women and achieving gender equality. Participants discussed the importance of critical and positive engagement with private sector actors as one of the best ways to both open up opportunities for women and to hold the private sector actors accountable to gender equality and interconnected issues of poverty, tax justice and macroeconomic policies, and labour and environmental protections. This is particularly important now, and as governments collaborate more and more with private sector actors in providing vital public services, participants raised concerns about the need for

new monitoring mechanisms that will hold private sector accountable to international standards and conventions. In addition, they talked about the need for more scrutiny around the UN’s engagement with private sector actors, and called for greater transparency. But there was also acknowledgement that the private sector is not a monolith; there are different actors with different levels of power and different sets of priorities, and that it is important to engage private sector actors strategically to win allies and build partnerships.

“Women’s exclusion from the private sector and private sector development, drives economic exclusion and poverty.”

– Participant from the Latin America and Caribbean regional discussion

Collaboration and autonomy: how women’s movements engage with state actors

Participants pinpointed the need for even more interaction with governments—while still maintaining autonomy and space for criticism, which has been one of the hallmarks of the global women’s and feminist movements. There was a rising chorus to do more to build strategic alliances with and win over strong allies within governments and Parliaments. In addition, there were a number of calls for increasing and expanding electoral quota systems to include women and providing training and capacity building for women members of political parties and women parliamentarians, on gender equality, advocacy and political participation to make their voices strong for women’s rights.

Attendees outlined the role for more women’s rights and gender equality ‘Watch Dog’ bodies to monitor

“Accountability important Hold your govt acct for #womensrights actions @USUN Amb Coleman Need follow-up at local & @UN @UN_CSW #GCSD2015”

– FemTaskForce @femtaskforce Nov 24

implementation and encourage augmentation of ‘good laws’ that have been passed by States, and create pathways for sharing advocacy strategies aimed at mobilizing publics to challenge ‘bad laws’ and parallel and customary laws and legal systems that undercut progressive policies.

Developing a common feminist faith discourse to achieve gender equality

Participants at the Global Dialogue represented a diversity of faith, secular and cultural traditions, and yet shared a common view that women have been marginalized within religious institutions and that feminist faith discourses have been marginalized globally. They pointed out that women’s experiences of faith have been excluded from the histories and places of power and decision-making.

“@nzbarakat that Islamic language must be included in the narrative in civil society, otherwise the extremist will co opt. #GCSD2015”

– Jamila Hammami @jamilahammami Nov 23

They also agreed that there are progressive discourses on women within every religion, and the feminist faith groups and actors must leverage these conversations and create new narratives, knowledge and religious teaching that promote women’s equality. They discussed the importance of public debate about the role of religion in laws and policies within religious societies. They also called for closer ties with religious leaders—who have sway over large constituencies—to identify and work toward the common goals of gender equality and dismantling the patriarchal status quo.

Because conservative religious organizations are better organized and better funded, building the capacities and knowledge of moderate religious and community leaders and activists was a central recommendation in order to scale up opposition to conservative forces and promote gender justice within the context of faith and religion.

“Men don’t need more space in feminist movements. Men need to make other spaces more feminist.”

– Todd Minerson, Executive Director, White Ribbon Campaign; Member, UN Women Global CSAG

Men and boys as allies and agents for transformative change

Engaging men and boys came up in many of the regional and thematic conversations as an indispensable, yet under-utilized opportunity to shift norms in the direction of women’s rights and gender equality. Participants also addressed the challenges and resistance to engaging men and boys for gender equality, including the need to address fears around resource competition and the need to do more to bring men to the table to have the hard discussions on power, privilege, access, opportunity and entitlement. While there was much talk about the importance of reaching boys at an early age, continued effort around engaging with grown men—business and military leaders, politicians, religious and community leaders, etc.—to make gender privilege visible to them was also put forward as vital. More also needs to be done to place the work with men and boys within the discussions on race, class and gender and the power hierarchies that inform those discriminations.

“This is the time to tell our sons that strength has no gender, emotions have no gender.”

– Muniba Mazari, UN Women National Ambassador, Pakistan

Engaging youth movements – mobilizing the future of gender equality

As the leaders of tomorrow, engaging youth movements is crucial in order to consolidate and expand on hard-fought gains for women’s rights and achieving seismic normative shifts towards gender equality. There were strong youth voices in attendance who also urged that engaging with youth cannot be a one-way or token endeavor. Youth movements can make feminist and women’s rights movements more



“We have to make sure the women’s movement is truly multigenerational,” ED says. “With youth on our side... we’d be unstoppable.” #GCSD2015

– Jesselyn Cook@JessReports Nov 23

robust, but we must avoid instrumentalizing young people; youth movement agendas must be valued and incorporated into the agendas for women’s rights and gender equality. Participants offered concrete proposals for enabling greater youth involvement, such as securing dedicated funding and enacting voluntary quotas for youth to ensure their attendance and participation in national, regional and international meetings, and that Youth Focal Points should be established throughout UN Women, and within other UN Agencies. Moreover, UN Women was asked to do more to help bridge the gap between young people and local governments, and facilitate the use of inter-generational advocacy tools.

“The media doesn’t make the story, we make the story!”
- @aya_chebbi #Tunisie #Tunisia #media #GCSD2015

– Leila Darabi @leila_darabi Nov 24

Working with the media

Media plays a formative role in shaping societal norms and attitudes, and as such, is an essential ally in shifting the normal. Participants discussed strategies for engaging traditional and new media and “safe media” and building alliances with journalists to make gender equality issues political. Increasing crackdowns on free press and journalism was cause for much concern, and there were calls for more to be done not only to identify those spaces where free press is threatened, but also to step up efforts to protect journalists who are covering women’s rights and gender equality in oppressive media environments.

VI. Commission on the Status of Women 60: new approaches for the future

Commission on the Status of Women is seen as the preeminent space to discuss and advocate for women’s rights. It is the foremost global intergovernmental body where leaders come together and make decisions that provide direction on the gender equality agenda and impact women all over the world. It draws on the largest number of civil society organizations of any other ECOSOC entity. As such, it is an

“There is a growing recognition that the gender equality project is perhaps one of the most important projects of the 21st Century...and it is achievable. [It is time] to seize upon this and to utilize what normative processes lie ahead, especially in CSW60, to try and finish—at the latest by 2030—what has been languishing for centuries: to end discrimination and violence against women and give them equal rights to their humanity, as the feminist credo demands...so let’s bring that credo back to the highest political levels...”

– Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, UN Women

important theater for advocacy and activism. Despite the close proximity of civil society and political leaders throughout CSW’s two weeks, civil society finds it a challenge to access and influence the decision-making at the Commission. This sentiment was reflected in second day of the Global Civil Society Dialogue, in the session on CSW, which centered on suggestions to make CSW60 a more responsive and interactive engagement with policy and decision makers. The dialogues resulted in strong, outside-the-box proposals to take CSW into the 21st Century. Some of the top-line recommendations for actions at CSW60 included:

- **Using CSW as a forum to link the agendas and accountability mechanisms for the SDGs to other platforms**

Because CSW brings together women’s rights activists and civil society actors from across the social justice spectrum, it is a prime opportunity to discuss the linkages between numerous conventions and agendas. For example, discussions on the connecting implementation of the SDGs with the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as discussions on the links between the SDG Goal 5 and the Climate Goals resulting from the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference could be staged at CSW60, and set a precedent for future discussions linking agendas.

- **Daily briefings for CSO leaders on the negotiations**

Because civil society are largely excluded from the formal Member State negotiations, participants urged UN Women to convene daily briefings for civil society members throughout CSW to recap the discussions among Member States as they are taking place.

- **Observer status within formal negotiations**

Further to the above, attendees recommended

that civil society organizations be granted observer status within the formal negotiations.

- **A place for civil society allies in Member States’ delegations**

Attendees asked UN Women to more strongly encourage Member States to include civil society leaders and experts within their delegations and as panelists at the discussions in the formal plenaries. Moreover, whether delegates come from civil society or not, participants called for a process to ensure members of national delegations are indeed allied with and conversant in the discourses and agendas for women’s rights and gender equality in their countries and internationally.

- **Engaging women political leaders on the power of CSW**

Discussants called on UN Women to convene women leaders’ meetings at CSW, starting with CSW60, to provide a stage that highlights the importance of political decision making at the CSW, and to serve as a fertile ground for women leaders to network and create advocacy strategies.

- **Bringing together the grassroots and the treetops**

There were several proposals requesting UN Women to do more to bring together Member State delegations and women’s NGO representatives in meetings and other fora throughout CSW for face-to-face dialogues, ‘knitting together’ the two sides. For example, one specific suggestion to achieve this was through the recreation of the ‘We the Peoples Hub’ created as part of the UN post-2015 Summit and the 70th General Assembly.

- **Use technology and other tools to open CSW**

In addition, there were a number of specific ideas put forth that would make CSW more inclusive and accessible, including providing special passes and

dedicated funds to enable more diverse ‘new actors’ from grassroots civil society organizations to attend and participate. Others spoke of leveraging existing technologies like mobile applications, web conferencing platforms and other tools to both open the Member State negotiations and stream the discussions taking place in CSO parallel events directly into the formal plenaries on a regular basis.

“CSW is about the power of collective action and shared ideas.”

– Ambassador Isobel Coleman, U.S. Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform

- **Expand and broaden CSW beyond the two weeks in New York**

There were specific recommendations for changing the format to broaden CSW beyond the two-weeks in New York by convening preparatory meetings in the months and weeks leading up to CSW, where grassroots participants can join together and help formulate unified messaging and advocacy strategies to take to CSW. Such preparatory meetings should be hosted by UN Women Regional Offices. During and after CSW, UN Women should draft and disseminate resultant policy briefs and informational materials on the outcomes, so that information on decisions taken by Member States can fan back out through the grassroots at the country and local levels.

- **Implementation and tracking of the SDGs for gender equality**

Governments’ work towards the achieving the SDGs are going to be a dominant feature at global discussions for the next 15 years. Because of CSW’s importance as an international convening, participants called for a multi-year plan on the implementation of SDGs through the lens of the gender equality agenda—with incremental steps and benchmarks for achievement—to be drafted and adopted at CSW60, with every subsequent CSW as platform for tracking and evaluating progress.

- **SDGs, the private sector and gender equality**

As an ongoing part of CSW moving forward,

attendees appealed to UN Women to work together with civil society partners to establish, and monitor, accountability norms for private sector work on the SDGs, and other global agendas.

- **Setting agendas and themes for CSW moving forward.**

Member States choose the themes and agendas for each CSW, and as participants pointed out, they choose agendas that they are comfortable with. Participants argued that CSOs, with the support of UN Women, need a stronger role in pushing Member States on thematic and agenda setting, so that the negotiations and decisions taken are striking at the most pernicious and persistent challenges to gender equality.

In addition to specific recommendations for action, participants at the Global Dialogue made requests for specific thematic discussions to be organized at CSW60 and future CSW sessions:

- **Make transformative and sustainable funding of gender equality a regular feature of CSW**

Funding for women’s rights and gender equality is in crisis, and a strong and sustained light needs to be shined on both the need for more funding dedicated to gender equality but also to spread awareness about the financial commitments Member States have made to gender equality at various fora. CSW is well positioned as a global platform to broadcast governments’ commitments to and progress on funding gender equality, to serve as the meeting point for the review of the proposed Independent Commission on Financing for Gender Equality (see below), and for tracking funding for the SDGs as well as progress on the

“Right now, women’s rights networks and organizations are basically operating on empty. And we have, in the SDGs, acknowledgement of the detrimental effects of not recognizing unpaid care work. And so we don’t want to continue that tradition by expecting many other issues to get financing, but when it comes to women’s rights and gender equality, we can just keep on going.”

– Joanne Sandler, Senior Associate, Gender at Work



initiatives outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.⁴ Organized discussions on financing for gender equality and women’s rights should be a regular feature of CSW60, and future CSWs.

- **Militarization and securitization as threats to gender equality**

With the world’s attention on the refugee crises arising from multiple violent conflicts, rising terrorism and violent extremism, and the retrenchment and closure of open societies, representatives urged that there should be an organized thematic discussion on militarization and securitization—as well as exacerbating factors such as global arms trade, environmental degradation and political and economic disenfranchisement—as profound threats to gender equality.

- **Making the news**

Attendees pointed out that CSW is a tremendous platform to engage with international media and showcase the work of the global women’s rights movements, the achievements and the struggles of grassroots women’s rights activists and civil society actors. It is also a tremendous opportunity to shine a spotlight on what Member States and private sector actors have done to support—or impede—comprehensive gender equality. Participants suggested that CSW could be a highly effective forum for engaging global media as well as exploring new forms of media. In addition, it is an excellent opportunity for building attendees’ capacities for understanding the changing media landscape and engaging with new media and “safe media” to highlight the work of civil society at all

levels, towards gender equality by 2030. Effective use of, and critique of, the broadening mosaic of media should be an ongoing thematic discussion at CSW.

“We [do] lots of work and [have made] lots of achievements locally, but we have many, many challenges. I want to raise these challenges to the world: we need help, we need advice, we need support, we need somebody to advocate with us, to influence our governments to give us the opportunity to participate and develop in our country, to develop the situation of women, to improve all the policies.”

– Saba Al-Asfoor, Board Member, Bahrain Women Association

VII. The way forward: concrete steps for taking the agenda to 2030

Concrete recommendations for action moving forward:

A grand coalition for Women’s Rights

UN Women should lead the advocacy effort for a Grand Coalition of Member States supporting women’s rights, particularly given the shrinking space for dialogue; organized opposition to women’s rights in intergovernmental fora needs an equally strong, organized and vocal challenge in the form of a platform of government champions for women’s rights.

Mobilize for a 5th World Conference

Civil society organizations and women’s rights and feminist activists need to begin serious mobilization

⁴ The Addis Ababa Action Agenda was adopted at the close of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015).

“We have to start being quite concerned with the fact that it is “okay” to build a coalition against women’s rights and to work together in intergovernmental forums to obstruct women’s rights. It’s time for a coalition for women’s rights. It’s time for a coalition of countries that unashamedly advance women’s rights. Look at intergovernmental coalitions today—the best and loudest voices are coming from the South.”

– Anne-Marie Goetz, *Clinical Professor at Center for Global Affairs, New York University*

for a 5th World Conference on women and gender, with governments and the UN System, led by UN Women

High-level Independent Commission on Financing for Gender Equality

UN Women should advocate for the creation of a High-level Independent Commission on Financing for Gender, similar to the Commission on Financing for Education, and which would bring together economists, women’s rights leaders, politicians, policy makers, etc., and report annually on the scope of public and private investments in gender equality and women’s rights, looking at States, the multilateral system, as well as large private and public philanthropies.

Compulsory Gender Responsive Budgeting

Whenever possible, gender responsive budgeting (GRB) should be compulsory through requiring distribution of funds contingent upon GRB. Gender-responsive mobilization of domestic financing to achieve gender equality is increasingly critical, and compulsory GRB can help ensure that needed funds are secured and properly allocated.

Mapping for knowledge, for monitoring, for accountability

There were numerous recommendations for mapping exercises and mechanisms across regional and thematic discussions. Most centered on UN Women as the location of the resources and technical expertise needed to establish mapping exercises and build the capacities of CSOs to use these maps for strategic

alliance building, knowledge sharing, monitoring and accountability. For example:

- Mapping national, regional and international coalitions across the spectrum of actors
- Mapping existing expertise and identifying gaps in capacities and tools among grassroots partners
- Mapping “good laws” and policies, and implementation (or lack thereof)
- Mapping and disseminating information about government commitments to gender equality
- Mapping where, and why, civil society spaces are shrinking

Develop Operational Guidelines for Governments to implement the SDGs

UN Women, informed by civil society, should create operational guidelines for achievement of the SDGs through a gender equality lens, which overlays the SDGs with the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the WPS resolutions and other conventions and frameworks. These operational guidelines should guide governments on how to reach the SDGs with goals and timelines for governments to achieve them and civil society to monitor them.

Localized Five-Year Plans for SDG Achievement

UN Women can help support CSOs in creating five-year goals and other incremental benchmarks for Member States to more effectively and systematically work toward high-level achievements in the SDGs and other frameworks. These incremental processes will also aid monitoring and accountability, and enable targeted and timely action when Member States are falling behind.

UN Women on Campus

UN Women should establish a network of university chapters that can serve to connect with young people, provide a conduit for their voices to reach civil society, government and UN Women leadership, expand the critical spaces for women’s movements, spread the messages of gender equality and women’s rights to new public constituencies and disseminate key advocacy tools to these highly engaged populations on college campuses.

VIII. A new compact for action

The passionate and pragmatic discussions that we witnessed at the Global Civil Society Dialogue exemplified the spirit of the global feminist movement—they were personal and impassioned, yet never losing sight of the gravity and scope of the challenging work that is ahead of us. The humour and celebration that we

have always relied on to remain undaunted and resolute, was ever present through the two days. What came out of the Dialogue, and the consultations that have come before it, is a global compact with strong ideas to transform the gains in the normative and political intentions on women's rights and gender equality into concrete realities for all.

“We want to work hand-in-hand with UN Women to strengthen the policy space and commitments for women's rights and gender justice, to take back the democratic space for civil society, in our countries, at our UN—and I will call it our UN—at our CSW and in our Beijing [Platform for Action]...We cannot allow the rollback on commitments that we've fought for, and instead we have to be able to push forward on these commitments to meet our reality. ”

– *Hakima Abbas, Director of Programmes, AWID*



“Jump together. Jump decisively. To create an earthquake to bring down the pillars of patriarchy - @phumzileunwomen rallies @ #GCSD2015”

– *Humay @HumayAG Nov 23*

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.
A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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