

# THE INAUGURAL GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2016



27 September 2016 – 3 October 2016, Phnom Penh CAMBODIA



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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*"There is a weakness both in the SDGs and the human rights system. There is no way of enforcing commitments undertaken effectively, including through the courts. We must operate within these limitations... And that is where lobbying and activism is important... The SDGs have improved significantly on the MDGs, and the extent to which this development agenda has improved, is the result of activism; the power of regional and national networks. The challenge now is to ensure that the progressive review of the development agenda is linked to commitments on implementation of women's human rights. **We must use our activism to create accountability by using what we already have, that is CEDAW**; a human rights treaty that has provided us with a context for making that link. We must advocate with a single voice that **sustainable development cannot be achieved without human rights**. We cannot create a schism between them as different agendas".*

Professor Savitri Goonesekere, Former CEDAW Committee Member (1999-2002)



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

*"This effort, is a **pioneering** effort, on how to bring gender equality into the SDG process... This is a **collective** of women from the Global South. We may represent networks or organization, but we are here as women committed to gender equality and human rights... This is not so much a structure, but a strategy".*

Roshmi Goswami, Facilitator –  
Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to sincerely thank all the participants of the Inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development for their contribution. Not only those who were able to join us in Cambodia, but those who joined us online and those who submitted written statements. Your commitment to creating this new strategic space is inspiring.

We also could not have achieved anything without our incredible local partnership with Ros Sopheap and her remarkable team at Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC). With your support, anything was possible. We would also like to sincerely thank our Working Group members: Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, Shanthi Dairiam and Roshmi Goswami for their commitment and support in helping to develop this strategic space for Global South Women. Your wisdom and insight has been invaluable.



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

And of course, thank you to those who funded the Forum, the Swiss Agency for Development & Corporation, the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, UN Women India and Migrant Forum in Asia.

# **THE INAUGURAL GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2016**

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## FOREWORD

**Priyanthi Fernando, Executive Director, International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific  
& Ros Sopheap, Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia**

Why do we want to ensure gender equality in the SDGs and what are our concerns about the SDGs framework and implementation processes, including opportunities and spaces created by SDGs? We are all here because we want to make life better for the women we work with and the women we represent. It is one year since the SDGs were agreed upon.

Some people agree with them, some people ignore them, some don't like them. Whatever our views on the SDGs, they are here to stay, and we can't wish them away. Global Southern women working for the women and daughters around us need to engage with the SDGs. There is ample



opportunity to celebrate and work with the SDGs. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs were pulled together with greater participation from civil society and NGOs in the drafting of the goals. The SDGs work together with environment, social inclusion as well as economic growth, and at some level the SDGs are talking the language of human rights - leaving no one behind, and that gender equality and women's empowerment is crucial. Above all,

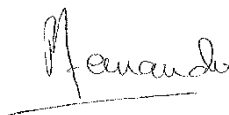
the SDGs have a standalone goal - Goal 5 to make governments commit to protecting the rights of women and girls, especially in areas such as reproductive rights and violence against women and girls. So the language has moved far beyond the MDGs. The SDGs are also seen as an agenda that not just the Global South, but also the Global North needs to commit to.

We see that the SDGs are an opportunity for strengthening our network; that we could explore our voices and be heard from the local to international and international to the local. Therefore, we believe that our strong voice will be considered to ending violence against women and girls, especially at the local level.

There are however huge challenges:

- A question we need to ask at a normative level is whether the SDGs add value or water down the commitments that have been set by UN, especially in relation in human rights?
- What implications do the SDGs have for our work on women's rights to reduce violence in all aspects?
- At a more practical level, how will they be implemented at international UN level, state level, local level, at the level of women's organizations?
- How sensitive are they to the broad scope of women's rights?
- How are they going to be financed? One aspect that is emerging is that there is little financing for the SDGs at an international level. Financing is expected to come from a national level and implementation is also expected at local level. So with questions of the lack of ODA, there is a push to collaborate with the private sector; and here there are issues, because the private sector are often the ones that violate human rights.
- Finally, we have to question who will hold the governments accountable for the implementation of the SDGs? There are the voluntary national reviews, but is there an alternative route to inform the voluntary reviews?

There may be more questions and challenges that you encounter in your work with women and the SDGs. We are here to try and create a space to discuss these issues, not just on the four days of the Forum, but in the next 15 years till 2030. We want to create a space to look at these questions and challenges, bring new questions in, keep the discussions alive and make sure that the SDGs foster equality and reduce violence against women.



**Priyanthi Fernando**  
Executive Director  
IWRAP Asia Pacific



**Ros Sopheap**  
Executive Director  
Gender and Development for Cambodia



## WHY WE NEED A FORUM... the Voice of Global South Women...

*“the voice we need to use is CEDAW; CEDAW has the pathway. The state is the duty bearer in our strategy; we need to ensure that governments do not undermine the SDGs”*

(Oral Statement 6)



*“We need to use the tools of the SDGs with its **political commitment** to reach the larger goal of human rights”.*

(Oral Statement 22)

*“This is the first time when international human rights and development goals are being put together in intergovernmental processes... CEDAW does have a **legal** authority to ask for SDG implementation... If any party implements the Convention, they will go a long way towards fulfilling the SDGs”.*

(Oral Statement 5)

*“Regarding the UN System, particularly UN Women within CEDAW and 2030 SDG Agenda, the main issue is the **means of implementation & accountability**. No doubt that CEDAW should be the framework because it has the legal foundations”.*

(Oral Statement 2)

## INTRODUCTION

This document represents a Global South Women's initiative. It records the stories of the lives of women in the Global South. It is their stories, contrasted against the words of the Member States of the United Nations, who promised to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

These are their stories, their lives, their experiences. It is the story of violence and destruction of people and the planet. It is the reality that is often ignored in development plans, policies and programmes. This document captures the discussions, debate and testimonies that emerged at the Inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It does not represent any organization, affiliation or formal network. It is merely a collective of concerned women from every reach of the Global South who see great opportunity in the sustainable development agenda to pursue and realize their dream of achieving gender equality for all. We hope you do more than merely read their story.



## ABOUT IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific) has a 20 year proven legacy focused on facilitating the full implementation of United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) in order to move from standard setting and norms to actual implementation of the rights guaranteed by the Convention. This is achieved through the progressive interpretation, universalization and implementation of women's human rights as articulated in CEDAW and other international human rights treaties.

Within the human rights treaty system and *Agenda 2030* gender equality is acknowledged as a cross-cutting issue that is integrated, interlinked and indivisible with all human rights and SDGs. IWRAW Asia Pacific advocates for the integration of women's human rights in the SDGs from local to global. We do this through developing partnerships that enhance accountability to women for the protection, promotion and fulfilment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To deepen our understanding on the SDGs, in 2016 we conducted a survey with women's rights groups about how they would like to engage with the sustainable development agenda. We received responses from different countries, including Iraq, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nigeria, DR Congo, Turkey, Portugal and Switzerland. The survey responses revealed the diverse ways national governments are responding to the implementation of the SDGs at national level. For example, governments were assigning accountability through one ministry, a new ministry or an inter-ministerial approach. But as Global Policy Watch (2016:2) notes:

“High-level political leadership is needed to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is not captured by a single ministry. All policies including those promoted and led by trade and finance ministries must demonstrate accountability to the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs in a democratic and transparent manner. This will require regular parliamentary hearings and reporting and meaningful consultation with civil society”.

Women's rights groups also had varied approaches to engaging with the *2030 Agenda*; from raising community awareness and engaging with governments; to establishing coalitions and developing action plans, position papers and indicators.

Despite lofty ambitions, the SDGs does not have a built-in compliance framework to ensure accountability to the prescribed SDGs. IWRAW Asia Pacific believes to ensure gender equality is prioritized and localized, meaningful, reciprocal communication channels must be forged to facilitate vital exchange between local and global actors on the progress of gender equality worldwide. Such a strategic space can create coherence between the SDGs, human rights treaties and civil society. In this respect, we recognize that any structure can create barriers. Therefore, we commit to creating a strategic space that is both living and growing; that is organic, dynamic and symbiotic with other existing processes.

## ABOUT OUR 2016 LOCAL HOST

The 2016 local host for the Annual Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development was Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC).

### GADCs Vision

Cambodia upholds the principle of justice and the rule of law in which women and men are equally empowered to participate in development and to access, use and protect their rights.

### GADCs Mission

GADC works to promote gender equality as a fundamental human right, which is necessary for Cambodia's social, economic and political development. GADC serves as an intermediary in which information flows between the national and subnational levels, including the grassroots. This intermediary role allows for local needs to be responded to by government and national level policies are informed.

### GADCs Technical Expertise

Gender equality is a cross-cutting policy in all development programs. GADC has been actively involved in combating gender-based violence (GBV) through its uplifting women's empowerment program. GADC also has almost 20 years of experience in advocacy and capacity development. Since its inception, GADC has developed various training manuals and has facilitated hundreds of training programmes for local NGOs, trade unions, youth groups, local authorities and government officers on gender analysis, women's rights, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, Gender in IP3 (Decentralization and De-Concentration) among other issues. GADCs Community Outreach Program works to empower villagers and builds advocacy knowledge among the grassroots, especially women and girls, people with disabilities, LGBT and ethnic minority (Muslim) groups, so that they can exercise their rights.

## BACKGROUND

The period prior to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is often described as development's "lost decade" (Hulme: 2009: 8), but with the advent of MDGs, a renewed enthusiasm towards achieving the world we want inspired hope. Yet within this supposed renewal, the vision for gender equality was so narrow and short-sighted it was tantamount to being blind.



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The MDGs were also conceived in an era of relative stability and growth. Then, September 11 changed everything. The Bush Administration viewed foreign aid as a misguided enterprise doomed to fail (Hulme: 2009: 42). The MDGs only gained momentum after the 2002 Monterrey Conference, where President Bush finally joined in affirming development finance. In this sense, Monterrey was seen as instrumental in breathing life into the MDGs (Aryeetey *et al.*: 2012: 9). However, according to Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2013: iii)

"The most celebrated Millennium Development Goals success stories since 2000 are now sites of mass protest, decrying widespread deprivation, repression and inequalities masked by the narrow models of economic analysis that have characterized development approaches in the pre-2015 period".



In September 2015, the United Nations adopted *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (hereafter, the *Agenda*). It resolves to take action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership through a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also recognizes that gender equality is critical to achieving all Goals. But, as history would have it, the world has changed markedly once more. Rising populism, nationalism and patriotism in the Global North appears to be signally a deepening of the divide with the South and further entrenchment of multidimensional inequalities. In this reality, it is hard to conceive of an event equivalent to Monterrey that could breathe much needed life into the stillborn SDGs.

But as Rosche (2016: 119) reminds us, “SDG 5 needs to be primarily understood as a tool to deliver the Beijing Platform and CEDAW, not the other way around”. But it is important to acknowledge that CEDAW is not dependent or premised upon any particular economic modeling, whereas the SDGs is a specifically neoliberal agenda. Kumi et al (2013: 539) delivers us the obvious irony that “neoliberal policies of privatization, trade liberalization and reduction in governments spending stand to affect the attainment of sustainable development”. He goes on to note:

“For many developing countries, solutions to socio-economic development and environmental problems have been left to the mercies of free-market mechanisms such as marketization, deregulation, privatization and the commodification of common property resources like biodiversity and forest resources. Paradoxically, there is mounting evidence showing that the current neoliberal economic regime and its accompanied structural changes almost run counter to the prerequisites of sustainable development” (Kumi et al: 2013: 540).

The defining features of neoliberalism include the ‘rolling-back phenomenon’ (deregulation and dismantling of the state) and the ‘rolling-out phenomenon’ (regulatory reforms and reconstruction of the state around neoliberal models) (Kumi et al: 2013: 521). But perhaps the greatest hallmark of neoliberalism is epitomized by the roll-back of human rights and growth of inequality, rather than economy.

Despite much grandstanding, the Sustainable Development Goals will not transform our world. Whilst language and policy development are important, without people invested in the process nothing will change. However, the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) does not contemplate any mechanism for independent review or direct recommendations from affected communities. Global South Women are not provided the opportunity to hold Member States accountable to these promises at a global level within the sustainable development framework. Therefore, when SDGs are not localized or not “on track”, Global South Women must rely on the review architecture within the human rights framework to hold governments accountable. The SDGs and human rights can be mutually reinforcing, with the treaty-based system contributing a much needed dimension of accountability that is otherwise absent in the sustainable development framework (Feiring & Hassler: 2016: 7). The Annual Global South Women’s Forum on Sustainable Development seeks to harmonize the human rights framework and the sustainable development framework for the higher goal of realizing women’s human rights.

## GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN

Being a Global South Woman has nothing to do with geography. Global South Women are not homogenous; nor do not seek to be. Reference to any common moniker in this document does not imply an existence of; or desire for, a monolithic culture of Global South Women. However, in the current context of rising populism, nationalism and patriotism in the Global North; leading to widespread white-washing of the global political economy, Global South Women wish to reaffirm that their true strength is derived from their diversified voices, rather than unified voices.



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

Whilst there is no common racial, religious, cultural or social experience amongst Global South Women, there is a common experience in respect to the global political economy. Global South Women must also continue to work against the lurid exoticism associated with the conceptualization of them as passive beneficiaries. Furthermore, there may be a common experience emerging specific to the era of the Sustainable Development Goals that could be in contrast to the long legacy of charity, welfare, protection and “development” experienced by Global South Women under Keynesian economics, the Washington Consensus, laissez faire capitalism, the MDGs and all preceding economic models.



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## THE 2016 GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, IWRAW Asia Pacific and Gender & Development for Cambodia (GADC), with supported from the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, UN Women India and Migrant Forum in Asia, launched the Inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development (hereafter, the Forum).

The Forum is a strategic space for systematic women-led follow-up and review of the implementation of gender equality norms and standards set in the SDGs and human rights treaties. The Forum recognizes that existing international review and follow-up mechanisms work, with the engagement of civil society that help to carry the gender equality agenda forward. CEDAW for instance, which is the main human rights treaty relevant to women's human rights, can provide added value to our understanding and implementation of gender equality. Moreover, the human rights treaty system can continue to provide verifiable and credible means of review and follow-up on women's human rights through other treaties such as the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD). The Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development provides space and opportunity to help create a supportive local environment for eliminating discrimination against women; responding to the urgent need to realize substantive equality for all.

### Our Vision

To transcend the aspirational language of the SDGs by translating it into the lived experience of women and girls, who are, can be, and must be, the driving force behind achieving gender equality for all.

### Our Aim

To ensure women's human rights and gender equality are achieved through the SDGs by linking and reinforcing them to human rights treaties and international human rights law and creating spaces for local voices within national and international processes that are monitoring and implementing SDGs.

### Our Purpose

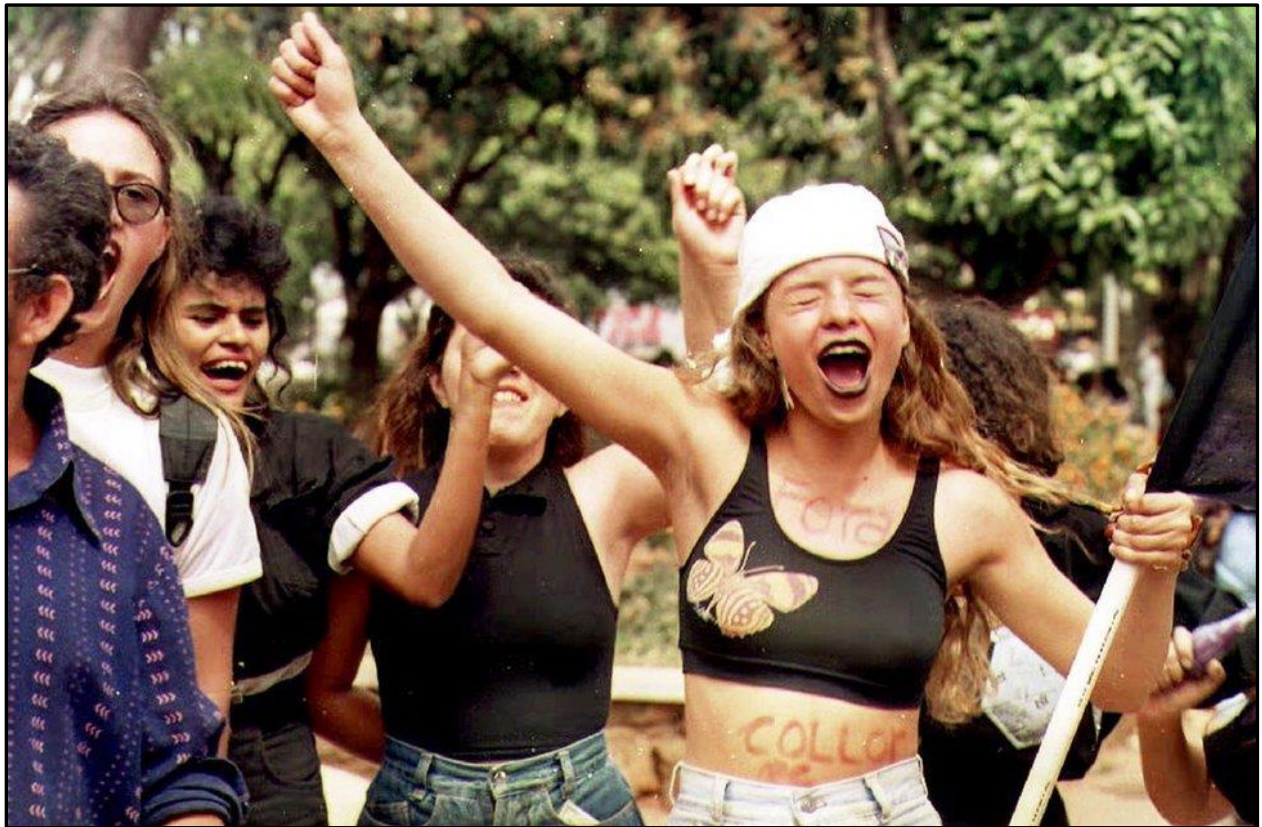
To guide, support and enhance processes at the local and national level in order to ensure gender equality is systematically reviewed and followed up at a national and international level.

### Our Hope

To transform the sustainable development and human rights frameworks in order to challenge systems and structures that create inequality.

## Our Objectives

- To enable women's advocacy and activism to impact at the national level and to use regional and international networking to achieve this.
- To create a strategic space for women of the Global South to discuss and share knowledge on achieving gender equality, focusing on the lived experience of women, noting the critical importance of doing so in implementing women's human rights through both the SDGs and human rights systems and processes.
- To initiate and facilitate the mobilization of women's rights groups in developing strategic links and collaborative approaches on the SDGs and human rights reinforcing state and private actor accountability for advancing gender equality.



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

The Inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development was launched on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 with the prophetic words of Ros Sopheap from Gender & Development for Cambodia (GADC), who declared:

***“we are all sisters”***

At the end of four days together, Global South Women drafted this Declaration, citing the challenges and opportunities in respect to achieving gender equality by 2030:

# **The 2016 Global South Women's Declaration:**

## **Sustainable Development with Equality, Dignity and Justice for All:**

Realizing women's human rights and gender equality for present and future generations

### **1. Preamble**

**We, the women from the Global South** who participated in the inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development in Phnom Penh, Cambodia between 27 September 2016 to 3 October 2016<sup>1</sup>, reaffirm our commitment to women's human rights in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

We see this commitment as essential in the context of a neoliberal, neocolonial and patriarchal model of development that only serves to deplete our planet and violate our human rights. We are deeply concerned that despite the Goals espoused by the sustainable development declaration, there has been little to no state accountability in terms of gender equality and women's human rights. This is also in light of existing binding international commitments, as well as national constitutional protections and guarantees.

We remain concerned that structures (such as neoliberalism, neocolonialism, patriarchy and andocentrism) only create inequality and social, cultural, political, economic and environmental crisis for all. For this reason, we call for a paradigm shift. We believe that sustainable development for both people and the planet can only occur through universal human rights and universal peace. The sustainable development agenda will only eradicate poverty and inequality if it addresses the root causes, which includes the unequal distribution of wealth and resources.

In this context, women and girls in the Global South face multiple challenges. The continuing prevalence of discrimination against women and girls is highlighted by the:

- Lack of women's access to economic resources
- Forced migration of women for low skilled employment
- Unregulated growth-led economic development and expansion of the private sector negatively affecting women and girls, in particular small landholders and rural women
- Lack of meaningful democratic and political participation of women
- Stereotypes of family responsibilities, including unpaid domestic and care work
- Reluctance to recognize sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Reluctance to recognize the intersectional forms of discrimination women face
- Early and forced marriages, pregnancies and other harmful practices
- Institutional weaknesses of gender machineries at the national level
- Lack of funding for women's human rights
- Denial of women's human rights due to extremism, including religious extremism
- Unending conflict and the continuing epidemic of violence against women

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<sup>1</sup> 38 participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Honduras, India, Iraq, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste and Turkey attended the Forum in Cambodia. 21 people from the Burundi, DR Congo, India, Iraq, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Turkey and Yemen also submitted a written statement to the Forum and over 1300 people participated via live streaming.



# The 2016 Global South Women's Declaration:

## 2. Challenges

The neocolonial, neoliberal and androcentric nature of the globalized world has only exacerbated the violations of women's human rights and the destruction of our shared planet. Conflict, multiple crises and complex disasters are all consequences of the current global political and economic model. Women and girls in the Global South unfairly bear the burden of these consequences for everyone.



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To this end, we reaffirm our deep concern of the challenges that Global South women and girls face and call for a coherent and consistent commitment from both the Global South and the Global North to go beyond the potential rhetoric of the SDGs and truly create sustainable development for all.

The challenges Global South women and girls face include:

- **Foreign direct investment, trade agreements, fiscal policies and tax justice**

Whilst systemic economic issues (including illicit flows) continues to undermine development in the Global South, governments also continue to promote foreign direct investment. In this respect, governments in the Global South refrain from regulating the private sector from exploitation and

discrimination against people and the planet is ultimately paid by everyone, but Global South women and girls in particular. Furthermore, harsh and opaque free trade agreements (such as Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER+) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) only serve to create greater barriers to achieving equality, women's human rights and sustainable development. States must ensure a rights-based approach to trade agreements, including asymmetrical agreements such as the PACER+, RCEP and the TPPA, which must not supersede national constitutions and legislation and must not allow infringement by corporate actors on human rights or on national policy space. Unfortunately, the ambitious sustainable development agenda is not enough when there is a lack of progressive fiscal policies and frameworks, a lack of global tax justice and limited regulation of corporate investments. These current realities are not conducive to achieving sustainable development and gender equality and therefore, must be urgently addressed.

- **Crisis in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)**

The current ODA system is in crisis. On the one hand, the Global North is not fulfilling their commitment to guarantee an ongoing flow of ODA to the Global South. But on the other hand, ODA does maintain a neocolonial dynamic that needs to be addressed by a global tax body in order to regulate tax evasion. We, the women of the Global South, recognize the dangers of allowing the private sector to fill the development finance gap given their continual human rights abuse and unabated environmental destruction. In this respect, Public Private Partnerships for sustainable development must be regulated and private sector partners must be scrutinized and held accountable to the United Nations Guiding Principles and international human rights norms and standards if we are to achieve sustainable development and gender equality for all.

- **Shrinking Democratic Space, Lack of Political Participation & Women's Leadership**

The vital voices of women and girls in the Global South, who enrich all our lives with their diversity, have been silenced under discriminatory and sometimes archaic laws, policies and practices, denying them their human rights to meaningful participation in democratic and political spaces, and access to decision-making and leadership positions in the public and private sectors. Women's human rights and gender equality are still not prioritized by governments. The "first steps" made by governments in relation to Agenda 2030 indicate a continuing lack of will to ensure gender equality in a coherent and consistent manner in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

- **Land Grabs**

National and multinational corporations, governments and private individuals are buying and leasing large tracts of land in the Global South for the purpose of industrial food and biofuel production, amongst other things. Land on which women depend for life and livelihood is highly susceptible to "land grabs". Many systems of land tenure continue to be subject to traditional, cultural and patriarchal practices that discriminate against women by limiting or denying their right to land, to access, ownership, inheritance, transfer, and property sharing in marriage and divorce. Furthermore, women rarely hold positions in traditional or formal institutions that make decisions

regarding land and violent backlashes (including murders of women human rights defenders and environmental defenders) has become an emerging reality for some Global South women.

- **Conflict**

Protracted armed and unarmed conflict continue to prevail in all regions of the world. Many are unresolved conflicts, while others are new struggles underpinned by scarce resources amid the virulent spread of neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Many of these conflicts take place in marginalized communities and all have gendered causes and consequences, both during and after conflict. Women's responses to, and experiences of, conflict are both multidimensional and diverse. In addition to CEDAW General Recommendation 30 and Security Council Resolutions, including SCR 1325, it is critical that Agenda 2030 (including SDG 16) is more cognizant of the causes of conflict and the role women play as human rights defenders, as members of resistance movements, as combatants, as active agents in formal and informal peacebuilding and perhaps most of all, as agents of change.

- **Disaster and Climate Change**

Over the past two decades, disasters such as cyclones, floods, storms, heatwaves, droughts and tsunamis have increased in frequency and intensity with devastating effect on Global South women and girls. The lack of appropriate and effective environmental management by states and the private sector has only increased everyone's vulnerability to disaster. Global South women and girls are the most vulnerable to these disasters, but they are simultaneously the most capable of effectively implementing appropriate disaster reduction strategies. Global South women recognize that the current growth-led model of development directly contributes to climate change, but also the associated violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Climate justice for all includes placing gender justice at the heart of climate agreements. Solutions to climate disruption must be based on gender responsive policies, including processes to adequately address the development and human rights impacts of climate change. We reaffirm that the global average temperature increase must be limited to below 1.5 degrees Celsius to limit catastrophic and disproportionate impact on the Global South, especially Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

- **Violence Against Women & Girls**

It is a blight on humanity that violence against women and girls in all its forms still exists unabated. The political, economic, social and cultural acceptance of gender-based violence is at the heart of inequality and discrimination against all women and girls. Violence against women continues in both public and private spheres; not only in the home, but in the workplace, in schools, on public transport, in public streets, in hospitals, police stations, detention centers, in media, social media, music, film, fashion and sport to name but a few. Women and girls live with a reality that accepts the perpetration of physical and psychological violence and abuse. We must change this unquestioning acceptance to conscious condemnation.



### 3. The Need for a Global South Women Solidarity Network

In response to these challenges, the Global South Women's network seeks to:

- Share knowledge, skill and experience in order to enhance activism for gender equality in the SDGs



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

- Work towards fulfilling women's human rights and achieving gender equality by addressing the need for a sustainable development process that considers the priorities of present and future generations of Global South women and girls, including indigenous women, migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, internally displaced, stateless and nomadic women, rural women, older women, women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities and LGBTQI people
- Develop modalities and strategies to incorporate women's human rights guaranteed by CEDAW and other global and regional human rights treaties within the sustainable development agenda
- Address the shrinking democratic and political space, especially for feminist and women's organizations to make their voices heard and promote women's leadership
- Prioritize data as a key element of obligations under international human rights commitments, including gendered macroeconomic planning
- Advocate for comprehensive Means of Implementation for the SDGs and to hold governments accountable to existing commitments in the UDHR, CEDAW, UPR, CRPD, CPD and CSW

- Build the capacity of women's human rights defenders, activists and advocates by creating linkages across thematic areas
- Strengthen the knowledge, skill and experience of feminist and women's rights organizations on gender budgeting and taxation and to put these tools at the core of the advocacy strategies of national and local governments

#### **4. Statement of Solidarity with Cambodian Human Rights Defenders**

We, the women present at the Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development call for justice for five Cambodian human rights defenders who have been working to promote human rights in Cambodia. This includes four senior staff at the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC): Ny Sokha, Nay Vanda, Yi Soksan and Lim Mony, who were charged with bribery of a witness under Criminal Code Article 548 and sent to CC1 and CC2 prisons in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. In addition, former ADHOC staff member Ny Chakrya (who was recently appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the National Election Committee) has been charged as an accomplice to bribery under Criminal Code Article 29 & 548. Ny Chakrya was sent to Police Judiciary (PJ) prison. If convicted, all five could be sentenced to five to ten years' imprisonment.

This act of alleged bribery amounts to 204 USD provided to Sreymom (who is also accused of having an affair with the Deputy Chair of the opposition party, Mr. Kim Sokha) to cover transportation and food costs.

We call upon the Cambodian Government to ensure justice and due process for the five human rights defenders working to promote human rights in Cambodia who have been imprisoned. The payment is said be a standard and legal form of payment, commonly used to provide per diems. There are concerns that the criminal justice system and State law enforcement institutions are being used to criminalize and punish human rights defenders. We call upon the Government to see that investigations and prosecutions are conducted fairly and with assurances of due process

*Global South Women.*

**NB.** We are pleased to report that the five human rights defenders imprisoned in Cambodia have now been released. We thank the Cambodian Government for their commitment to due process in their cases.

## METHODOLOGY

This outcome document of the 2016 Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development is the result of a mixed method model of both problem-orientated Action Research (gathered from 21 structured surveys from 15 different countries, hereafter referred to as written statements) and solution-orientated Appreciative Inquiry (gathered from 38 participants in semi-structured focus groups from 17 different countries, hereafter referred to as oral statements). The written statements followed similar common reporting guidelines as the Voluntary National Reviews presented at the 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Both the written and oral statements



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represent every ECOSOC region in the world. However, the small sample size in both methods means generalizations about Global South women and girls cannot be drawn. Despite this, greater value must be placed on alternative data sources by all Member States (and the human rights and development sector in general), especially data that has been verified through triangulation. In this document, it is clearly apparent that the data presented is credible as triangulation was applied via outcome harvesting to both methodologies across a combined reach of 22 countries, producing consistent and repetitive claims from Global South Women. The women who participated in the 2016 Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development were from the following countries...

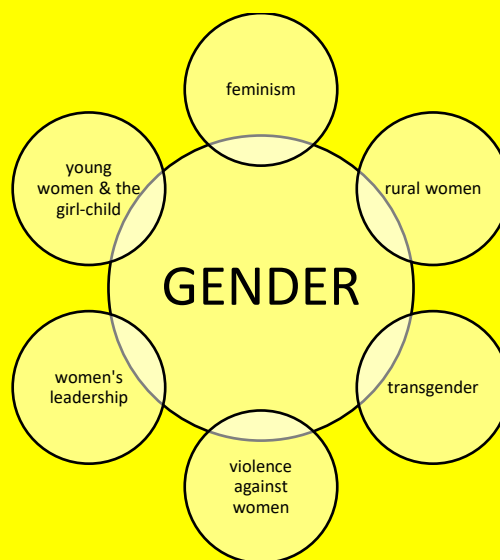
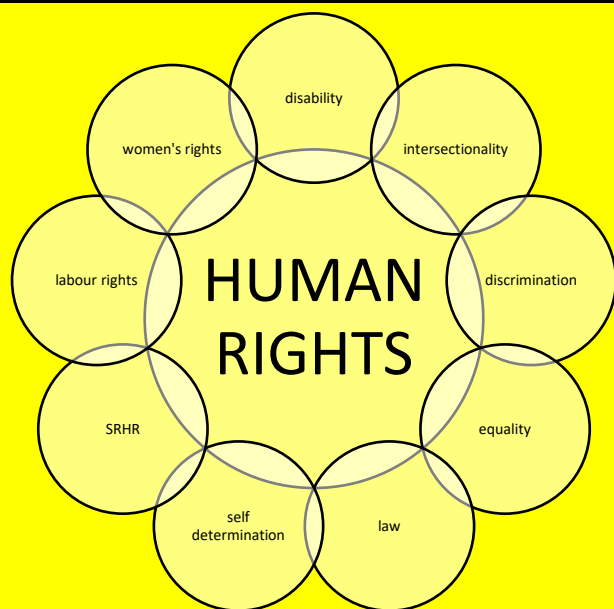


Bangladesh Burundi Cambodia DR Congo Fiji Honduras India Iraq Madagascar Malaysia Mali



Mexico Mongolia Nepal Nigeria Pakistan Phillipines Sri Lanka Thailand Timor Leste Turkey Yemen

**The Global South Women who contributed to this document work in the following areas...**



## DATA ANALYSIS of the written and oral statements

### Too Early For Good Practice? Too Late for Good Intentions?

As Member States throughout the world, at least to some extent, adopt the language of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (hereafter, the *Agenda*), overwhelmingly Global South Women provide little to no evidence of good practice in its implementation. This is despite the very obvious need to “hit the ground running” if we are truly committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Any evidence that suggested some practice in respect to the SDGs referred to a mere motion or movement that *could* precipitate action. Whilst creating preconditions are vital to enabling Member States to take action on the SDGs, any concrete examples cited in either oral or written statements pre-exist the *Agenda* (such as evidence of a “strong legal, programmatic and budgetary framework for gender equality”, Written Statement 7).



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Although no evidence was provided for any good practice in the 21 written statements received, there was some evidence to suggest the *potential* for good practice. However, as good practice remains suspended in a nascent stage, it becomes no more than hollow good intentions. Here are some potential good practices we hope will flourish into more than mere **good intentions**:

- **Nigeria** just signed into law the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act and now civil society is pushing for the Equal Opportunities Bill to be passed into law" (Written Statement 17).
- **India's** "Blue Revolution" seeks to achieve blue water and blue skies through sustainable use of fresh and marine water (Written Statement 4).
- **Sri Lanka** "The National Sustainable Development Act will enable policy, legal and institutional frameworks for implementing the SDGs. The Act will mandate ministries, provincial councils, local governments and the public sector to prepare strategies, audits and annual progress reports" (Written Statement 5).
- **Pakistan** "SDG Support Units at national and provincial level will coordinate implementation and measure progress on SDGs" (Written Statement 11).
- "The Sustainable Development Vision 2016-2030 of **Mongolia** states that gender equality is a guiding principle of the social development pillar, while the Green Development Policy 2030 aims to improve labour force participation of women by building more childcare facilities" (Written Statement 10).
- "The Anti-Discrimination Bill in the **Philippines** encompasses the recognition and promotion of LGBTI rights and as a cross-cutting issue in the SDGs" (Written Statement 21).



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## Business as Usual?

Whilst there is some evidence to suggest the preconditions are being laid in order to achieve sustainable development and gender equality by 2030, the overwhelming evidence suggests that for many states, from Africa, to Asia and the Middle East, it is **business as usual**...

- **Madagascar** "Two consultations were undertaken to harmonize SDG targets with national realities and lessons learnt from the MDGs. However, gender equity, which was identified as a key catalyst to sustainable development in these consultations, was not reflected in the national program" (Written Statement 20).
- **Thailand** "A gender equality law was passed in 2015 to create national mechanisms to ensure the implementation of gender equality. However, the associated committee has only met on a few occasions, calling into question political will" (Written Statement 6).
- **Turkey** continues to "reinforce gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles (i.e. women as mothers, homemakers and caretakers) and force women into the private sphere" (Written Statement 18).



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- In **Pakistan**, the Women's Protection Bill was passed providing women with access to justice in cases of domestic violence and "honour" killing. While "civil society welcomes the Bill, they also fear the lack of enforcement of the Bill. If the enforcement mechanism is strong, then it will create more spaces for women for their economic and social growth, which are key to sustainable development" (Written Statement 14).
- The National Institution for Transforming **India**, tasked with monitoring the implementation of the SDGs, has "no imagination utilized in creating new schemes or programmes to initiate the holistic change necessary for the implementation of the rights of women with psychosocial disabilities" (Written Statement 15).
- In **Yemen**, "the international community develops annually a Humanitarian Response Plan. The Humanitarian Response Plans are not developed in an inclusive manner. Women's voices are not heard" (Written Statement 8).







## Lessons Learnt? Or Lessons Ignored?

We asked Global South Women what lessons had been learnt in the implementation of women's human rights through the SDGs. Global South Women repeatedly and clearly evidenced that lessons were not learnt and early indications suggest the "transformative" agenda is not translating to transformative action as promised. Here are some examples from Asia:

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### Pakistan **Stereotypes:**

Despite the "Malala Effect", "the activities of women remains in their homes, they cannot start businesses outside their homes, nor can they meet in a public gathering... they cannot campaign for election. The family disgrace, fear of harassment are hurdles in the way of development... There are already laws for women's protection, but the implementation on the ground is nil" (Written Statement 14)

**Sri Lanka Innovation:** "Out of the box thinking is necessary to achieve women's human rights", yet the public sector is reluctant to truly innovate (Written Statement 5)

**Mongolia Consultation:** "The limited participation in the consultations during formulation of the Sustainable Development Vision of Mongolia... has led to lack of targets on advancing women's human rights in the long term national policies" (Written Statement 10)

**Thailand Solidarity:** "Despite evidence to prove when civil society works together the impact is greater, civil society continues to silo & individualize" (Written Statement 6)

**India Representation:** "Despite the SDGs, there is no representation from persons with disabilities in national processes. This exclusion ensures their continued marginalization in society (Statement 15). "Gender equality cannot be achieved by simply allocating more public funds for women, as social change requires much more than mere finance" (Statement 4). "Despite the acknowledgment of the need to address the root causes of multidimensional poverty & gender inequality, violations of women's human rights remains entrenched" (Written Statement 9)

**Philippines Inclusion:** "Despite the understanding that female migrant workers should be substantively included in the planning & implementation of national plans, this does not occur" (Written Statement 21)



## Lessons Not Learnt from Latin America, Africa & the Middle East

**Yemen Peace Building:** “Despite SDG 5, 16 & Security Council Resolution 1325, women continue to be excluded from participation in peace talks” (Written Statement 8)

**Iraq De Facto Equality:** “Despite the multiplicity of national laws ensuring women’s human rights, in reality, these rights are relentlessly violated” (Written Statement 3)

**Turkey Accountability:** “Despite “plans”, there is a lack of evidence of implementation, methodology & participants, especially in respect to infrastructure for the SDGs” (Written Statement 18)

**Mexico Gender Budgeting:** “Despite evidence proving gendered budgetary allocations are a decisive element in promoting women’s human rights, no country in the world adequately provides a gendered budget” (Written Statement 7)

**Burundi Communication:** “Despite the need for communication & sharing information about gender based violence at a community level, rape, forced pregnancies & forced marriages persist” (Written Statement 19)

**Nigeria Awareness Raising:** “Despite the conscious effort of civil society to ensure the SDGs are not politicized like the MDGs, early indications suggest they could be” (Written Statement 17)



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## Challenges

In addition to the challenges cited in the Global South Women's Declaration (see pp. 17-22), Global South Women also identified four broad categories in the written statements (see diagram below). In these statements, **exclusion** and **violence** were the most cited challenges for Global South Women and **Goal 16** and **Goal 17** were of most concern:



There are many building blocks that create structural walls and systemic barriers to Global South Women achieving gender equality. In each of these four broad categories, this is what Global South Women said are the barriers to achieving gender equality by 2030...

### 1. Lack of Data: Goal 17

Whilst the *Agenda* declared:

*“Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind... We agree to intensify our efforts to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Small Island Developing States and middle-income countries” [Para 48].*



Despite these promises, the predicted “Data Revolution” is not evidenced by Global South Women...

“Activist groups do not have the data to advocate for more comprehensive reform for the provision of services, particularly with regard to advocating for adequate budget allocations using the maximum available resources in line with the CRPD and what is required within the frame of the SDGs” (Written Statement 15)

**Nigeria** “Currently, there is economic challenges which has forced the government to focus the attention on conflicts to the exclusion of adequate structures for the monitoring of rights” (Written Statement 17)

**Sri Lanka** “Why is it not possible to resource a NGO statistical agency & strengthen their capacity to collect data & produce statistics?” (Oral Statement 3)

**Madagascar** “The lack of communication to popularize the SDGs at national level will make its monitoring difficult for grassroots organizations” (Written Statement 20)

**Honduras** “The data that provides evidence for all the targets & indicators needs to be gender disaggregated. We need to address the integrated nature of all goals” (Oral Statement 9)

**Thailand** “There is a need to closely monitor how laws will be enforced and whether the implementation is in line with CEDAW & according to Goal 5” (Written Statement 6)

“In **Cambodia**, we have an issue with data. It is difficult to gather statistics for indicators. CSOs don’t want naming & shaming of the Government. Rather, they want to bring issues up to be addressed. We don’t need checklists & information only to be included in reports... You can’t believe the State Report when sometimes the data is given under duress... CSOs are encouraged to advocate at the UN, but there is no space. We all need to join together to hold governments accountable” (Oral Statement 1)

“Its the accountabilities of the duty bearers; they are held responsible for implementing SDGs & CEDAW. We need to see that national statistical agencies have the capacity to monitor according to the indicators. From a policy perspective, we need to look at these methodologies & see what needs to be developed & used in connection with national implementation” (Oral Statement 2)

**Mexico** “We think that gender budgets are a way of having access to data. Statistical commissions are based on surveys & are expensive, but gender budgets can gather data in the same time while promoting gender equality... CSOs are in existence because of the shortcomings of the state, & we are here to address this, not duplicate it” (Oral Statement 6)

**Malaysia** “The SDGs are very technical in reporting. CEDAW reporting is also very technical. We need to build capacity to deal with this technical knowledge” (Oral Statement 4)

**Sri Lanka** “We need to recognize that certain knowledge is privileged above others. And we need to find a way in which underprivileged knowledge (e.g. qualitative data) is brought in” (Oral Statement 7)

**Malaysia** “What we need is quality data. It is difficult to design & get data. There are also constitutional restrictions on getting data (e.g. racial profiling)” (Oral Statement 8)

## 2. Lack of Political Will & Governance: Goal 16

The *Agenda* declared: "We commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030" [Para 2]. This is what Global South Women said...

**Pakistan** "The government is not quite interested to provide protection to females... We have a firm Constitution, but when local customs & traditions come, the elders violate the Constitution & announce a case relates to honour & women are harassed.... The government plays the role of silent spectator, ignoring the situation & failing to provide protection. This is why women's political, economic & social growth is not flourishing in our country. The government admits the local elders groups is superior to the Constitution" (Written Statement 14)

"Corruption has deprived millions of **Yemenis** from a life with dignity. The way the international community dealt with it was through establishing parallel institutions instead of building the capacity of state institutions & strengthening their governance" (Written Statement 8)

**Turkey** "One of the biggest challenges we have is the absence of a Ministry on Gender Equality, Women's Status or Equality" (Written Statement 18)

"The national machinery on women in **Thailand** is not in a position to mainstream women's human rights through the SDGs" (Written Statement 6)

"The Convention [CEDAW], having international ratification, will legalize the SDGs" (Oral Statement 5)

**Mongolia** "Lack of capacity is based on the weak national machinery & in prevailing attitudes of the government that neglects existing gender disparities in key economic sectors" (Written Statement 10)

"There are political intricacies in the UN System, but generally there is political will by Member States to see the UN System reformed & to be fit for purpose to support the Agenda. UN Women has a will to support this integrated mandate; to look at how the UN System supports national priorities... It is important to break down silos & work together: governments, civil society & women's groups, we all need to work on separate goals, but look at them as a whole. Having a common voice will be powerful" (Oral Statement 2)

"Gender machinery is present, but all institutions are weak. **Central America** is passing through an unstable phase. The strategy has been to strengthen civil society, but there is a lot of persecution. There is no planning around SDGs in **Honduras**. Laws are there & CSOs push the government to implement those laws, but the State is not resolving the violations of human rights" (Oral Statement 9)

**Phillipines** "The HLPF report says they had consultations with civil society regarding indicators, which did happen, but it was more about civil society representation with no room for contributions & giving input. The engagement with civil society was also selective within different sectors" (Oral Statement 12)

**Mexico** "The UN has little power in terms of maneuvering governments. The G7 needs to be much stronger in comparison to the G8. How are we to establish CSOs in the North to support the Southern agenda?" (Oral Statement 6)

**Sri Lanka** "Accountability is a big issue; the voluntary nature of the reviews, so it's important to use the UPR, CEDAW & other mechanisms to hold governments accountable" (Oral Statement 3)

**Turkey** "We found that there was no current discussion in parliament on the SDGs. It was only raised briefly by some parliamentarians" (Oral Statement 11)

### 3. Lack of Peace: Goal 16:

The *Agenda* declared:

*“We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development... We must redouble our efforts to resolve or prevent conflict... including through ensuring that women have a role in peacebuilding and statebuilding” [Para 35].*

This is what Global South Women told us...

**Pakistan** “By leading the path of sustainable development, dozens of women human rights defenders were gunned down in the recent past by leading the movement to protect the rights of women... We are concerned how the responsibility of implementing Goal 5, the targets on women & girls in other Goals, as well as the gender responsive implementation of the whole 2030 Agenda will be informed & undertaken” (Written Statement 14)

“Women & girls with disabilities who are human rights defenders face multiple levels of discrimination due to their gender, disability & activism. Challenges identified in **Pakistan** by young female women with disabilities in their work include: defamation, lack of recognition, sexual harassment & security risks” (Written Statement 11)

**Yemen** “All warring parties still continue to acquire arms. 19 countries who are states of the Arms Trade Control & 3 signatories continue to supply Saudi-led coalitions, while Houthis & Saleh militia continues to acquire weapons through illicit transfer” (Written Statement 8)

**Nigeria** “The growing communal conflicts & terrorism arising from agitation for resource control in the Niger Delta area & religious intolerances in parts of the Northern zone, which have left women & children as the major victims” (Written Statement 17)

**India** “Rape gets converted to caste/religious issues. Constitutionally acceptable issues such as women’s entry into places of worship get hijacked by vigilante groups and caste/religious politics” (Written Statement 9)

**Burundi** “Most community members, particularly young women & girls have no access to information & knowledge on their rights, specifically related to their physical & psychological health & wellbeing [including] sex, pregnancies & marriages” (Written Statement 19)



**Mali** "Increasing fundamentalism is affecting women's rights & gender equality. Some ethnic groups have more power because of ethnic & religious differences; people identify themselves in different groups for more advantages, which affects inclusivity & has a bearing on indicators... There are nuanced aspects of war & terrorism. If you oppose aspects of development, you are categorized as a terrorist. We need to build nimble strategies to deal with this" (Oral Statement 15)

"Protecting and securing women's rights is a safeguard against growing violent extremism, but securitizing women's rights undermines the intrinsic value of women's rights and reduces women's rights to simply an instrument to counter extremism" (Oral Statement 14)

**Iraq** "Fundamentalist's main agenda is to go against women's rights & creating insecurity for women" (Oral Statement 18)

**Mali** "Women face specific violence simply because they are women" (Oral Statement 15)



**India** "War incapacitates women & the development plans of governments" (Oral Statement 14)

**Honduras** "SDGs do recognize that all forms of discrimination against all women & girls needs to be addressed; including eliminating violence against women & girls in private & public spheres" (Oral Statement 9)

"Transitional justice and post-conflict development must aim at bringing about transformation in the lives of those most affected by conflict. In **Sri Lanka**, the SDGs and the ongoing transitional justice processes are not aligned and the government seems to be pushing aside important issues of reparative justice for women and women's access to ESC rights in order to placate the nationalists' voices or as post-conflict policy and budgetary trade-off" (Oral Statement 14)

**Iraq** "There are gender inequality issues in the way investments are made in post-war reconstruction. Increased militarization & the arms trade take away investments in the social sectors" (Oral Statement 18)

"All attacks on women's rights to education, to their mobility and bodily integrity, or to their decision-making are the first signs of growing intolerance in a society" (Oral Statement 14)

**Honduras** "Those working on rights of the environment & climate change risk losing their life" (Oral Statement 9)

"As the most vulnerable members of a community, women are often caught between the state and non state, and their rights severely curtailed in the violence of terrorist groups and counter terrorism agendas of the State" (Oral Statement 14)

#### 4. Lack of Inclusivity (of people, organizations and issues): Goal 16

The Agenda promised “All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan... As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind”.

This is what Global South Women said...

“Lack of ownership from the beneficiaries & grassroots women are key challenges to implementation to women’s rights using the SDGs as an entry point. The overall process of national consultation has been limited to development practitioners & State Parties & even if the SDGs claim inclusivity during development, this is not the case in **Madagascar**” (Written Statement 20)

“Women are excluded from peace talks... [And those included] usually represent their political affiliation agenda instead of women’s needs. Moreover, high level conferences on development & reconstruction of **Yemen** so far have excluded the participation of civil society organizations, women & youth” (Written Statement 8)

**India** “Exclusion through caste & religion is increasing for women, especially poor women in India, leading to more severe control over their lives by families & kinship... identity based politics also excludes women from decision-making in the public & private domains” (Written Statement 9)

“Female migrant workers should be substantively included & consulted in the planning & implementation process of national development plans” (Written Statement 21)

“There is much anecdotal evidence, & that which is reported by international human rights agencies... to suggest for women within closed door institutions the route to access SDGs & any kind of development process, is near impossible” (Written Statement 15)

**Mexico** “The main challenge is to guarantee the interconnectedness of the 3 dimensions of sustainable development while maintaining women’s human rights at the core of the implementation” (Written Statement 7)

**Nepal** “The main challenge is creating a common platform for women” (Written Statement 13)

**Pakistan** “Persons with disabilities are excluded from the mainstream of education, health & development” (Written Statement 11)

When we specifically asked Global South Women about this lack of inclusivity they experience, they cited three major barriers, this included exclusion from...

1. Economics and Finance: Goal 8
2. Politics: Goal 16
3. Information, Communications and Technology: Goal 17



## 1. Exclusion from Economics & Finance: Goal 8

The *Agenda* declared:

*"We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature... We envisage a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all [para 9]... We will work to build dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies, promoting youth employment and women's economic empowerment, in particular, and decent work for all" [para 27].*

### This is what Global South Women said...

"Women's lack of access to loans, properties, continued subjugation and near exclusion from decision-making positions continuously make it impossible for them to contribute to national development" (Written Statement 17).

"Global systems are built in such a way that the North are keeping all the benefits" (Oral Statement 6)

"Macroeconomic issues as well as structural obstacles are still seen as non-gender related" (Written Statement 7).

"There is very much less economic powers in the hands of women... nor do they get permission to do their jobs" (Written Statement 14).

"Non-available financial services... this affects women more as they tend to dominate the small scale businesses and informal sector" (Written Statement 10).

"The proportion of women working in decent jobs outside agriculture remains low; their participation in the overall labour force is also low and declining in rural areas; women in farming are constrained by lack of land ownership" (Written Statement 4).



“Yemeni women... have been forcefully or voluntarily pushed to give up their valuable belongings and money to support the war effort...The Social Welfare Fund that provides cash transfers to 1.5 million Yemenis (45% women) and microcredit opportunities has been suspended since early 2015” (Written Statement 8).

“In Africa, what is very common is that development relies on loans, so governments work on what they think is important to the lender, so women’s issues are sidelined. The belief that FDI is important for a country’s development has led governments to bend over backwards to attract these investments because they are fearful that the capital will go to other countries where conditions for investment are more favourable... Governments also don’t regulate private sector. The challenge is that this situation focuses on economic growth above everything else and this can lead to compromises. The development of an alternative paradigm (alternative to economic growth and neoliberalism) is necessary, but has not quite taken off” (Oral Statement 16).

“Social construction of gender norms (e.g. the norm of the male breadwinner) maintains women in vulnerable employment, including sex work. In combination with the trends of land-grabbing and linked to the capitalist, neoliberal economy, this has limited women’s access to land and women end up as agricultural labour on land that was previously theirs” (Oral Statement 17).

## 2. Exclusion from Politics: Goal 16

“Lack of decision-making in personal, family, community & national matters, patriarchal mindset in the private & public domains... resistance & backlash at women’s increased mobility & education, decision-making in the realms of romance, sexuality, marriage” (Written Statement 9)

“The present institutions on women’s issues & gender equality are politically weak, understaffed & under-resourced. For that reason, the political discourse presented by the political leaders is very much based on stereotyped gender norms” (Written Statement 18)

“Women with psychosocial disabilities [are] excluded from recognition among national NGOs & disabled peoples’ organizations” (Written Statement 15)

“There is no effective mechanism to mainstream gender into government management” (Written Statement 6)



“Countries are still largely patriarchal when it comes to policy making & policy review... as well as the lack of accountability mechanisms for governments despite the existence of the SDGs” (Written Statement 21)

### 3. Exclusion from Information, Communication & Technology: Goal 17

“The barrier for women from HIV key populations is related with their capacity building. They have yet to recognize their women’s rights... Without the realization, they won’t be able to seek their rights as rights holders” (Written Statement 13)

“Yemeni women’s access to the internet is very limited. When online platforms are used for inclusive engagement only 29% of women users are responsive... When the discussion is on political rights, women’s participation diminishes to 6%” (Written Statement 8)

“Young girls & women have no or limited access to adequate information, knowledge & assets... particularly the different types of GBV, the consequences of rape & early pregnancies & marriage” (Written Statement 19)

“NGOs must be prepared to share & defend their information. Committees needs to be clear when raising issues with State Parties that the information has to have some credibility” (Oral Statement 5)

“As long as local indicators for development are not disaggregated by age & sex, there will not be clear action to improve women’s lives” (Written Statement 20)

“Because of wars & conflicts millions of girls missed the opportunity to go to schools... millions of women are now IDPs because of the war” (Written Statement 16)

Despite explicit commitment to the SDGs by all Member States, many Goals are already on track to failure, such as:

- **SDG 3, 5, 10, 11 & 16** ensure the implementation of Article 19 of CRPD, yet “none of the Asian countries who have submitted themselves to the Voluntary National Review process... have reported in regard to these Goals. Furthermore, it is not clear whether they will in the future” (Written Statement 15).
- **All SDGs:** In Yemen:
  - 82% require humanitarian aid
  - 6,503 have been killed
  - 32,169 have been injured
  - 2.8 million displaced
  - 7.8 million on the verge of famine
  - 19.4 million no access to clean water
  - 14.1 million no access to basic medical care
  - 0.5 million pregnant women cannot safely deliver babies
  - 5,000 GBV cases in 2015 (including rape, sexual & physical violence, forced marriage & deprivation of resources)
  - 1/3 of fighters are children (Written Statement 8)

Claims to good intentions within the first year of the SDGs are all too familiar words touted by Member States across the globe in respect to notions of sustainable development and gender equality. Meanwhile, the evidence outlined here suggests it is Global South Women, not Member States, that are committed to “turn this delayed start of SDG implementation process... to a possible best practice in the future” (Written Statement 18).

Mr. Uchita De Zoysa (2016:1), Advisor for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka, rightly questions “How can the SDGs capture the imagination all people in a way that they actively engage in the transformation, as transformation will not merely come through policy processes”. And here’s the crux. Based on the evidence presented here, any modicum of “good” found in laws, policies or programmes appears no different to the litany of good laws, policies and programmes that have come before it. Sustainable development will never be achieved by the preconditions alone without concerted action. Only action by all will precipitate the change we, the people and the planet, need to survive. As the statement from Yemen reminds us all:

“The protracted nature of security instability and humanitarian crisis *requires* sustainable policies and intervention... in fragile states and states in conflict situations... an implementation framework of the SDGs during emergency becomes *paramount*” (Written Statement 8, emphasis added).

This statement distills clearly that sustainable development is not merely about transformation (although this itself is a mighty task). It is fundamentally about saving lives and Life. The statement goes on to say:

“Women have been directly targeted in this war by all fighting parties through blind airstrikes, cluster bombs, indiscriminate shelling, snipers, anti-personal mines and AV mines. Additionally, AQAP stoned a woman for adultery. Moreover, restrictions of mobility including confiscation of passports and travel bans have targeted women. Women were also arbitrary detained for either their political affiliation or for their religious faith. Assaults on female students, journalists, human rights defenders, relief workers, women protestors have also been reported” (Written Statement 8).

From this standpoint, it is difficult to envisage the proclaimed 2030 World as any different from today’s world when as one year passes and no concrete practices can be cited beyond intentions. We must return to the hope declared in a statement by one Global South Woman, saying: **“The SDGs can become more than an ideal, they can become a true description of the world we are building”** (Written Statement 11). So, for the women in the Global South, we keep on building.



## FINDINGS

The *Agenda* declared:

*“Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities”* [para 20].

The Inaugural Global South Women’s Forum on Sustainable Development has revealed that despite good intentions, the SDGs are proving to be “business as usual” given the lessons ignored to date in respect of the *Agenda*. Global South Women have identified lack of data, lack of political will, lack of peace and lack of inclusivity as major factors holding us all back from achieving gender equality. In terms of the lack of inclusivity, Global South Women said exclusion from economics, politics and ICT are also major barriers to achieving gender equality.

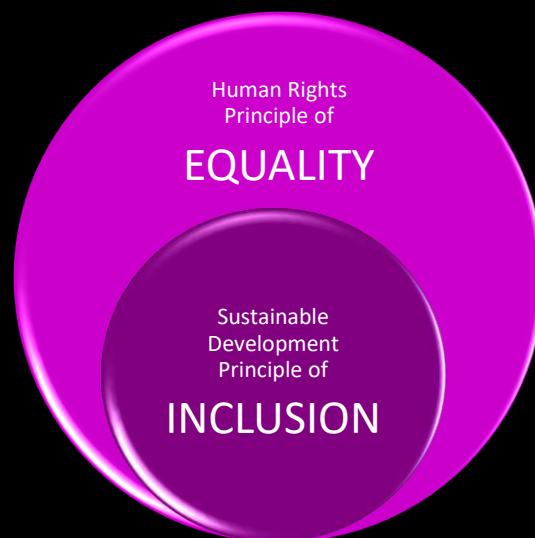
Ultimately, this unprecedented *Agenda* now requires unprecedented action. While the *Agenda* did set the ground work to change the course of history, the structural causes that led us to this moment have not been redrawn and we continue to focus on the ends rather than the means. As McCloskey (2015: 188) said: “We cannot afford to invest another fifteen years in targets that dance around the structural causes of poverty”. With this in mind, Global South Women remain concerned that the *Agenda* will not remedy inequality as it is merely a temporary corrective measure to accelerate progress towards equality, rather than a truly sustainable and systemic paradigm shift. The SDGs have not altered the growth-driven model that relies on Global South Women as slaves, rather than agents of change. We hope the Sustainable Development Goals do bring renewed enthusiasm for protecting, promoting and fulfilling women’s human rights, but we remain mindful that the SDGs, like its utilitarian predecessor the MDGs, only focuses on ends of inequality and therefore, will never be a truly sustainable solution to achieving women’s human rights.

*In this context, Global South Women have identified two priorities areas*



Damon Dahlen/Huffington Post

# INCLUSION & EQUALITY!



# INCLUSION & EQUALITY

## Why we need to harmonise the sustainable development framework with the human rights framework at a conceptual level

*“The condition inseparable from the pursuit of sustainable development is the progressive realization of substantive equality... This is why the question of substantive equality cannot be avoided in our time, in contrast to the past. For sustainability means being really in control of the vital social, economic and cultural processes through which human beings not merely survive but can also find fulfilment, in accordance with the designs which they set themselves, instead of being at the mercy of unpredictable natural forces and quasi-natural socio-economic determinations” (Meszaro: 1993: p. 1, p. 6).*

Meszaro here relates the critical importance of the human rights principle of substantive equality within the sustainable development agenda. Yet, the sustainable development agenda; epitomized through its mantra to “leave no one behind” is premised upon the pillar of inclusion rather than equality, in particular social inclusion and economic inclusion. Social inclusion is “the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities” (Bennett: 2001: 13). However, inclusion is only one dimension of the human rights principle of substantive equality. As Peroni and Timmer summarize Sandra Fredman’s exposition on substantive equality, we see that inclusion (or participation) is only the first element. She states:

1. Equality as participation compensates for the ‘absence of political voice’ and opening up ‘channels for greater participation in the future’. This includes accountability both in the public and the private sector to ensure participation is meaningful.

However, Fredman goes on to explain three more dimensions of substantive equality, which are not currently effectively integrated into the sustainable development agenda. They are:

2. Equality as transformation (in order to overcome structural barriers);
3. Equality as redistribution; and
4. Equality as recognition (which involves promoting ‘respect for dignity and worth, thereby redressing stigma, stereotyping, humiliation and violence because of membership of an identity group’) (Broderick: 2014: 2-3)

Brodsky and Day (2001: 184, 189) say to this:

*“The substantive approach to equality requires that there be positive rights against governments to ensure that everyone has adequate food, clothing, and housing... [and] substantive equality requires that women’s poverty be remedied by governments”.*

Given that this substantive approach ensures all our needs are met and governments are accountable, we may well question the purpose of the SDGs. What the SDGs offers is not a replication of existing rights, but an acceleration process to expedite rights realization. Brodsky and Day (2001: 201) go on to say:



“CEDAW contains an express provision committing signatories to establish mechanisms for the enforcement of CEDAW rights. It is also a settled principle of international human rights law that equality rights create obligations of immediacy, as distinct from social and economic rights, which may be progressively realized in poorer countries where resources are not available to realize them immediately”.

In this context, it is essential to interrogate the difference between the pillars of sustainable development, which include social and economic inclusion *vis-à-vis* social and economic rights espoused in human rights treaties. For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) long preceded the SDGs as a landmark anti-poverty agenda, which explicitly recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living. To these existing rights, the SDGs would seem to add value as an acceleration process, but we must recognize that achieving only social and economic inclusion, rather than social and economic rights, is a flawed measure that is ultimately incapable of achieving the SDGs unless grounded in substantive equality.

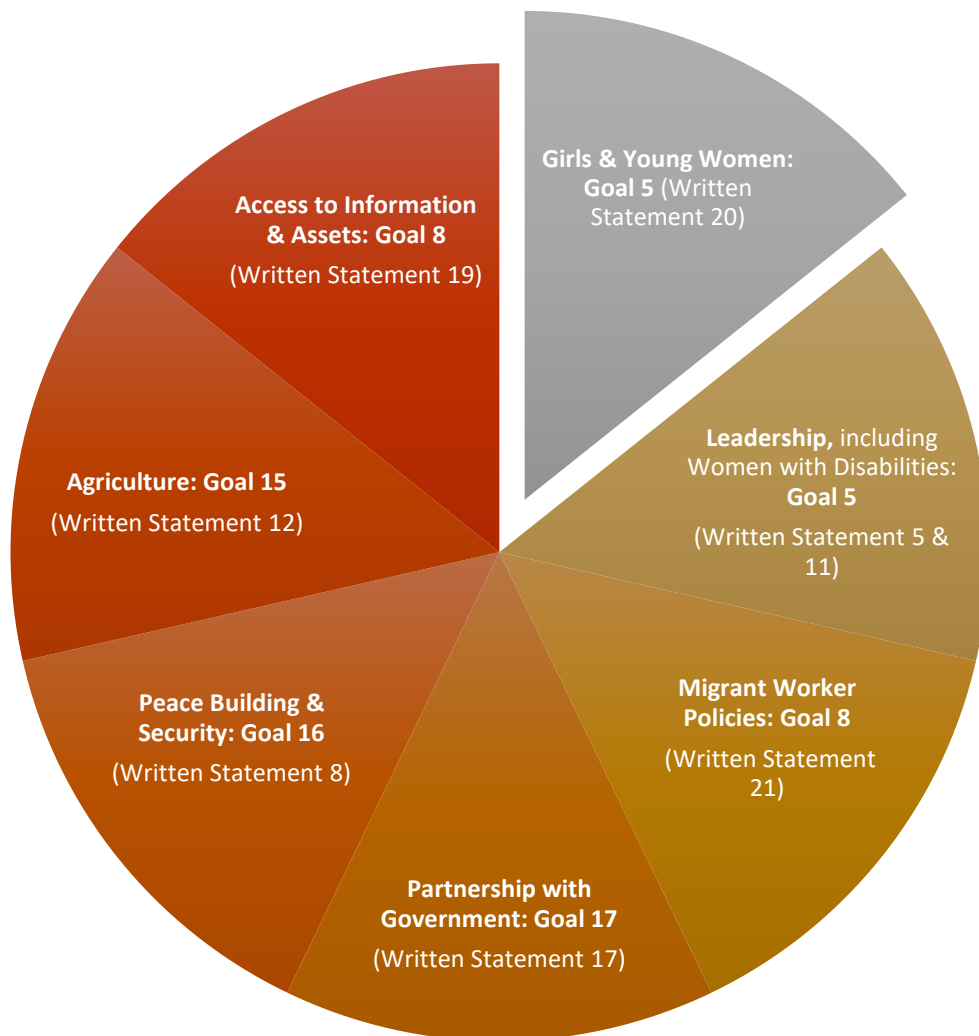
Furthermore, as poverty is a gendered issue, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is also a long standing anti-poverty framework. CEDAW recognizes that social and economic exclusion exist due to social and economic inequalities. To merely include women, without simultaneously addressing these inequalities is counterproductive. As Fredman (2010: 22) states, “the structural nature of gender discrimination is necessary to check whether a measure is likely to bring about change or simply reinforce stereotypes”. In this sense, inclusion increases inequality, rather than ameliorates it if it is not implemented in tandem with substantive equality.

The ultimate purpose of social inclusion is social change or social transformation achieved via accountability to society. If there is no accountability to the desired social change (in this case, accountability to the SDGs), social inclusion can become a tool of exploitation if the root causes of the exclusion are not addressed. Bennett (2002: 7) explains “social inclusion is aimed at building the incentives and capacity within institutions that will enable these institutions to respond effectively and equitably to the demand of all citizens”. Without institutions that are seen to be legitimate in the sustainable development agenda, equivalent to the CEDAW Review or Universal Periodic Review, the sustainable development agenda runs the risk of losing credibility as a transformative agenda.

The sustainable development pillar of economic inclusion is epitomized in the notion of inclusive growth. Rauniyar and Kanbar (2009) describe inclusive growth as “growth coupled with equal opportunities, and has economic, social, and institutional dimensions”. Therefore, growth is considered inclusive when it allows all members of a society to participate in and contribute to the growth process on an equal basis regardless of their individual circumstances (Ali, Ifzal, Zhuang and Juzhong: 2007: 10). Without substantive equality however, inclusive growth can mean the poor are merely included only for their productive or consumptive capacities without equal pay and conditions. This is the essence of exploitation. We are already witnessing the consequences of this narrow application of inclusive growth as poverty may diminish, yet inequalities are exacerbated due to inclusive growth promoting equal opportunity in an environment that is not a level playing field. True sustainability will not be achieved by an economic model that is based on exploitation. In this scenario, people living in poverty become mere beneficiaries (not rights holders) of opportunities created by growth, but not beneficiaries of the growth itself. Pro-poor growth on the other hand “focuses on *outcomes* of the growth process” (emphasis added, Klasen: 2010: 2). In this case, Fredman’s second and third elements of substantive equality would insist

upon both economic redistribution and economic transformation. For this reason, it is fundamental that the sustainable development framework harmonizes with the human rights framework to truly achieve the SDGs. Gupta, Pouw and Ros-Tonen (2015: 541) contend “inclusive development is used to counter the dominant neoliberal capitalist agenda”. However, we see that inclusion in fact *reinforces* the dominant neoliberal agenda when it is not based on substantive equality. Meszaro (1993: 6) concludes “success will require the constitution of a culture of substantive equality, with the active involvement of all, and the awareness of one’s own share of responsibility implicit in the operation”. A great lesson to learn with great urgency, particularly in light of the evidence submitted on pages 37-40 of this document that allege the SDGs have not been inclusive. Whilst inclusion is not enough, it is a vital first step.

### **INCLUSION** of Global South Women in...



## ***“Equality is multi-dimensional”*** (Oral Statement 4)

The *Agenda* promised ***“A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed”*** [Para 8].

Global South Women asked for **EQUALITY** in....





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Agenda declared:

*“We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. We resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities” [para 3].*

**To overcome the challenges Global South Women face on the road to achieving gender equality, they are clear on what has to change in order to achieve the SDGs...**





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***"This [the SDGs] is the space we have & we should occupy this space"***  
(Oral Statement 15)

In the Turkey country report, civil society is not mentioned in connection with implementation, monitoring & review. They are only mentioned in relation to public awareness & ownership of the SDGs (Oral Statement 11)

The processes of reporting at international level, UPR, HLPF, are all led by strong male-dominated civil & political rights activists & there is very little input from women's rights advocates. We need to be better prepared & ready to be more active in pushing the women's human rights agenda (Oral Statement 4)



"Governments rely on international loans & depend on civil society to provide them with language as they don't have capacity. In Nigeria, the strategy has been to work with them in providing capacity & the language & to use CEDAW to push for gender equality in the SDGs. We need CEDAW so that we can hold people responsible" (Oral Statement 16)

***“Linking international mechanisms to local voices”*** (Oral Statement 4)





The Agenda declared:

*"We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development... We fully commit to this. This Partnership will work in a spirit of global solidarity, in particular solidarity with the poorest and with people in vulnerable situations" [para 39].*

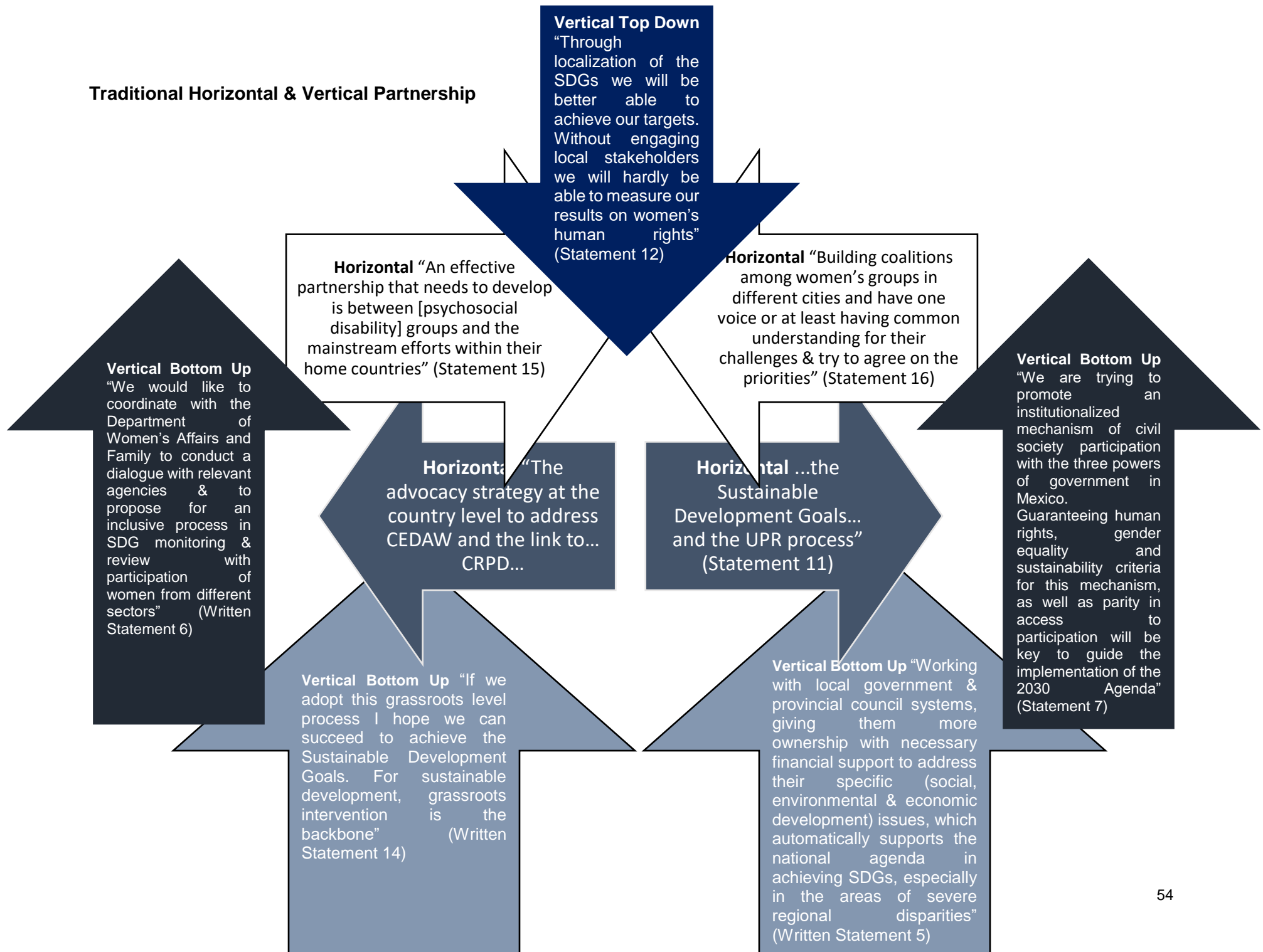


***And, finally...***

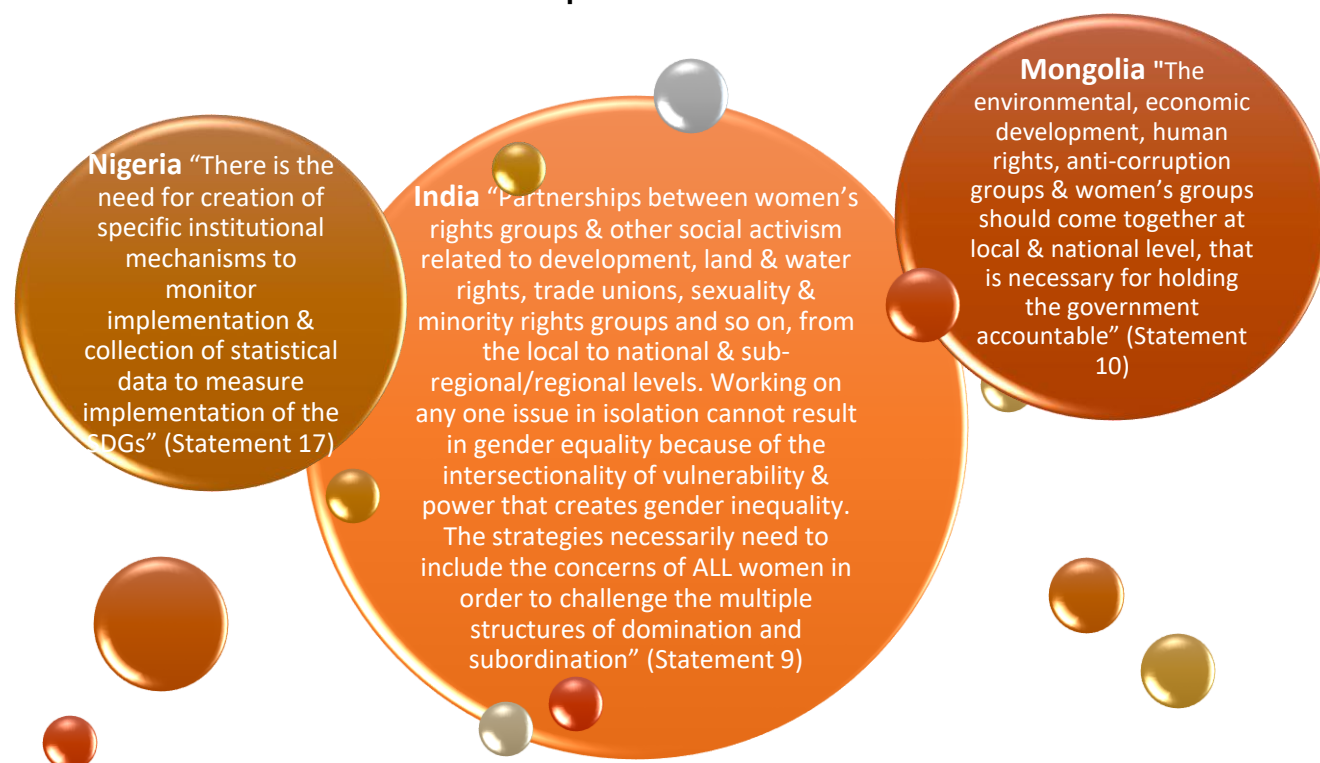


The *Agenda* declared ***"We recognize that we will not be able to achieve our ambitious Goals and targets without a revitalized and enhanced Global Partnership and comparably ambitious means of implementation"*** [para 60]. In response to this, Global South Women have many ideas for partnership. They recognize the need for intersectionality between **horizontal** and **vertical** partnership, but perhaps more importantly, they also recognize the need for intersectionality beyond these two dimensions into multidimensionality, that being, in the third and fourth dimensions of **depth** and **time**...

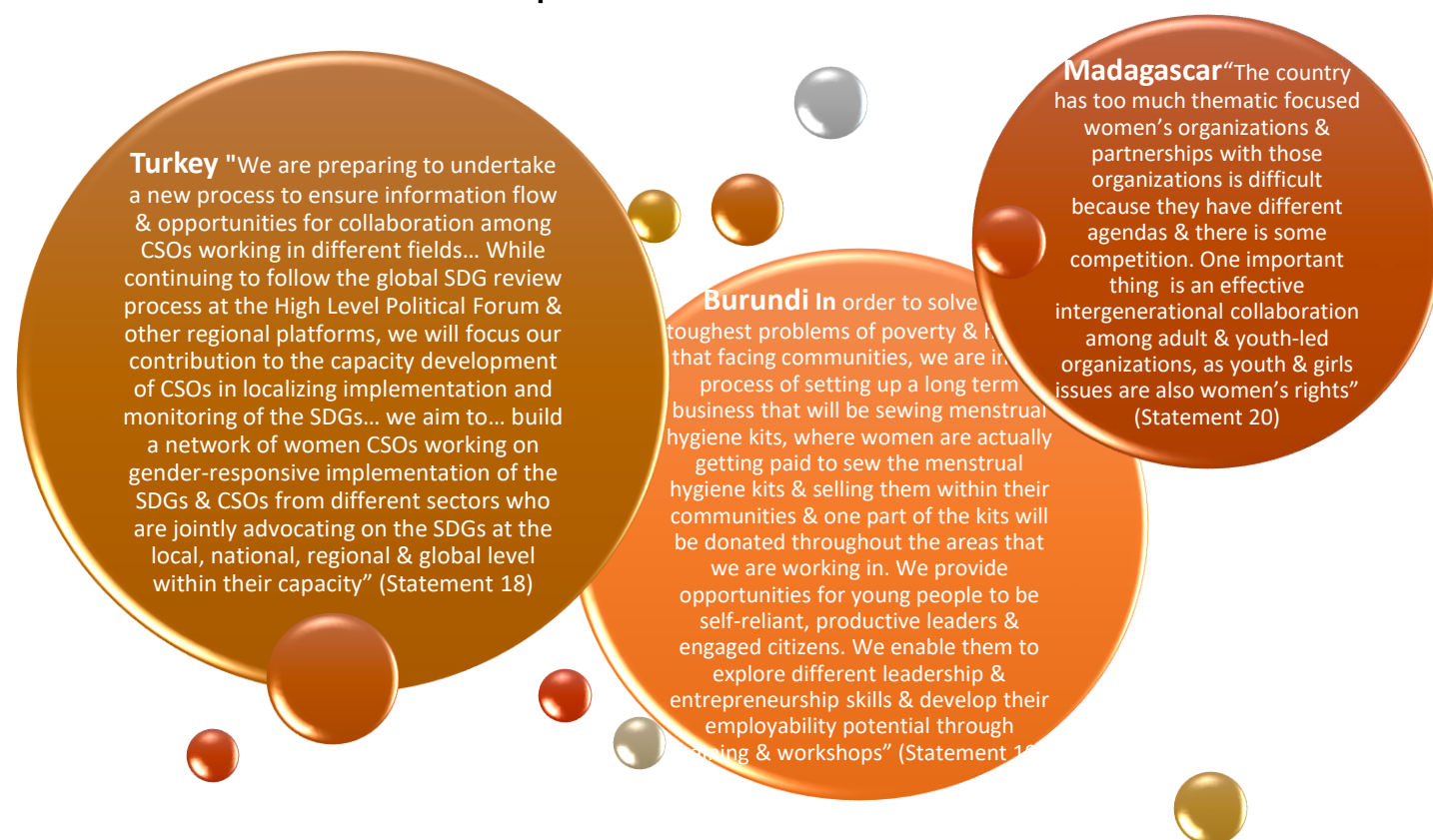
## Traditional Horizontal & Vertical Partnership



## DEPTH: New & Innovative 3D Partnership



## TIME: New & Innovative 4D Partnership





So what are Global South Women doing now to achieve gender equality...





**We asked Global South Women what they need to achieve gender equality. They are asking for your support in 5 ways...**



## SUPPORT US!

After a successful launch of the Inaugural Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development in Cambodia in 2016, International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific is delighted to announce the next Global South Women's Forum will be held from **9 May to 12 May in Kigali, Rwanda!**

In response to Global South Women at the Inaugural Forum, the theme for the 2nd Forum is:

### **Strategizing ways to ensure Global South Women's voices are heard from local to global**

At the beginning of this document we invited you to do more than merely read these stories of Global South Women. Why not empower a Global South Woman to advocate for her human rights and invest in her sustainable future!

**We want you to join** our regional partner FEMNET, our local host Human Rights First Rwanda Association and our donor, the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation in making the next Forum another huge success! There are many options for getting involved. Be sure to part of the Forum from the beginning of this exciting 15 year journey towards sustainable development and gender equality!

Your contributions will make a difference:

- 1,000 USD will support the in-country costs of 1 Global South Woman to attend the Forum
- 2,000 USD will support the airfare for 1 Global South Woman to attend the Forum
- 3,000 USD will fully support all the costs for 1 Global South Women to attend the Forum
- 5,000 USD will provide technical support, such as documenters and translators
- 10,000 USD will support the production of technical resources for Global South Women
- 20,000 USD will support the communications strategy for the Forum (e.g. development of a logo, graphic design, YouTube production etc.)
- 50,000 USD will support all the in-country costs for Forum participants
- 100,000 USD – become our major sponsor!
- **Donation of any goods and/or services for the Forum are also most welcome, and don't forget to join us at the Forum in Rwanda and tell us what you are doing towards achieving gender equality!**



In 2016, the Forum was hosted by the ESCAP region. In 2017, the Forum will be hosted by the ECA region. We hope to hold future Forums as follows:

- **2018 ECE region**
- **2019 ECLAC region**
- **2020 ESCWA region**

You can choose to support the participation of Global South Women to attend the Forum in 2017, but you can also commit to supporting her participation for the next 3 years! In exchange for your support, your logo will appear on all our online and offline material developed for the Forum. Checkout our social media analysis (p. 59) from the 2016 Forum for more information about how our partnership could be mutually supportive. And if you know anyone else who would like to get involved, spread the word!

## 2016 FORUM SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

| Live Viewers on Periscope       | Replay Viewers on Periscope | Hearts on Periscope | Twitter                | Facebook                | YouTube   | TOTAL Social Media Interactions |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 869                             | 468                         | 628                 | 17 hearts/<br>retweets | 501 reached/<br>7 likes | 100 views | <b>2590</b>                     |
| <b>TOTAL Views On Periscope</b> | <b>1337</b>                 |                     |                        |                         |           |                                 |

Checkout our YouTube for the 2016 Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development, we made it ourselves!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLirHwdeZIE>

## CONTACT US

If you would like to get involved in the 2017 Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development or you would like more information, please contact:

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