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Information Document

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION

Overview of follow-up on progress in implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"

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A summary of relevant processes and related documents in 2017

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The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly during the historical summit held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015.

With the adoption of General Assembly Resolution “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹, world leaders agreed on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs revolve around the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, with the overall aim to realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.² People, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership are therefore at the core of the Agenda 2030.

Countries are responsible for the follow-up and review of the progress made towards the implementation of the Agenda, at the national, regional and global levels over the next 15 years. In order to monitor the implementation, 232 indicators have also been set.

¹ A/RES/70/1 – see at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

² Preamble of the Resolution.

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 aims at achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, who are still confronted to gender-specific as well as intersectional forms of discrimination. Violence against women and domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, as well as the grossly unbalanced share of unpaid domestic and care work and responsibilities between women and men, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in all fields, are some of the gender-related issues to be addressed worldwide.³

Gender inequalities are present in all countries of the world, and while they affect women and girls disproportionately, they also undermine men and boys' potential and abilities. Therefore, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary pre-condition for a peaceful, democratic, prosperous and sustainable world.⁴

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing justice for all and building inclusive institutions are the core of Goal 16 included in the 2030 Agenda. In order to meet this Goal, international and national efforts have to be made to tackle all forms of violence and to develop institutions that are accountable, open and accessible to all.

The importance of this Goal is closely related to the achievement of gender equality. Promoting the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice for all is essential to achieve gender equality, and vice-versa. Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice is also one of the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe. Moreover, in agreement with the indicators set for Goal 16, people need to feel safe and be free from all forms of violence as well as be able to contribute to decisions that affect their lives, through a responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making at all levels. Goal 16 also addresses violence against children, women and girls, human trafficking and sexual violence, all core areas of the Council of Europe work to promote women's human rights.

In order to follow-up and review the goals included in the 2030 Agenda, the UN Statistical Commission established an Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on SDGs with the aim of creating a global indicator framework.

³ Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", E/2017/66: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/66&Lang=E

⁴ United Nations – Promote Sustainable Development: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/promote-sustainable-development/>

The indicators to measure progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The indicator framework for the follow-up of the progress achieved in relation to the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was conceived and developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs), specifically created on 6 March 2015 by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and composed of UN member states and regional/international observers. The list of indicators was included as Annex IV to the IAEG-SDGs Report (E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1) presented at the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission held in March 2016 and then taken note of by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its 70th session in June 2016. In this respect, with the decision 47/101, the UN Statistical Commission agreed as a practical starting point with the proposed global indicator framework, but at the same time requested a future technical refinement.

Annex III of the IAEG-SDGs Report (E/CN.3/2017/2), presented in March 2017 during the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission, provided a revised list of global SDGs indicators. In the Report on the 48th session (E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35), the Commission stressed the importance of continuous work and adjustments to ensure that the global indicators fully address the level of ambition of the 2030 Agenda and agreed with the proposed plan for annual refinements of the indicators and the two comprehensive reviews to be presented to the Commission in 2020 and 2025.

The 5th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs was held from 28 to 31 March 2017 in Ottawa, including a Members meeting and a Plenary Session with representatives from all countries, international and regional agencies and entities, and other stakeholders. The aims of the meeting were to:

- Present the updated tier system⁵;
- Discuss the guidelines on data flow and global data reporting;
- Discuss the criteria for tier re-classification and the proposals for new concepts and definitions;
- Review work plans for tier III indicators and the proposals for new concepts and definitions and develop a mechanism to ensure completion of work;
- Present the IAEG-SDG work plan on data disaggregation;
- Present the timeline for finalizing the proposals on possible additional indicators.

⁵ According to the tier classification for SDGs, Tier 1: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available and data regularly produced by countries; Tier 2: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries; Tier 3: Indicator for which there are no established methodology and standards or methodology/standards are being developed/tested.

The meeting discussed the outcomes of the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission, principally in relation to the revised global indicator framework. Moreover, the following timeline for reviewing the proposals on possible additional indicators was presented:

- 1) **By the end of 2017:** the IAEG-SDGs will review the current list of possible additional indicators to decide which to include in an open consultation;
- 2) **By fall meeting of 2018:** the group will review indicators and propose changes and possible deletions based on the criteria set out in the IAEG-SDG report to the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2017/2, para 22);
- 3) **By the end of 2018:** one or more open consultations on the proposed possible additional indicators will subsequently be launched;
- 4) **By mid-2019:** one or more open consultations on the proposed changes and deletions will be carried out;
- 5) **By September 2019:** IAEG-SDGs will review the results of the consultations and give preference to those proposals with an established methodology and data available;
- 6) **By the end of 2019:** IAEG-SDGs will prepare the final proposal for the 2020 review to the Statistical Commission.

As included in the work programme for March 2017/March 2018, presented during the meeting, the next steps to be tackled by the IAEG-SDGs include:

- a) establishing procedures for the review of work plans for Tier III indicators and finalizing a mechanism for moving indicators from one Tier to another;
- b) initiating work on a proposal for additional indicators and other changes as part of the comprehensive review for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020;
- c) reviewing the availability of data for Tier I and Tier II indicators and develop a plan for increasing the data coverage of Tier II indicators with the joint subgroup of the Expert Group and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- d) developing further guidance on the issue of data disaggregation;
- e) continuing the work of the three working groups, on statistical data and metadata exchange, geospatial information and interlinkages;
- f) developing guidelines on the data flows between countries and custodian agencies;

g) holding two meetings, the first in March 2017 and the second in November 2017.

The next meeting of the IAEG-SDGs will be held in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, from 11 to 14 November 2017, with the following objectives:

- Review the tier classification;
- Discuss the proposed guidelines on data flows and global data reporting;
- Review progress made on the methodological development of tier III indicators;
- Discuss issues related to the work stream on data disaggregation;
- Discuss progress made on the data reporting calendar;
- Other related issues.

In relation to the revised list provided by the Report of the IAEG-SDGs, there have been modifications regarding two indicators concerning Goal 5: **indicator 5.5.1 and 5.6.2**. The following table shows **the currently agreed indicators for the follow up of Goal 5 on gender equality**, as established by the IAEG-SDGs:

Goal 5 targets	Indicators
5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1: Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	<p>5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age</p> <p>5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence</p>

<p>5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation</p>	<p>5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18</p> <p>5.3.2: Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age</p>
<p>5.4: Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate</p>	<p>5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location</p>
<p>5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life</p>	<p>5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments</p> <p>5.5.2: Proportion of women in managerial positions</p>
<p>5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences</p>	<p>5.6.1: Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care</p> <p>5.6.2: Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education</p>
<p>5.A: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws</p>	<p>5.A.1: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure</p> <p>5.A.2: Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women’s equal rights to land ownership and/or control</p>
<p>5.B: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women</p>	<p>5.B.1: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex</p>

5.C: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	5.C.1: Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment
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The following table shows the agreed **indicators for the follow up of Goal 16** as modified in the IAEG-SDGs Report (E/CN.3/2017/2):

Goal 16 targets	Indicators
16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	<p>16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age</p> <p>16.1.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause</p> <p>16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months</p> <p>16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live</p>
16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	<p>16.2.1: Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month</p> <p>16.2.2: Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation</p> <p>16.2.3: Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18</p>
16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	<p>16.3.1: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimisation to competent authorities or other officially recognised conflict resolution mechanisms</p> <p>16.3.2: Unsensenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population</p>

<p>16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime</p>	<p>16.4.1: Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)</p> <p>16.4.2: Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments</p>
<p>16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>	<p>16.5.1: Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months</p> <p>16.5.2: Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months</p>
<p>16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2: Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p>
<p>16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>16.7.1: Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions</p> <p>16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>
<p>16.8: Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance</p>	<p>16.8.1: Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organisations</p>
<p>16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration</p>	<p>16.9.1: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age</p>

<p>16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements</p>	<p>16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months</p> <p>16.10.2: Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information</p>
<p>16.A: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime</p>	<p>16.A.1: Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles</p>
<p>16.B: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development</p>	<p>16.B.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law</p>

The 2017 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the main United Nations (UN) forum for sustainable development issues, which plays a key role for the follow-up and review of the results achieved by United Nations member States as regards the SDGs established by the 2030 Agenda. It takes place every year under the auspices of ECOSOC – and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly. Its current functions are to provide political leadership, to guide the implementation of the Agenda, to track all progresses achieved through the national reports presented by states on a voluntary basis and address new/emerging issues.

The 2017 HLPF took place in New York from 10 to 19 July 2017 and it focused on “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”. It was the first HLPF held after the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 70/299 which gave further guidance on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁶, especially deciding that the sequence of themes for each four-year cycle of the forum shall reflect the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs and establishing that the HLPF shall discuss a set of Goals and their interlinkages including, if appropriate, with other Goals, at each session representing the three dimensions of sustainable development, with a view to simplifying an in-depth review of progress made on all Goals.

The 2017 meeting was the first HLPF to review in depth six SDGs: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), **SDG 5 (gender equality)**, SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 14 (life below water).

43 member states – among them, **12 Council of Europe member states** – presented their voluntary national reviews (VNRs) – see next page.

A Ministerial Declaration was adopted on 19 July 2017 (ref. E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2), aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

⁶ “Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level”
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/299&Lang=E.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

The 2015 Declaration “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (adopting the 2030 Agenda) enshrined how the follow-up of the SDGs is to be undertaken through reporting and reviewing mechanisms at the global, regional and national level. The purpose of the national reviews presented during the 2017 HLPF is to track progress in national implementation, including on legal frameworks, new provisions, and taking into consideration the interrelated nature of the SDGs. The national reviews are made on a voluntary basis and are carried out by different countries every year (43 States in 2017).

The following twelve national reviews were presented by Council of Europe member states in 2017: **Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.**⁷ They addressed the implementation of SDG 5, among other issues, providing an overview of the national situation as regards gender equality.

In their voluntary national reviews, most Council of Europe member states recognised the importance of Goal 5 as a priority cross-cutting issue, seen as essential for decisions aimed at achieving all the other SDGs. As highlighted in the VNR of Portugal, the gender equality dimension should be taken into account whenever any public policy is developed and carried out.

Despite the limited amount of information provided (only a few countries made specific remarks on gender equality), the prevailing view stressed the need to tackle inequalities to ensure that no one is left behind, in particular through efforts to reduce: gender-based income gaps, women and men’s unequal access to financial services (the Netherlands), unemployment among women (Italy) and gender disadvantages in education (Denmark).

⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

Input from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to the HLPF on Sustainable Development

(E/HLPF/2017/1/Add.2, 11 May 2017)

The Regional Forum on sustainable development for the UNECE Region was held on 25 April 2017 and attended by representatives from the governments of the UNECE region, international organisations, NGOs and the private sector – with the double purpose of sharing policy experience and learning from each other.

In compliance with the HLPF 2017, UNECE focused on the central themes of prosperity (SDG 9), health and well-being (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5), as well as poverty and social protection (SDG 1), nutrition and agriculture (SDG 2) and life below water (SDG 14).

The Forum was structured in two parts: a policy segment and a peer-learning segment. The latter consisted of three parallel regional round tables: national and local adaptation of SDGs, sub-regional co-operation for SDG implementation and data and monitoring.

The first two round tables revealed that the implementation and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda are taking place at various levels: global, national, regional, sub-regional and local. All these levels are required within a multidimensional system to fulfil the complexity of the SDGs. In this respect, the discussion underscored that, in the European Union (EU) member states, there are ongoing efforts to create linkages between the agenda of the EU and the SDGs.

Moreover, during the regional round tables, especially during the third one, the discussion dealt with the importance of quality, accessible and reliable disaggregated data to measure progress. Data availability and reliability is still a considerable problem. Therefore, since the insufficient disaggregation could represent a difficulty in policy-making, in order to formulate and evaluate policies in line with the 2030 Agenda, member states should provide more and better-quality data to increase their statistical capacity. Essentially, there should be a stronger co-operation between policymakers and statisticians.

Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls were considered important cross-cutting issues, whose achievement is essential for the accomplishment of the other goals. Effectively, the close linkages between the different SDGs and the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda are becoming increasingly clear, for this reason, implementing the Goals requires the creation of appropriate – vertical and horizontal – co-ordination structures having an intrinsic inter-sectoral character.

Report of the United Nations Secretary General on Progress

towards meeting the SDGs

(E/2017/66, 11 May 2017)

The report provides an overview on the progress achieved in recent years towards the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda, including the following analysis of SDG 5 (p.8).

- On the basis of data from 2005 to 2016 for 87 countries, 19 per cent of women between 15 and 49 years of age said they had experienced **physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey**. In the most extreme cases, such violence can lead to death. In 2012, almost half of all women who were victims of intentional homicide worldwide were killed by an intimate partner or family member, compared to 6 per cent of male victims.
- **Child marriage** is declining, but not fast enough. Around 2000, nearly 1 in 3 women between 20 and 24 years of age reported that they were married before 18 years of age. Around 2015, the ratio was just over 1 in 4. The decline is driven by an even steeper reduction in the marriage rate among girls under 15 years of age during that period.
- The harmful practice of **female genital mutilation/cutting** has declined by 24 per cent since around 2000. Nevertheless, prevalence remains high in some of the 30 countries with representative data. In those countries, survey data from around 2015 indicate that more than 1 in 3 girls between 15 and 19 years of age have undergone the procedure compared to nearly 1 in 2 girls around 2000.
- The average amount of **time spent on unpaid domestic and care work** is more than threefold higher for women than men, according to survey data from 83 countries and areas. Available data indicate that time spent on domestic chores accounts for a large proportion of the gender gap in unpaid work.
- Globally, **women's participation in single or lower houses of national parliaments** reached 23.4 per cent in 2017, just 10 percentage points higher than in 2000. Such slow progress suggests that stronger political commitment and more ambitious measures and quotas are needed to boost women's political participation and empowerment. Women are still underrepresented in **managerial positions**. In the majority of the 67 countries with data from 2009 to 2015, fewer than a third of senior- and middle-management positions were held by women. Just over half (52 per cent) of women between 15 and 49 years of age who are married or in union make their own **decisions about consensual sexual relations and use of contraceptives and health services**. That statistic is based on available data from around 2012 for 45 countries, 43 of which are in developing regions.

Ministerial Declaration of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on the theme “Eradication poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges”

(E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2, 19 July 2016)

The Ministerial Declaration issued after the 2017 HLPF reaffirms member states’ commitment to implementing the objectives encompassed by the 2030 Agenda. It highlights the importance of SDGs, including a focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5).

We, the Ministers and high representatives [...]

5. Commit to a world in which all women and girls enjoy full gender equality with men and boys and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment and equality have been removed. The feminization of poverty persists, and the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is an indispensable requirement for women’s economic empowerment and sustainable development. We stress the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty. We realize that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets. We also stress the need to ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls throughout the life cycle, including through social protection systems.

8. Commit ourselves to embracing diversity in cities and human settlements, to strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, gender equality, innovation, entrepreneurship, inclusion, identity and safety, and the dignity of all people, as well as to fostering liveability and a vibrant urban economy. We also commit ourselves to taking steps to ensure that our local institutions promote pluralism and peaceful coexistence within increasingly heterogeneous and multicultural societies.

17. Recognize and are concerned that gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their human rights and opportunities. Violence and discrimination against women and girls in private and public spaces is a major impediment to the achievement of women’s empowerment and their social and economic development that no country has managed to eliminate. We reaffirm our commitment to take action to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls through strengthening of institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks. Women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and, in this regard, we also recognize the special challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities. We note the slow progress in women’s representation in leadership

and management level positions. Globally, women hold only 23.4 per cent of seats in single or lower houses of national parliaments and less than one third of senior- and middle-management positions. Stepped up efforts are required to ensure women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership at all levels, in all areas, and in all efforts aimed at the eradication of poverty and promoting prosperity, including through financial literacy and inclusion. We reiterate the urgency of addressing structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, such as discriminatory laws and policies, gender stereotypes, harmful practices and negative social norms and attitudes, so as to ensure rights of ownership, control over land and natural resources, and access to financial services. Action is needed to address gender pay gaps, which remain pervasive across regions and sectors, including by recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work. We underline the importance of fully engaging men and boys as strategic partners and allies in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. We also underscore that all other Sustainable Development Goals need to be implemented in a manner that delivers results for women and girls. We urge that countries fully integrate gender equality strategies into national sustainable development frameworks so as to promote greater policy coherence, recognizing that achieving gender equality will require both targeted action as well as mainstreaming gender into all our efforts.

Summary of the 2017 HLPF by the then President of ECOSOC (H.E. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava)

At the end of the 2017 HLPF, the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, reaffirmed the relevance of the HLPF as an important platform for the follow-up and review of the SDGs. Relevant parts concerning gender equality include the ones below:

SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The HLPF recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women was not merely a goal, but a prerequisite for prosperous societies and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. While progress was noted in ending discrimination against women and girls in laws, policies and practices since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, systemic and structural changes had far to go in some parts of the world. Violence against women and girls and child marriage are still prevalent in some regions. Women still spend more time than men caring for family members and on domestic duties. Women continue to be largely underrepresented in decision-making in public and private spheres and face constraints related to access to and control over productive resources, limited employment in skill based industries, exclusion in skills development programmes and access to financial resources. The consequences of armed conflict and political instability on women and girls are devastating, and must be urgently addressed.

Participants recognized the critical link between women’s empowerment, breaking poverty cycles and enhancing economic growth. Efforts are concentrated on strengthening the means of implementation of SDG 5, addressing violence against women, supporting women’s participation in the labour market and in decision-making, promoting women’s health and access to services, and improving institutional frameworks by integrating SDG 5 into long-term development plans, localizing the SDGs and prioritizing investment in gender disaggregated data. Some highlighted knowledge sharing among countries and the importance of adopting the SDG 5 indicator guidelines, with these indicators serving as a baseline for national efforts. Creating synergies and strategic alliances, including among the BPfA, CEDAW and CSW, and between state and non-state actors, can improve progress.

Follow-up and review

[...] Some progress is evident at the two-year mark of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. National governments are strongly committed to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind. They have begun internalizing SDGs into their strategies and planning processes, coordinating internally and among ministries. Policymaking is increasingly becoming science- and evidence-based and aligned with national budgets. Decentralization is occurring as local governments and communities adapt the SDGs to their particular circumstances. Meanwhile multi-stakeholder engagement is increasing and changing as actors engage in structured implementation processes.

[...]Lack of social inclusion and widening inequality remains a significant challenge, both within and among countries. In particular, the young, indigenous people, older people, rural workers, people with disabilities and people affected by conflict are seen as vulnerable. The perils of people on the move, including migrants, are increasing. Women and girls remain deprived of basic rights and opportunities in many parts of the world. They are disproportionately impacted by climate change, disasters and conflict, especially when living in poverty and are often being forced into child marriages and suffering from genital mutilation and violence without access to health and reproductive services and rights. At the same time, they must be recognized as significant agents of change able to drive development and prosperity, when empowered.

[...]Lack of official statistics, data and effective monitoring systems remain a significant challenge to measuring progress, in particular at the SDG target level in relation to new elements of the SDGs that measure the transformative propositions of the 2030 Agenda. Lastly, science and technology must be brought to bear on the SDGs, with knowledge and know-how made accessible to all.

The HLPF recognized the importance of the regional dimension in supporting effective implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Regional cooperation and integration plays an increasing role in supporting sustainable development, including through South-South cooperation, peer learning, and the sharing of experiences among countries. The contribution of Regional Forums on Sustainable Development (RFSD) enables connection between the national and global levels.

Identifying interlinkages among the SDGs and within SDGs at target level was critical and should translate into the policy making, budgeting and institutional structures and processes at national and sub-national levels [...]. It was widely recognized that data is vital for achieving the SDGs, building trust and accountability, but also constitutes a key challenge. Localization of targets and indicators, as well as capacity development and investments in data collection, disaggregation, analysis and dissemination need to be prioritized.

Discussions at the 2017 HLPF have shown the critical role of the HLPF as the global platform for follow-up and review, highlighting the Forum's importance as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that require coordinated action at the global level, but also serving as a platform for collaboration, partnerships peer learning and exchange of experiences and lessons learnt. The facilitative momentum of the HLPF enhanced national efforts towards SDG implementation.

Next steps towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

As regards the next steps to pursue the 2030 Agenda and, in particular Goal 5, it is important to look at the future national efforts provided by the UN member states.

In relation to the voluntary national reviews (VNRs), in September 2017, the current President of ECOSOC, Marie Chatardová, introduced the 49 countries that will be conducting their VNRs at the 2018 HLPF. Among them, there are the following **15 Council of Europe member states: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland.**

Moreover, in order to implement the follow-up and the review of the progress made about SDGs, the IAEG-SDGs Report (E/CN.3/2017/2) provided also possible additional indicators. Concerning Goal 16 target 16.3, the possible additional indicator is “Access to civil justice”.

New: The “Spotlight Initiative”

In September 2017, the European Union and the United Nations launched a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG): the Spotlight Initiative.⁸

In compliance with SDG 5, the purpose of the Spotlight Initiative is to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. In this context, violence is a main barrier to the accomplishment of women’s human rights and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda ensuring that no one is left behind. The Spotlight Initiative is so named because it aims at moving this issue into the spotlight from the darkness where it usually takes place. The Initiative will address all forms of violence against women, with a particular focus on domestic violence, gender-based violence, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation.

The Spotlight Initiative will provide large investments aimed at achieving important progresses in the lives of women and girls in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean. In this respect, on 20 September 2017 the European Union committed 500 million euros to this project.

For further information visit the official website of the Spotlight Initiative: <http://www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative/>.

⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative/>

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