STATEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ON TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES AT THE 4th AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DAKAR SENEGAL

MAY 2, 2018

We, representatives of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders met in Dakar, Senegal on 2nd May 2018, ahead of the 4th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development themed *"***Transformation towards sustainable and resilient Societies***"*.

We speak one voice of the African Major Groups and other stakeholders drawn from diverse organizations. We are committed to upholding the rights of all African peoples in the building and developing transformative, sustainable and resilient societies. Across all the goals there are cross cutting issues that are central to the solutions that will address barriers in the implementation of a transformative agenda. This includes women and girls, young people, the ageing, and people living with disabilities who are disproportionately affected by poverty, exclusion and the impact of environmental and climate change across the continent.

As we share our recommendations of the SDGs and the corresponding goals the First 10-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 and 2030 under review at the Forum, we call on our governments to support the meaningful participation of CSOs in decision-making processes, the provision of accurate, evidence-based, disaggregated, qualitative and quantitative data that is critical to monitoring progress and identifying gaps with a stronger focus on domestic financing sources.

We highly appreciate and are encouraged by UNECA and the African Union Commission's commitment to engage with major groups and other stakeholders; and their recognition of the role of Major Groups and Other stakeholders towards realizing Sustainable Development in Africa.

To realize the goals, we thus recommend the following:

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

1. A Rights Based and person-centred approach to provision of water and sanitation to ensure access among its citizenry not forgetting older people, rural and urban informal settlements where poor people generally live, in schools and communities especially high population areas and every household.
2. The role of governments as providers of social services to be safeguarded in order to prevents the commodification of water and privatization of services. **Increase political and financial commitment to water, sanitation and hygiene** by Investing in the development, acquisition and adaptation of technologies that will improve sustainable clean water availability through water treatment plants, waste management as well as localised water treatment techniques.
3. Investment in the education of girls including providing access to sanitation facilities for better menstrual hygiene management and invest in breaking the stigma around menstruation and raise awareness about it by pursuing initiatives that keep girls in school
4. In order that no one is left behind, we strongly recommend women's participation in the development and decision making of water and sanitation infrastructure to ensure they are benefitting from the indigenous knowledge whilst protecting environmental ecosystems that secure water systems and strengthens community based water resources.

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

Energy poverty in Africa affects productivity and makes job creation difficult. Moreover, it makes people more reliable on fossil fuel and unclean energy sources which contributes to climate change. Addressing energy poverty in the continent and shifting toward more clean and renewable energy sources is vital for securing the future energy needs and for improving access to sustainable and affordable energy.

Recommendations:

1. Governments should hasten the transition to clean energy by increasing investment, diversifying energy sources and ensuring access to affordability.
2. Governments should ensure regulatory frameworks that encourage the participation of youth and women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and rural women in alternative clean energy investments and developments including technology and skills transfer, access to financing and control of these resources by removing barriers that hinder participation.
3. Governments should prioritize Indigenous knowledge on clean energy technologies and fuels specifically women led initiatives and encourage local manufacturing of energy products.

4. Governments should ensure affordability and accessibility of the renewable energy technologies and fuels in rural and high-density settlements and adopt programs to Intensify rural electrifications

Goal 11 Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Transforming African cities and human settlements into safe, resilient and sustainable societies must be an inclusive process that recognizes the rights of all including the most excluded and marginalized who are facing multiple and intersecting forms of discriminations. Excluded and marginalized peoples including older persons, people living with disabilities, young people and women often face barriers in housing and transport services that increases their vulnerability to abuse and violence.

Recommendations:

1. Investing in social, economic and sustainable infrastructures in rural and urban centers must be a priority for African governments.
2. Governments need to increase access to sexual and reproductive health information and services to address population growth by implementing the Maputo protocol and Plan of Action as well as the Abuja Actions Towards the Elimination of HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in Africa in order to achieve sustainable cities
3. African governments need to rise up to the challenge of urbanization, tackle waste and air pollution by implementing the polluter pay principle and build resilient infrastructures that are accessible and user friendly for all including persons living with disabilities to combat risks from natural disasters.
4. Integrate biodiversity and ecosystems management in city planning and management including through connecting city / urban and rural planning
5. The government must increase investment in rural and urban areas to ensure inclusive economic opportunity and empowerment for young people, women and the ageing. The initiatives should include decent work and recognize the unpaid care labour by women and girls in households and societies.
6. Address issues of corruption and ensure transparency and accountability to citizens on the continent.

Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Many African countries continue to be a landfill for toxic waste which endanger the health and lives of Africans especially local and indigenous populations, women and the ageing.

Recommendations:

1. Promote establishment of strong legal frameworks for sustainable production and consumption of locally manufactured bio-degradable products entrenching inclusive participation for all
2. Provide and improve access to agricultural extension services, financial services, farm inputs and support farmers, especially women, the older persons, youth and people

with disabilities along the value chain, particularly in post-harvest and preservation mechanisms to prevent wastage and post-harvest losses.

3. Promote research, knowledge and learning on sustainable consumption and production and ensure disaggregated data on older people, women, youths and persons with disabilities.
4. Deploy new technologies in the production methods that are energy efficient, clean and lean on externalities through investments in the structural transformations of African economies to arrest the continent's dependence on externally produced goods and services.
5. Governments across Africa need to strengthen their regulatory frameworks and policies in line with Bamako convention

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 (Life on Land)

1. Adopt and promote policies that increase women's rights land ownership
2. As state party to Human and Peoples Rights, African governments need to recommit to protection of women, human and environmental rights defenders and the promotion of their work.

3. Promote ecological engineering that protect the environment and enhance sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, combat deforestation, monitor and reverse biodiversity loss

4. Governments need to build capacity for women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, to enable involvement in planning and decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of conservation programs.

5. Integrate sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems into local, national and regional policies and strategies.

6. Partnerships between government and private sector should be inclusive of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples to ensure sustainability.

Goal 17 Strengthening the means of Implementation and partnership for sustainable development

Inclusive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and 2063 Development Agenda is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This is only achievable where there is an economic system that promotes equitable distribution of wealth and resources. It is therefore necessary to strengthen, and promote and invest in effective, meaningful and transparent public policy that integrates a human rights and gender perspective and support the mainstreaming of gender aspects in financing, budgeting and taxation.

Recommendations:

1. Governments should invest, as a priority, in the formulation, generation and analysis of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, including commitment to collection and reporting on deliberate action to mainstream a gender perspective in the Voluntary National Reviews.
2. Countries providing funds and technical support to enhance the capacity for the collection of statistical data for African countries should ensure that this support builds capacity for better statistical data in the collection of sex-disaggregated data. ⬚
3. Subscribe to the future database of Best Practice guidance and case studies, covering issues such as policy/legislation, education and awareness, and capacity building, as well as SDG programmes, across a diversity of contexts with a focus on gender mainstreaming. ⬚
4. Support and provide comprehensive protection to women human rights and environmental defenders, at all levels, to enable them to do their work free from violence, fear of imprisonment, or other human rights abuses. ⬚
5. Global partnerships to curb illicit financial flows should also showcase their positive impacts on vulnerable groups such as women's, people with disabilities, older persons, youth, and indigenous peoples.

Finally, we call for the institutionalization and operationalization of the African Major Groups by the Pan African Institutions for effective coordination, collaboration and partnerships.