



10<sup>th</sup> Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals  
Women's Major Group Statement  
April 2, 2014

Imagine a world in which we have no new words. Imagine a future in which no new events are foreseen. Imagine a world 15 years from now replicating the dilemmas that we faced 20 years ago. And also, imagine that because of that paralysis, there is no possible future to advance further.

My name is Emilia Reyes, from Equidad de Genero, Mexico, and I speak on behalf of the WMG.

As the process of negotiation continues, the WMG is pleased to see that in the 2nd version of the 19 Focus Area document, the focus area "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" reflects the status of the discussion of the 8th and 9th OWG session, with a reference to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, of women's burden of unpaid care work and the need to eradicate both all forms of violence against women and gender discrimination. We are also glad to see new inter-linkages with gender equality.

In the WMG we have been thinking about this process. Also, we have been thinking about poetry. Yesterday the delegate representative of Colombia mentioned she liked metaphors. We like metaphors as well. We like creativity and invention. We like the full potential of human capacities. And we would like to think that we, all of us, every stakeholder involved, will find a way to guarantee human's rights and gender equality in a sustainable process of development. The poetry lies in the potential it brings: at this point, in several negotiations in regard to these priorities, language has been keeping humanity lagging behind its promise of wellbeing and prosperity. In the obstinacy to keep "agreed language", we have witnessed impasses in parallel negotiations on climate change, financing, human rights, gender equality agendas, to mention a few. We would like the Post 2015 to be our poetic field: the place in which we agree new language, a new language of such vanguard that even 15 years from now, sounds fresh to the ears of governments, citizens and stakeholders.

What will that language say? That we will find a way to ensure that, as Oscar Wilde said, reality follows imagination:

- That the WMG and in the end the entire world endorsed the widespread call for a standalone goal on gender equality and women's rights, and thus we promoted as a cross-cutting element gender equality and the full realization of women's human rights.
- That every single cluster has interlinkages with gender equality and women's rights, meaning not only that the social agenda, but also the environmental and economic agenda, include the gender dimension.

But we are still far from that promise. The Women's Major Group is strongly concerned that many of the proposed targets for the Sustainable Development Goals do not adequately address the structural, gendered and power inequalities due to the current neoliberal, extractivist and exclusive development model. We challenge the unquestioned call for "economic growth", and reiterate our stance that this terminology must be replaced with "sustainable development". Sustainable development requires a radical paradigm shift regarding the current growth model, and we cannot expect transformation change if we continue a "business as usual" approach to our current economic and ecological systems.

We like progressive language. We like Cairo's language, the Conference on Population and Development, with its global and regional references to the most ambitious agendas for gender equality, such as in domestic and unpaid work and sexual rights as well as reproductive rights. We want to see it in our implementing mandate, and we want to move away from "unclear" terms: let us make them clear and sound so that every country endorses them. We are now 20 year beyond Cairo and yet our rights continue to be parceled up and pawned off. We call for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Also, critical agendas are still in need to recognize the links with gender equality and women's rights:

- Water & Sanitation, because women and girls are more impacted by lack of sanitation, as in menstrual hygiene.
- Employment, because the gender pay gap needs to be eradicated.
- Oceans and Seas, since women make up a large part of the fisherfolk.
- Climate change, because structural inequalities deepen the impact on women and girls.
- Biodiversity, because women in particular indigenous women are the stewards of biodiversity and depend on it for their livelihoods.
- Economic development since, as the World Bank and all economic studies show, gender equality spurs economic development.

Let us just not remain imagining. Let us sign an ambitious agreement and create meaningful language to fulfil rights.