INTERVENTION FOR THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM Session 10.5

"Reaching out to the world": Communicating the agenda
Wednesday, 1 July 2015, 3:00 pm – 5:00pm

Thank you, Madam Moderator. It is a privilege to speak. I am Malyn Ando. Aside from representing the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), I'm also speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM) and the Women's Major Group.

Before discussing the 'how', I would like to first backtrack and touch on key issues relevant to communicating the post-2015agenda:

1.   We all agree that information and communications play a big role and are crucial towards popularizing the SDGs and creating ownership amongst the people and governments. For this to happen, we need **open, transparent information and communications systems and political cultures** that establish and realize **legal rights to freedom of speech and access to information,** and do not punish voices of dissent. We also need free and functioning **media, internet freedom, and a supportive regulatory environment.** All of these are critical to **transparency and accountability.**

2.   **The world has become much smaller, but we have to remember that there is a digital divide and not everyone is wired, with four billion people in the developing world remaining offline.** To communicate the agenda to those most left behind, we mustaddress the reasons why they have difficulty getting information. These systemic barriers include non-literacy; not speaking the majority or official languages; distance from sources of information; lack of electricity and other infrastructure that limits the availability of radios, televisions, computers, and access to the internet; and lack of capacity to use new technologies. Women and marginalised groups like indigenous peoples have unequal access to technology; people with disabilities also face additional barriers.

3.   On the other side of the communication coin, we must also **overcome hurdles to participate and to make one's voice heard.** This includes addressing gender inequality, and other social norms and power structures in our societies that silence the voices of women, girls, and other groups on the margins. We urge Member States to regard open, inclusive, participatory information and media channels as public goods, and to invest in these and not leave it to the private sector.This will strengthen the role of women as producers and processors of knowledge, including traditional knowledge, and enable their greater participation as well as of young people and the powerless in social, economic and political processes. Particular for indigenous peoples is their right to Free Prior and Informed Consent.

4.   Regarding **technology and big data,** we must ask: who benefits? Is it the women and marginalized, the governments who will use this for policymaking, or corporations? It is crucial that with the adoption of technology and the processes used to collect and

maintain big data, and using this for communication, education or policymaking, communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples, must share ownership.

5.   Info and media campaigns to increase awareness of the post-2015 agenda are needed. At the same time, **communications mechanisms can be used to listen**; governments can use these to gather feedback on bills, policies and programmes. They can also be used towards an i**nclusive and transparent monitoring, review and accountability system**, where the HLPF and UN agencies can integrate marginalized voices and views when considering the progress made towards the SDGs.

In terms of the **how do we communicate the agenda**, great tips have already been mentioned by the panelists—His Excellency Francis Lorenzo mentioned earlier using human stories, best practices, use of art and music; Grammenos Mastrojeni cautioned against use of fear tactics; Mitchell Toomey mentioned crowdsourcing, communications and network-driven technology; and David Droga showed the importance of the emotional hook and getting buy-ins. I would like to just add a few more points:

1.   **On harnessing the power of new information technologies, including social media, as a tool for collective action and social change:** Examples of the use of social media are civil society initiatives, such as ARROW's #SRHR4all campaign and the #WhatWomenWant campaign by the Women's Major Group on the zero draft of the post-2015 document.

Another good example is Facebook's 'Celebrate Pride' tool. How many of you changed your profile and used a rainbow filter to support marriage equality after the US Supreme Court decision? While this can be criticized as clicktivism, it also gauges growing acceptance and social change. It is also an opportunity for deepening public discourse and highlighting gaps. Homosexuality remains illegal in 79 countries globally, and even in the US there are still issues disproportionately affecting queer immigrants and trans lives in accessing health care, employment and safety. It also reminds us that the zero draft of the post-2015 agenda outcome document does not reference sexual orientation and gender identity and expression amongst the grounds for non-discrimination. Neither does it consistently mention age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship status, geographic location, HIV and health status, marital status, pregnancy status, and occupation.

2.   **Our messages must be simple and clear, but not simplistic.** I really liked the example that Grammenos gave of the polar bear, the child and the phytoplankton earlier. We must build understanding that all goals are interconnected—the rights to development, to food and nutrition, to land and oceans, to education, to health, to decent work and living wage, and to sexual and reproductive rights are all interconnected, and sustainable development and development justice can't be achieved without achieving all.

3.   When communicating the post-2015 agenda, we must all **adhere to human rights, gender equality, and ethical principles and standards**. For example, do we reinforce

stereotypes of women and girls in our messages? Do we take permission for the use of their images? Do we subscribe to poverty porn? We must walk what we talk.

I would like to end by emphasizing that in communicating the post-2015development agenda, the 'what' and 'why' are as important as the 'how'. If the 'what' and 'why' do not reflect people's aspirations for development justice, the 'how' simply becomes a tool to perpetuate injustice and inequality. Thank you.