



Informal Consultations with Civil Society on the agenda and work of the Second Committee

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“How can the Second Committee ensure that its work is in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?”

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Thank you Ambassador, thank you Moderator.

As the Women’s Major Group, we appreciate the opportunity to speak here today at the 2nd Committee on the agenda and working methods of the 2nd Committee, to ensure its work is aligned with and responds to the complexities and challenges of achieving the 2030 Agenda and the recently adopted Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The WMG has been active in sustainable development & will continue with implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – to support turning words into transformative action that eradicates poverty and gender inequality, ensures a healthy and resilient planet, and the rights of all people. Our engagement throughout, and that of other major groups and constituencies, has been supported by open, inclusive participation modalities.

The work of the 2nd Committee could be further strengthened by increasing ongoing and systematic opportunities for collaboration with the Major Groups and other organized civil society constituencies and we are eager to engage with you on how this could be done.

Today, I will address 4 issues.

First – We agree with many Member States that the current program takes a siloed approach to the issues and is not aligned with the 2030 agenda, which has as its premise the 3 dimensions of sustainable development. We also recognize that the agenda of the 2nd Committee already addresses many aspects of the 2030 Agenda, though not all. Thus it is important to ensure strong coordination and linkages with the work of the 3rd Committee and of ECOSOC.

The WMG has always focused on integrating the 3 dimensions. Gender equality is not only a social issue - it is inextricably linked to environmental and economic issues. It is also a matter of human rights.

We recommend that the 2nd Committee apply a gender lens as a first overarching step to support better and integrated responses to the challenges of the 2030 agenda. Taking this cross-cutting approach can happen already, even as priorities and the future agenda are further discussed throughout the session.

To illustrate my point, the 2030 agenda includes commitments to address a range of social, economic and environmental issues that impact women and girls, including economic inequality, agriculture, energy, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, climate change, and peace and security. It also commits to expand women's economic opportunities and recognize and value the burdens of unpaid care work, among other key actions relevant to the 2nd Committee.

Second - Looking at the agendas of the 2nd and 3rd Committees, we see overlaps between them and with the agenda of ECOSOC.

Like Member States, we do not want to run in circles, retracing our steps in different spaces. But, we also value deep reflection and debate that allows for consideration of complex issues.

We look forward to continuing to engage with the 2nd Committee on how best to address perceived duplications. A clear analysis of the overlaps – and gaps – is needed. A careful review of the agenda is important so that what's preserved is done so for its quality and contribution to sustainable development and poverty eradication. This can better position the 2nd Committee to support achievement of the 2030 agenda, incorporating the ideas into existing resolutions or spurring new resolutions if relevant. The 2nd Committee will need to recognize, as the 2030 agenda does, that development and human rights (which is the purview of the 3rd Committee) are inextricably linked and break down the siloes that exist between the two committees.

The integrated approach may allow more nuanced resolutions and better parsing of issues between 2nd and 3rd committees, or ECOSOC.

On this point, as well as the issue of silos, a question is ---- what benefit do Member States see in exploring joint sessions or other types of collaboration with the 3rd Committee as a means to address the duplication issue? As well as to better explore the added value of housing a particular topic in one or the other committee?

Third – Remember, the 2nd Committee is part of the larger UN. The 2030 SD Agenda is a major step forward in its comprehensiveness and universality; however, we do not want to see action at the UN (or the 2nd Committee) reduced only to the 2030 Agenda, because it is much more than that. The functional commissions still have a key role in following up their specific mandates, for example. While neither the Addis nor 2030 Agendas brought ambition to fully address systemic issues of global trade, finance and taxation arrangements that entrench inequalities, the resolutions coming from the 2nd Committee should keep in mind the opportunity to propel further systemic change and ensure there is no backsliding – recognizing the social implications of macroeconomic policy issues.

Finally - We recognize the important role the 2nd Committee can have in guiding the HLPF look forward to following up this aspect.

To conclude, the WMG and its many members are ready to stay engaged with the 2nd Committee to support the best outcomes possible.

Thank you.