



## **Working Principles and Values**

### **Women's Major Group at UN Environment / UNEA**

#### **Background:**

The Women's Major Group at UN Environment (WMG-UNEA) has as core mandate to facilitate women's civil society perspectives in the policy space and processes of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The WMG-UNEA cooperates closely with the WMG working on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but has its own structure. The United Nations officially recognizes this role of the WMG<sup>1</sup>.

The WMG-UNEA provides a formal channel for physical or virtual participation in key global and regional UN policy meetings; observing and speaking in official sessions; engaging in coordinated and strategic advocacy with decision-makers; contributions to coordinated position statements, analysis and policy recommendations published on the [UNEP](#) webpage for Major Groups; participation in reporting and accountability efforts; capacity building; and access to documents and information.

The WMG-UNEA is self-organised and open to all interested civil society organisations (e.g. diverse women's and feminist groups, gender-focused civil society organizations, social movements and women from indigenous and other communities) working on environmental issues to promote human rights-based sustainable development with a focus on women's human rights and gender equality in these international policy processes.

To participate in the WMG-UNEA, civil society organisations do not need to be accredited to UNEP.

As we are a self-organised group we ask all interested organisations to sign-on to the WMG key principles and values, and to adhere to them when acting and speaking as part of the WMG.

The Guiding Principles herein articulate the collective values that we consider key to our work and to our lives as activists and feminists organizing for sustainable development. They chart the change we wish to see in our communities and countries and spell out our individual and collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another. These principles inform the development of our positions as well as the ways in which we organize.

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<sup>1</sup> The Women's Major Group (WMG) was created as an outcome of the Earth Summit in 1992, where Agenda 21, the "blueprint for sustainable development" outlined the critical role, rights and responsibilities of nine Major Groups, including women, in global sustainable development processes. Countries reaffirmed their commitment to the major group system in the outcome of the Rio +20 summit and again in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The WMG @UNEP cooperates closely with the WMG @Agenda2030 which has its own structure of elected facilitators (Organizing Partners).

## Principles and Values of WMG-UNEA:

### WMG-UNEA core framing principles are:

- Gender equality and justice,
- Women's human rights,
- Social, economic and environmental sustainability
- Respect planetary boundaries and,
- Living in harmony with nature

### WMG-UNEA work together to:

- overcome structural economic, social and environmental crises that disproportionately impact women and girls
- tackle intersecting inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics, disabilities, and other status;
- ensure government accountability to commitments of gender equity and sustainable development; and
- create diverse, vibrant, equal and just societies for all people
- tackle all structural barriers that violate planetary boundaries and nature's health and integrity
- struggle against the commodification of nature

### In our work as the Women's Major Group @UNEA, we commit to the following:

- An understanding of the links between our diverse issues – within social, gender, ecological, economic, redistributive, racial, reproductive, and sexual justice – and to ensure we are not trading or prioritizing the rights of one over another.
- Cooperate closely and build bridges with other Women's Major Groups and Women's constituencies linked to related UN policy processes, while respecting their mandates in those processes.
- Continuously encourage active participation of all members of the WMG in an atmosphere of solidarity, trust, and respect.
- Respect the work done by the WMG and the positions that the WMG has taken in its decades of activity, in all statements made and positions taken on behalf of the WMG.
- Solicit feedback through an open and consultative process for all statements made on behalf of the WMG respecting the prior positions and statements of the WMG.
- Speak with the “collective voice” when speaking on behalf of the WMG, and speak to the entirety of the WMG position rather than choosing only certain elements of the position. *Non-aligned views cannot be presented on behalf of the WMG*
- Create space for dissenting voices in discussions within the WMG and open up space, where available for divergent voices, as members of the WMG, rather than on behalf of the WMG.
- Avoid conflict of interest from organizations wishing to participate in the WMG, including where they have not worked in alignment with these principles and values and/or where there is lack of clarity about the aims and organisation<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The WMG co-facilitators can request to visit interested organisations and request annual reports and information about financial dependence

## How is the WMG-UNEA organised?

**The WMG-UNEA is official recognized** by the United Nations Environment Programme and its member states. As such, the WMG has the responsibility to abide by the rules of the UN Environment to which it contributes to, whilst ensuring a critical, independent and diverse input from the WMG member organisations.

**The WMG-UNEA is a self-organized** space for women, feminist and gender-equality civil society organizations and movements wanting to work jointly, in solidarity, on environmental policies.

**All interested women, feminist, civil society organizations and movements** working on environmental policies, and who endorse the WMG principles and values, can join the WMG-UNEA advocacy groups as members.

**To join the WMG-UNEA they first endorse** the WMG principles and values and then join the list-serve and working groups.

**Joining the WMG-UNEA does not give access to any funding.** The WMG does not obtain any core support from the United Nations and the members need themselves to fundraise to ensure the effective work of the WMG.

**Individuals are welcome to join our discussions**, and can join the information list-serve, but the priority and strength of the WMG are the civil society organizations

**The WMG-UNEA is coordinated by volunteer member organizations called ‘co-facilitators’** who are nominated and elected for global coordination every 2-3 years. The nomination and election procedures are transparent and aim at ensuring renewal, diversity and continuity. The elections process is self-organized abiding by the rules of UNEP.

Organisations that would like to participate in the **WMG-UNEA election procedure** are requested to endorse the WMG-UNEA Principles and Values.

Please return your endorsement to: [isis.alvarez@globalforestcoalition.org](mailto:isis.alvarez@globalforestcoalition.org) and [nigerdeltawomen@gmail.com](mailto:nigerdeltawomen@gmail.com) with copy to [lean@wedo.org](mailto:lean@wedo.org)