

**Terms of Reference (TOR) for Organizing  
Partners (OPs) of the Women's Major Group  
for Sustainable Development**

*Version January 2025<sup>1</sup>*

*The Women's Major Group (WMG) for Sustainable Development (SD) is the focal point for UNDESA, ECOSOC and the GA for all UN Sustainable Development processes. The WMG for SD scope covers the Rio+20 outcomes (SDGs, Financing for Sustainable Development, SIDS, SCP) and the 2030 Agenda and SDG process at the global and regional policy level. In addition, the WMG for SD aims to cooperate closely with other Major Groups and feminist ally constituencies linked to other UN policy processes.*

**1) Description of OP Role**

The WMG aims at a balanced distribution of Organizing Partners (OPs) as much as possible, bringing together organizations that have expertise in relevant international and regional policy processes,<sup>2</sup> thematic expertise<sup>3</sup> as well as organizational skills (e.g. networking, advocacy, outreach, grassroots, capacity building).

The OP role is held by organizations, rather than individuals. Each elected organization nominates a person(s) to represent the organization in the function of OP and this person(s) has the responsibility of fulfilling the ToR of OPs. **At least one staff person should be able to dedicate a minimum of 20-30% of their time to participating in and leading Women's Major Group work.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Terms of Reference for the OP role is an evolving document that changes according to the needs of the WMG and the advocacy we undertake. Please remember that there may be changes to the ToR in time, in consultation with members.

<sup>2</sup> UN processes on Agenda 2030 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

<sup>3</sup> Gender Equality, Women's Human Rights, Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights (SRHR), Peace & Rule of Law, Energy, Forests & Biodiversity, Oceans & Seas, Climate Change, Food Sovereignty, Energy, Education, Decent Work, Finance, Trade and Investment, Social Justice and Social Protection, Technologies, & ICT, among other relevant themes.

Subject to funds availability, each OP organization is eligible to receive a small regrant from the WMG budget, which can be used for any purpose to support the work of the OP organization and representative with the WMG. If the budget does not allow all OPs to receive a sub-grant, Global South OPs will be prioritized. A brief report on each annual regrant will be required. The OP role is not a paid position, and there is no salary or guarantee of travel funding that accompanies this role.

## **2) Criteria for WMG OPs**

Organizations should have:

### **1. *Relevant thematic focus and experience:***

- A mission focused on achieving gender equality, women's human rights, women's economic and/or social development, and/or women and the environment/sustainable development.
- Staff with relevant expertise in gender equality, women's human rights, economic, social and sustainable development and/or related thematic issues.
- A national and/or regional/international scope of activities related to women's human rights and gender equality and/or experience in advocacy work/ initiatives at the regional and international spaces. If a national or more grassroots organization applies, then they must show capacity and at least 3 years of experience of mobilization and/or handle regional and/or global networks.
- Experience advocating for women's human rights, gender equality and/or economic, social and sustainable development in relevant global and/or regional policy processes.
- Experience in proposal writing and fundraising and a willingness to fundraise on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

### **2. *Administrative establishment:***

- Proof of their independent juridical personality and non-profit and/or tax-exempt status in a State Member or Observer of the United Nations.
- An established office or address (called e.g. headquarters), with an executive officer.

- Governance statutes which are transparent and accessible and if a network organization preferably a democratically adopted constitution, as outlined in ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, which governs NGO participation at the UN.
- In the case of a network organization, the organization shall have procedures that give authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives.<sup>4</sup>

**3. A wide reach, and connections with organizations in their context:**

- Demonstrated (net)working relationships with national, regional or global organizations or networks involved in women's human rights and gender equality.
- Demonstrated national/regional constituencies of women/gender experts and or organizations, preferably including traditionally under-represented groups.
- For regional OPs, ability to mobilize the members in their regions, work to invite new members to the WMG, facilitate strategic discussions and share information in the key languages used in their region.

**4. Capacity:**

- Interest and capacity to coordinate development of position statements, strategies, relevant meetings and delegate activities to WMG members.
- Sufficient (financial/human/time) resources for its representative to be able to engage in the policy process and mobilize its constituency for at least 2 years. At least one staff person should be able to dedicate a minimum of 20-30% of their time to participating in and leading Women's Major Group work. Depending on the time of the year, there might be less or more work.
- Ability to communicate in English. As the common working language within the WMG Coordination is English, the representative put forth by the OP organization should have a working knowledge of English. In addition, OP representatives are encouraged to leverage their language skills—particularly in other UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish) to broaden member engagement and overcome language barriers.

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<sup>4</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

**5. Commitment to Co-creation, Decolonizing Ways of Working, and Feminist Principles:**

- Demonstrated willingness to work collaboratively and transparently, ensuring all members, including those from traditionally underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds, have voice and agency in decision-making.
- Commitment to adopting and continuously refining decolonizing ways of working that address power imbalances and foster equitable partnerships.
- Alignment with feminist principles<sup>5</sup>:
  - i. Intersectionality
  - ii. Self-awareness
  - iii. Self-care and caring for others
  - iv. Dismantling bias
  - v. Inclusion
  - vi. Sharing power
  - vii. responsible and transparent use of power,
  - viii. Accountable collaboration
  - ix. Respectful Feedback
  - x. Courage
- Openness to ongoing self-reflection and capacity-building to challenge oppressive structures and strengthen feminist solidarity within and beyond the organization.

**3) OP responsibilities**

***Coordination of members:***

- Organize, manage and disseminate data and information on the Women's Major Group and the 2030 Agenda follow up and review processes, especially the HLPF and related processes at the regional level.
- Inform the WMG constituencies at all levels of all WMG activities and strategies, particularly the WMG elections process and requirements.
- Work to ensure that WMG has a balanced and diverse membership of the feminist and women's movements from their constituencies/regions, including via inviting

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<sup>5</sup> <https://actionaid.org/feminist-leadership>

new members to the WMG, in particular feminists and activists who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented, and raising awareness on WMG in the region and globally.

- For regional OPs, work in close ties with the regional civil society/stakeholder engagement mechanisms (when they exist) for effective participation of WMG at the regional level and keep WMG constituencies updated on regional activities and strategies

***Participation in the HLPF and related processes:***

- OPs are expected to fully engage in and follow HLPF and their respective regional fora for sustainable development (RFSDs), including travel if possible, and help lead the coalition's advocacy and other working groups during the conference.
- Provide logistics support, share information and develop processes so that the Women's Major Group members can maximize their understanding and presence at the HLPF, RFSDs, and other related processes.
- Coordinate and facilitate the participation of Women's Major Group members, especially, but not limited to, those from their constituencies, in the HLPF, regional sustainable development forums (RFSDs) and other related global and/or regional processes.
- Work in collaboration with other major groups' sectors' representatives, in the MGoS<sup>6</sup>, to ensure continued space for civil society engagement in the HLPF, including its preparation and follow up, and other related global and/or regional processes and coordinated positions, as necessary.

***Inputs to policy processes:***

- Consult with national/regional women's human rights and gender equality networks to prepare written inputs for global and/or regional policy processes, such as in the form of discussion and recommendation' papers, briefs, statements and analyses that address gender equality and women's human rights within economic, social and environmental spheres—.
- Streamline policy papers and positions developed by various WMG thematic and/or advocacy working groups and convert materials for global advocacy purposes
- Organize and facilitate working groups and advocacy meetings on key themes, issues

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mgos.org/about-mgos/>

and processes central to the Women's Major Group advocacy goals, at regional and global level, to enable members to participate with adequate preparation and strategic guidance.

***Decision-making and governance, including financial management:***

- Provide strategic direction and guidance to the Women's Major Group through an inclusive, consultative and transparent process of decisions surrounding WMG positions on all Agenda 2030 and Rio+20 outcomes
- Guide and support the functioning of the WMG Secretariat, including administrative and financial, communications, and advocacy functions, etc.
- Fundraise and contribute to donor reports on behalf of the Women's Major Group, working with the Secretariat and administrative host (WEDO).
- Work in a collaborative and constructive spirit, in line with feminist principles and the working methods of the WMG, with the other OPs, the WMG Secretariat and other relevant partners.
- Other responsibilities not mentioned here are likely to come up over the course of the term and OPs are expected to coordinate as a team to ensure that the responsibilities and burden of work are equitably shared among all OPs.

***4) Process for Nominations, Election and Ending of OP position***

The WMG voting membership can elect a minimum of 4 OP roles and maximum of 10 OP positions<sup>7</sup>, out of the nominated organizations. Terms are 2 years (generally beginning in January).

In total, we ideally strive to have 10 OPs: two global Co-OPs (one preferably based near UN headquarters) / one based in the global South) and one OP per region in order to ensure geographical representation, selected from among the regions: (1) Anglophone Africa, (2) Asia, (3) Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) Arab States (4) Europe & Central Asia, (5) Francophone Africa, (6) Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), (7) North America, and (8) Pacific Small Island States. Upon standing for election, each nominee will indicate if it is global, regional or global and regional, along with their organization's thematic focus area.

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that the Asia and Europe & Central Asia regions conduct independent election processes, and each region may choose two OP organizations per role/seat. As a result, the total number of OPs may occasionally exceed the stated maximum.

Among the OPs, there should be:

- Thematic balance, addressing the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development
- Intergenerational diversity to the extent possible: feminists of all ages, including young feminists, are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Institutional and leadership continuity
  - If reelected, OPs may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. An OP may be re-elected after 2 terms if they take a break for at least 1 term.
  - Staggered elections are held to ensure knowledge transfer and continuity for the WMG community.

The nominated organizations should not have administrative connections to the OP organization or representative ending their term for that same region/post. In case of any connections, this information should be shared publicly and openly at the beginning of the nomination process, and the mandate holder organization or representative should refrain from any interference in the election process for that post.

If an organization is not complying with the ToR, the OPs will decide if the organization needs to step down. It is up to the other OPs to decide if they call for special elections or wait until the next period of elections.

Each year, the election process of the WMG will be overseen by an Election Committee, composed of two or three OPs (with posts not open for election that year), an outside, third party reviewer and the WMG Secretariat, who will work to ensure that the election process runs smoothly, transparently, that the nominees comply with the nomination and OP role requirements, and the votes are cast in accordance with the criteria.

*Note: At this moment, the Asia-Pacific region and Europe and Central Asia are the only two regions that have an existing open and broad process to elect a regional WMG representative for the regional SDG policy process (UNESCAP and UNECE). Therefore, only the Asia-Pacific region and the Europe and Central Asia region are invited to nominate one commonly agreed WMG OP, to avoid the doubling of the election processes. All other regions will be part of the election process.*

*Note: Please note that the 2024-2025 election cycle is being held off-cycle. In order to maintain the WMG regular election cycle we propose that the next cohort of OPs serve two-and-a-half-year terms (April 15, 2025, to December 2027). Please keep that in mind as you apply.*