

# Terms of Reference (TOR)

for

## Organising Partners (OPs)

of the

### Women's Major Group

for Sustainable Development

*Version 1 July 2014*

*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 policies. The WMG for SD responsibility scope covers the Rio+20 outcome (SDGs, Financing for Sustainable Development, SIDS, SCP) and the Post-2015 development agenda process at global and regional policy processes of the United Nations. In addition, the WMG for Sustainable Development aims to cooperate closely with other Women's Major Groups and Women's constituencies linked to other UN policy processes.*

#### **1) Criteria for WMG OPs**

- Current working experience in areas related to women's human rights, women's economic development, and/or women and the environment/sustainable development
- Availability of staff experienced in Gender equality, women's human right & participation etc.
- National and/or regional/international scope of activities related to women's human rights and gender equality.<sup>1</sup>
- Organizations with proof of their independent juridical personality and non-profit and/or tax-exempt status in a State Member of the United Nations
- Organizations with demonstrated (net)working relationships with national, regional or global organizations or networks involved in women's human rights and gender equality activities.
- Demonstrated national/ regional constituencies of women /gender experts and or organizations, preferably including of traditionally under-represented groups.
- The organization should have an established office or address (called e.g. headquarters), with an executive officer. It should have statutes which are transparent and accessible and if a network preferably a democratically adopted constitution.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP Stakeholders engagement policy

- In case of network organization, the organization shall have procedures which give authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives.<sup>3</sup>
- The organization shall have a representative structure and possess appropriate mechanisms of accountability to its board or members.<sup>4</sup>
- Organizations should have interest and capacity to coordinate development of position statements, strategies, relevant meetings and delegate activities to WMG members.
- Organizations should have sufficient (financial/human) resources for its representative to be able to engage in the policy process for at least 2 years.
- Organizations should preferably be experienced in proposal writing and fund raising
- Preferably experience with relevant policy process expertise<sup>5</sup> and relevant thematic expertise<sup>6</sup>

## **2) Balanced distribution of OPs: Geographic distribution / Thematic representation**

The WMG strives to have regional representation and thematic diversity by bringing together organisations which have:

- Global policy process expertise<sup>7</sup>
- Regional expertise (8 regions - see under 3 below)
- Relevant thematic expertise<sup>8</sup>
- Organisational expertise (e.g. networking, advocacy, outreach, grassroots, capacity building)

## **3) OP responsibilities:**

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<sup>2</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

<sup>3</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31

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

<sup>5</sup> UN processes on Post2015, Post Rio+20 (SDGs, Financing for SD etc.) as well as experience in other relevant processes such as CPD, CSW, UNFCCC, UNCBD and regional UN processes

<sup>6</sup> Gender Equality, 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.

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<sup>8</sup> Gender Equality, 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.

- Consulting with national/regional women's human rights and gender equality networks to prepare written inputs in the form of discussion papers and priorities for action papers addressing gender equality and women's human rights within economic, social and environmental spheres -including the cross-sectorial themes-that reflect their group's views on progress made, outline obstacles and constraints to implementation, and identify new challenges to be met by major groups to expedite implementation.
- Organizing, managing and disseminating data and information on Major Groups and the post 2015 process
- Consulting with women's networks to identify participants to serve on their sector's delegation
- Providing logistics and developing processes so Major Groups will be able to maximise their understanding and presence at the HLPF and other Rio processes Provide guidance and find expertise to develop policy positions representing the best from the Major Groups constituencies relevant to the agenda points of the HLPF
- Have proper and valued knowledge of the UN in general and Rio/OWG outcome processes in particular to provide Major Group constituencies with background information and/or capacity building expertise.
- Coordinate and facilitate the participation of representatives of their respective sector throughout the OWG sessions, working in collaboration with other major groups' sectors' representatives.<sup>9</sup>
- Coordination of Women's Major Group working group around SD and related themes

#### **4) Specific roles and tasks of Organizing Partners:**

- 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 Post 2015/Rio 20 outcomes
- To facilitate public representation of the WMG and coordinate active member participation in regional and global meetings related to Post 2015 by speaking to previously agreed WMG positions

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<sup>9</sup> DESA, Sustainabledevelopment.org, can be retrieved at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/orgpartners.html>

- To keep the WMG as well as regional and national constituencies informed of all WMG activities and strategies
- To streamline policy papers and positions developed by various WMG thematic and/or advocacy working groups and convert materials for global advocacy purposes
- To conduct advocacy meetings in New York and regional meetings on behalf of the WMG and organize members to participate with adequate preparation and strategy
- Secretariat role, which can be covered by OPs, or can be subcontracted, which includes maintaining websites other social media, listserves, etc,

### **5) Process for Nominations, Selection and Ending of OP position<sup>10</sup>**

The WMG aims at a balanced distribution of OPs as much as possible, bringing together organizations that have expertise in relevant international and regional policy processes, thematic debates as well as organizational skills (see footnote [6] above).

An organization nominates a person for the function of OP and this person has the responsibility of fulfilling the ToR of OPs; each nominee will indicate if it is global, regional or global and regional, along with that person's and their organization's thematic focus area. If this person is no longer available or 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 to the next period of elections.

The WMG can elect a min of 4 OPs and max 10 OPs, out of the nominated organisations.

- In total, we ideally strive to have 8 OPs: one OP per region and two global co-chairs (one North/one South) selected from among the regions in order to ensure geographical representation: (1) Africa, (2) Asia (3) MENA (4) Europe & CA (5) Latin America (6) North American preferably NY based 7) Pacific 8) Caribbean.
- Adequate attention to thematic balance: social, environmental and economic pillars
- Elections to ensure institutional and leadership continuity on a rotational basis allowing previously elected OPs to be re-elected for a second term up; to 2 consecutive terms.
- Keep accounts of the women's Major Group.

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<sup>10</sup> *Proposed is a slate nomination and election process that will produce balance between regions, themes and types of organizations.*

- For amounts exceeding USD500,000 per year external audits would be made or when the donor requires it.

The nomination process will be transparent and organized by an independent selection committee. Regions can come with one commonly agreed nominee, avoiding the need for further election/selection processes. See separate note on nomination and selection process.

**End/**

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**Annex 1**  
**FAQ & Other concerns on OPs work**

*Financial transparency:*

- Does successful fundraising by the OPs mean that their travel expenses for WMG work are covered in full - no assurance this is the case - but that is the extent of the remuneration?  
R/ Ideally OP fundraising efforts would also contribute to compensation for their time and expenses.
- Do the OPs manage the finances for the WMG, keeping books, processing reimbursements, etc?  
R/ Yes, unless they decide to subcontract that out.
- How are financial decisions made- by all the OPs? With advice from members of the WMG?  
R/ Yes, financial decisions are made by all Ops. They may choose to seek advice from members.
- Are the books open to all members of the WMG?  
R/ Summary financial information can be given on request. It is the responsibility of the OPs to keep accurate accounting of all finances; organizations are responsible on receiving funds.
- While financial clarity and **transparency** is important, if the WMG does not have anyone paid to do the work of **bookkeeping**, who does? and what about time and resources (not only financial)?  
R/ The work of bookkeeping, accounting is done by each of the organizations as funds are not sufficient in the case of smaller grants; when the grant exceeds USD500,000 then a separate consultant can be hired.

*On guiding WMG:*

- How does the OP balance the weight of member voices coming in via email, or other distant communication with voices at face to face meetings, including with expertise that the OP has?

R/ Every effort is made to balance the voices coming in via all media before a meeting. Once negotiations or meetings begin, those members present (and when possible, those who have elected to be on the meeting-specific listserv) need to have authority to make decisions as needed – based on agreed positions by the WMG and taking into account the progress at the meeting.
- How is consensus reached, and what concessions are needed for time sensitive issues?

R/ Strive to reach consensus, aiming for the most ambitious position possible. If there are clearly dissenting voices but a small portion, then their voice will be acknowledged as input but not reflected in the consensus. And then they may speak in the name of their own organization, or place a document on the WMG website in the name of their own organization.
- What is the process of/ who is responsible for making sure new women are directed to the existing WMG positions, while honoring the experience and expertise that new women bring?

R/ Women who come to participate at the different sessions will need to be aware of the different documents that the WMG has produced. Besides, morning meetings during the different sessions (e.g. OWG) will also help ‘new comers’ guide throughout the process and to get clarity on the WMG positions that have been reached by consensus.
- How do the OPs seek to build the leadership shared among the WMG, continue bringing in new members, and balanced this with upholding existing positions, while communicating the constraints of the UN environment?

R/ Best practice: Encourage grassroots women and new participants – with as much diversity and broad participation as possible. Self-funded women are always welcome to join the WMG in meetings. In some cases, the point in the process requires that limited funding be spent on those who are experienced and able to integrate into the technical and advocacy requirements of the document/process under discussion.
- How are distant voices assessed, included or dismissed?

R/ This needs to be clarified by affirming decentralized leadership- the OPs are coordinators, but the work of the WMG can be initiated and headed up by a woman taking on that responsibility, writing up notes afterwards, so each individual leader (or small team) is responsible for hearing the voices and working to incorporate them.

- How to **assess that decentralized leadership is working**, and encourage women to volunteer to lead pieces as they are able, ensure a grassroots justice based model, and to pick up any and all pieces that fall through cracks?  
R/ The WMG strongly supports a model that encourages women to volunteer to lead pieces as they are able. With volunteering comes a level of accountability – to clearly communicate when the person is no longer able to lead.
- How do points made by WMG members get assessed, included or dismissed?  
R/ OPs work to ensure that they, or deputies/supporting members, capture the inputs submitted as thoroughly as possible.