



## **First Review of the 2030 Agenda Falls Short - Fails to Address Systemic Obstacles to Achieving Sustainable Development**

UNITED NATIONS (21 July 2016) - Women's groups today expressed grave concern that the annual review process to hold governments accountable to their commitments to the 2030 Agenda failed to address key obstacles to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, which took place from July 11-20 in New York, was the first ever follow-up and review process of the SDGs since 193 governments agreed to it in September 2015. Now known as the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs are a framework of 17 goals and 169 targets that aim to reduce poverty, end hunger, increase access to energy, address climate change, advance gender equality, and promote peaceful societies, among other key actions. The HLPF, which will be held annually, will be the opportunity for governments to present their national plans and progress to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Twenty-two countries volunteered to present their national reviews at this year's HLPF. "An initial [survey review](#) by the Women's Major Group of these 22 countries' reports shows that only two countries seriously engaged civil society in the review process from the beginning, and most didn't especially address women's organizations," says Eleanor Blomstrom of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, an organizing partner of the Women's Major Group, which comprises more than 600 women's organizations from 100 countries.

Only two days of the eight-day meeting were devoted to the actual country reviews, during which civil society organizations were heavily marginalized. The nine recognized UN Major Groups representing a diversity of issues from women's rights, to indigenous people's rights, to the rights of workers, were granted limited time and space to speak throughout the eight-day meeting severely limiting any opportunity for meaningful exchange between country representatives and the civil society organizations responsible for holding their governments accountable.

"Grassroots organizations risk being reduced to tokenistic consultation instead of being included in national policy development," said Nurgul Djanaeva of Kyrgyz Forum of Women NGOs. "Women's organizations can provide valuable lessons on how to implement the SDGs."

Moreover women's rights organizations face major constraints even though they are essential for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

"Women's priorities are underrepresented in national plans and budget allocations. For example, not one of the 22 countries presenting their national reviews said they would start

using gender budgeting as they had previously committed to do in Addis Ababa Action Agenda” said Sascha Gabizon from WECF International.

The Women’s Major Group also expressed their disappointment with the very weak Ministerial Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the meeting. The Declaration failed to move beyond the empty rhetoric of “leaving no one behind,” and lacked guidance and concrete commitments on how countries can fulfill human rights, establish accountability mechanisms, overcome systemic and structural barriers, and combat climate change and ecological damage, which will be necessary to achieve the SDGs.

“This Ministerial Declaration does not reflect the strong political will and financing required to make the 2030 Agenda a reality. It seems that the means of implementation necessary to move this agenda forward has been left behind. The world is watching and we expect our governments to do better,” said Emilia Reyes of Equidad de Genero.

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