



Working Principles and Values

Background:

The Women's Major Group (WMG) for Sustainable Development¹ has a core mandate and responsibility to facilitate women's civil society perspectives in the policy space and processes of the United Nations related to sustainable development. 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 is officially recognized by the United Nations and its Member States and provides a formal channel for physical or virtual participation in key global and regional meetings, including by:

- facilitating registration and participation in meetings;
- sharing opportunities for funded participation when available;
- observing and speaking in official intergovernmental sessions;
- writing coordinated position statements, analysis and policy recommendations and publishing them on the UN webpage for Major Groups and other Stakeholders and the WMG website;
- gaining access to official documents and information;
- participating in reporting and accountability efforts; and
- engaging in coordinated and strategic advocacy with decision-makers.

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

The WMG does not receive core financial support from the United Nations. Any funds that the WMG receives comes from independent fundraising efforts of its members and Organizing Partners. Additional funding for participation is sometimes available through the United Nations. When that is the case, the WMG works through an open application process so that its members may access these funds in a fair and just manner.

Principles and Values:

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

¹ The WMG for SD coordinates closely with both the WMG for the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the Women and Gender Constituency for Disaster Risk Reduction (WGC for DRR). They share the same Principles & Values and also share communications resources such as the [website](#), Facebook and Twitter. The WMG for UNEA has its own structure and process and the WGC for DRR is currently developing its structure and linkages to WMG for SD. (June 2018)

to the movement and to one another. These principles inform the development of our positions as well as the ways in which we organize.

Our core framing principles are:

- Gender equality and justice,
- Women's human rights,
- Respect for planetary boundaries, and
- Social, economic and environmental sustainability.

We 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 empowerment; and
- create diverse, vibrant, equal and just societies for all people.

In our work as the Women's Major Group, 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.
- 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.