

<http://wilpf.org/off-to-a-rocky-start-reviewing-progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-at-the-first-high-level-political-forum/>

## **Off To A Rocky Start: Reviewing Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals at the First High Level Political Forum**

Now that the world's governments have adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together with its 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), it is time to talk about strategy and implementation. What must be done so that the agenda lives up to its promises?

The [High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF), which is the accountability mechanism for the Sustainable Development Goals, took place for the first time at the United Nations from 11-20 July 2016. The forum's theme was 'Ensuring no one is left behind', and it aimed at evaluating progress toward implementing the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of [WILPF's work to strengthen conflict prevention and promote accountability](#) on gender equality and peace, WILPF's PeaceWomen Programme monitored the forum for gender and conflict issues. We also leveraged this space to build momentum on strengthened accountability and financing of gender equality and peace through a [two-day workshop and follow-up side side event](#) on [Women, Peace and Security Financing](#).

### **FORUM HIGHLIGHTS**

The two-week forum included a series of side events and training sessions. Participants explored how to foster prosperity and sustainability, and mobilise means of implementation, with the goal of building an inclusive future and ensuring no one is left behind.

On 12 July, one key plenary took place, entitled: '[Ensuring that No One is Left Behind- Creating Peaceful and More Inclusive Societies and Empowering Women and Girls](#).'

At this event, UN Women Deputy Executive Director Ms. Lakshmi Puri stated: "We must systematically mainstream gender equality into all aspects of the agenda." Highlights included calls for action to address root causes of conflict and terrorism, promote feminist foreign policy, collect gender disaggregated data on conflict and development in fragile states, and ensure women's participation in peace talks and peace building.

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On 18 July, another plenary took place, entitled '[Ensuring that No One is Left Behind: Challenges of Countries in Special Situations](#).' At this event, participants explored opportunities for addressing key challenges such as climate change, debt sustainability, and sustainable livelihoods by countries facing structural vulnerabilities including conflict and post-conflict affected countries and others.

2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Ms. Tawakkol Abdel-Salam Karman, shared one of the few reflections militarism and development at the HLPF. According to Karman, addressing military coups and militias is critical, as "these coups restrict the right to development, prosperity, and good living."

In parallel with the formal sessions, WILPF's PeaceWomen Programme held a [side event](#) on 11 July 2016 to report back on our WPS financing workshop. '[Ensuring that No One is Left Behind: Financing Gender Equality and Stable and Peaceful Societies for Effective Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda](#).' Building on our 7-8 July workshop, we called for member states to #MoveTheMoney from a political economy of war to a political economy of sustainable gender justice and peace.

## **VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS OF THE SDGS**

Twenty-two member states took up the task of submitting voluntary reviews to the High Level Political Forum: China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, and Venezuela.

While recognising the initiative these governments have taken, our coalition, the Women's Major Group, [highlighted substantial challenges](#) to effective SDG implementation and accountability.

One key issue is the inclusion of women-led civil society. According to our [coalition survey](#) by the Women's Major Group, [only 2 of 21 \(less than 10%\) of countries](#) submitting reports in a timely fashion "seriously engaged civil society" from the outset. This is a critical gap that must be bridged if the SDGs are to be implemented without leaving half the population behind.

Another key issue is inconsistency in reporting on gender equality and peace. Only 16 of 22 countries referenced Goal 5 on gender equality, and 14 of 22 countries referenced Goal 16 on stable and peaceful societies, and level of analysis varied. Lack of comprehensive monitoring risks ad hoc follow up. It is

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critical to ensure that gender equality and peaceful societies are substantially integrated through women's human rights lens for effective 2030 Agenda implementation.

## **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

The Ministerial Declaration affirmed that “sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security, and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.” It recognised that human rights and peace are key to leaving no one behind, and that inequality and illicit arms flows give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice.

The Declaration also recognised gender as a cross-cutting contributor to progress in all Sustainable Goals and Targets and committed to striving toward “a just, equitable, tolerant, open, creative and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.” It affirmed that: “We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at the global, regional and national levels.”

Despite recognition of the importance of gender equality and peace, the Declaration did not substantially integrate gender or militarism analysis. As a result, key issues required for structural transformation including means of implementation that build on women's human rights commitments including on regulating corporate power and developing innovative financing consistent with women's rights standards including reducing military spending remained outstanding. As [our coalition statement by the Women's Major Group](#) noted, ““how can developing countries mobilise resources for sustainable development, when MOI (Means of Implementation) is MIA (Missing In Action)?”

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

The first High Level Political Forum is just the first step. It is critical to learn from this year's experience moving forward and strengthen action to include women-led civil society and prioritise peace and gender justice to promote prevent conflict and promote sustainable development and peace.

Ask your government to ensure civil society are meaningfully included in their reviews, and ask them to [#MoveTheMoney!](#)

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## **JOIN THE DEBATE!**

You get what you pay for!

Learn more on and stay tuned for more resources on how to  
#MoveTheMoney.

What can you do to move from a political economy of war to a political economy of peace?