



THE FUTURE WOMEN WANT

A Vision of Sustainable
Development for All

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UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet meets with rural women of the Soulalyates ethnic group, who have been striving for inheritance and property rights in Morocco.

FOREWORD

Rio+20 provides an opportunity for leaders to strengthen the foundation laid 20 years ago at the 1992 Earth Summit to build a path towards a sustainable future.

Twenty years ago, UN Member States unanimously agreed that “women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development”.

Twenty years later, we still have a long way to go to end discrimination and violence against women and to achieve equal rights, opportunities and participation. A new development paradigm should advance equality, human rights and environmental protection.

Every day, women manage household resources and make decisions with environmental impacts. To move forward, Rio+20 needs to encourage specific actions to advance women’s empowerment and gender equality and reduce women’s poverty and harmful health and environmental impacts. Any agreement must acknowledge women’s contributions to sustainable development.

UN Women was established in 2010 to make greater progress for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Our work—to advance women’s leadership, participation and economic opportunities; end violence against women and girls; increase women’s participation in peace-building; and support

gender-responsive budgets and plans—supports sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

For the sake of current and future generations, we must nurture and develop all of humankind’s collective intelligence and capacity. Given rising sea levels, increasing inequality and environmental decline, the full and equal participation and leadership of women is no longer an option. It is an urgent necessity if we are to achieve the transformational change needed at all levels and spheres of society for sustainable development.

I am proud to release this report highlighting the centrality of women’s rights, empowerment and gender equality to sustainable development, and pointing the way forward with recommendations to build the future women want.



Michelle Bachelet
Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director, UN Women





MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

NO TIME TO WASTE

Since the first Rio Conference in 1992, the world has experienced economic, social and environmental crises with severe human costs for many of the world's most vulnerable, poor and disadvantaged people. Nearly two thirds of the services provided by nature to humankind are in decline worldwide and climate change poses unprecedented threats to humanity.

Spiking world food prices, first in 2008 and again in 2011, pushed millions of additional people into poverty. Food costs between 2010 and 2011 alone kept an estimated 49 million people in poverty and led to increased undernourishment.¹ Urban and female-headed households were particularly hard hit—women are disproportionately represented among the global poor. The food crisis remains a serious threat to the lives of millions, and entrenched gender roles mean that women often bear the brunt of the associated hardships as growers and processors of food, responsible for the nutrition of their family.

Four years after the 2008–2009 financial crisis, global economic recovery is still uncertain. Advanced economies are expected to grow at a little over 1 per cent in 2012; developing countries, which buoyed the global economy in the aftermath of the crisis, are expected to grow slower. Unemployment remains high in most developed countries, still well above pre-crisis levels, but in developing countries employment recovery has been stronger. The impacts of the recession, unemployment and slow economic growth on women and men differ due to gender norms and stereotypes that continue to perpetuate gender-based discrimination in many areas, including access to productive assets and justice.

The urgency to find a new global development framework is greater than ever. The dominant model of economic development has led to growing inequalities within and between countries and helped to generate social and

economic exclusion. A new gender-responsive global development framework must integrate environmental sustainability, inclusive growth, gender equality and social inclusion.

BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

In addition to strong action to protect the environment, sustainable development requires delivering on the fundamentals: international commitments to eradicate poverty, promote human rights and advance gender equality.

The 1945 Charter of the United Nations reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of every human, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. It demonstrated determination to promote social progress and better standards of life with expanded freedoms.² Within this framework, gender equality advocates in civil society, governments and the UN system have advocated for the equal rights of women and girls in civil, economic, political, social and environmental issues.

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a significant outcome of these efforts, committed all State Parties to take measures in the political, social, economic and cultural fields to guarantee women the full exercise and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In its dialogues with government representatives, the CEDAW Committee has called on State Parties to include gender equality and women's empowerment as an overarching guiding principle in all areas, including the environment and climate change.³

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission report, 'Our Common Future', ushered in a new thinking on sustainable development, which it defined as development that "meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition laid the foundation for an

approach to sustainable development that highlights inter-generational responsibility and defines the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

During the 1990s, the international community came together at a series of international conferences and agreed on global commitments in relation to sustainable development, financing for development, human rights, population issues, social development and gender equality and women's empowerment.

At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (the Earth Summit), the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 laid out a global framework for addressing the challenges facing the global community in the three central dimensions of sustainable development.⁴

Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration stated that "women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development."⁵ In addition, Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 recommended that national governments develop strategies to "eliminate constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social and economic obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development and in public life".

Much of the progress made on the normative framework for sustainable development at the international level should be credited to the women's movement. Across the globe, women leaders have advocated for environmental issues, women's rights and the well-being of their communities.

Since the Earth Summit, work towards attaining sustainable development has increasingly integrated its economic, social and environmental dimensions, with a strong focus on poverty eradication. The 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation reviewed progress made since the Earth Summit and discussed ways to further advance Agenda 21 implementation. The Plan noted that poverty eradication is the greatest contemporary global challenge and is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. The Plan also outlined areas in which work was required in order to advance gender equality, including promoting women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making at all levels, mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and strategies, eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and ensuring full and equal access to economic opportunities, credit, education, health care, land and agricultural resources.

BOX 1. 1992: Agenda 21 calls for global action for women

Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, Global Action for Women towards Sustainable and Equitable Development, contains references and recommendations on subjects including eliminating violence against women; strengthening women's bureaux, non-governmental organizations and groups; advancing women's participation in and access to decision-making, education, employment and credit; reducing women's unpaid care work⁶ and providing reproductive health care; and recognizing women's contributions to reducing unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Agenda 21 also called for concrete actions in the areas of research, data collection and knowledge dissemination.

Agenda 21 was revolutionary in that it called for both institutional arrangements and financial resources for its effective implementation. It called upon the Secretary-General to review the "adequacy of all United Nations institutions, including those with a special focus on the role of women, in meeting development and environment objectives, and make recommendations for strengthening their capacities".

The Earth Summit also contributed to the creation of three significant environmental agreements that came to be known as the Rio Conventions: the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). While the first two advanced gender perspectives from the outset, UNFCCC did not originally incorporate a gender perspective. However, awareness of the linkages between gender equality and climate change issues has since increased, including through a critical decision in 2001 aiming for gender parity in all UNFCCC created bodies and the 2010 Cancún Agreements and 2011 Durban Platform, which integrate multiple gender dimensions due to diligent efforts of key Parties and gender advocates. During the last two decades, UNFCCC has also undergone a significant evolution, broadening its environmental focus from mitigating greenhouse gases to include the economic and social dimensions of adaptation, thus more closely reflecting the comprehensive approach of sustainable development.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women added a new dimension to the development discourse. The Beijing Platform for Action led the shift from a women-specific approach to a focus on gender relations by identifying gender mainstreaming, human rights and the development of partnerships between women and men as the strategic bases for the pursuit of gender equality.⁷ It asserted that human beings are at the centre of concern for sustainable development and that women have an essential role to play in developing sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resources management.

The progress governments have made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action has been reviewed on three separate occasions, in 2000, 2005 and 2010. These reviews have spelled out the importance of women's participation and benefits in the context of the environmental dimension, effectively substantiating and updating the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Governments have made some efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives in the environmental sector. Countries have also increasingly linked gender equality and the



environment in national action plans and strategies. Despite these efforts, environmental policies and programmes have not consistently taken into account gender differences in access to, and control over, natural resources or the impact of environmental degradation on women and men. Institutions continue to lack the capacity, knowledge and skills to mainstream gender perspectives in sustainable development and natural resource management, and in particular in relation to climate change.⁸

These global normative frameworks and plans of action have clearly laid out the principles for a people-centred approach to development and the systematic integration of gender perspectives into all policies, actions and strategies on sustainable development. But a number of reviews have illustrated that the significant development of global policy frameworks has not been translated into effective implementation at the national level.

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, heads of state and government resolved to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable”.⁹ The work of the Summit ultimately led to

BOX 2. Beijing Platform for Action on women and the environment

The Beijing Platform for Action dedicated one of its twelve critical areas of concern to women and the environment in addition to focusing on women and poverty, the economy and social issues, such as health and education.

Strategic Objective K recommended actions in three areas: (i) Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels; (ii) Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and (iii) Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environment policies on women.

The Platform calls for the integration of gender perspectives in the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable resource management mechanisms and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas; the effective protection and use of the knowledge, innovations and practices of women; and for the participation of women in decision-making on sustainable resource management and the development of policies for sustainable development.

defining eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be achieved by 2015. One goal, MDG3, was dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, and several other goals included gender-sensitive targets and indicators. It has been widely recognized since then—and validated in a number of reviews and evaluations—that progress on MDG3 is critical for the achievement of all other goals. However, the goals on environmental sustainability, MDG7, and global partnership, MDG8, were and remain gender-blind. The limited progress for women in relation to the MDGs suggests that efforts to achieve the MDGs were insufficiently based on the global policy framework on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Today, the international community is at another juncture. Discussions leading up to Rio+20 have focused on a set of sustainable development goals. In September 2013, the General Assembly will hold a summit to review progress towards achieving the MDGs. As attention is turning towards formulating the post-2015 development agenda, the Secretary-General will appoint a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons to guide the future development discourse.

Irrespective of the form it will ultimately take, the post-2015 development framework must

fully integrate issues of gender equality and women's empowerment into all goals and be built on the principles of universality, human rights, equality, people-centred progress and accountability. It must also prioritize gender equality as a comprehensive goal in itself, with indicators and targets that embrace the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

TAKING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Only an integrated approach can build equilibrium between present and future demands for economic progress across generations, social justice and use of natural resources that respects environmental and ecological development. While delivering on each of the three dimensions of sustainable development is important for women's empowerment, it is not enough; it is imperative to take an integrated approach. This would entail a shift to a sustainable development model in which the economic, social and environment dimensions involve women as beneficiaries, leaders and contributors to growth that is inclusive,

socially equitable and just, and effectively manages resources and the environment.

Economic dimension: Inclusive growth is a critical element in ensuring the outcomes of development efforts are equitably distributed. When women have access to resources and opportunities and participate on an equal footing in economic life, they are in a better position to fill their roles as drivers of development outcomes and take advantage of sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Evidence shows that this not only benefits women themselves, but also contributes to economic growth. Yet, the feminization of poverty, women's unpaid work, their concentration in informal and vulnerable employment and constraints on their access to productive resources and capital and the lack or absence of women representatives and voices in key decision-making bodies restrain women's contributions to productivity, efficiency and sustainable development. Further steps are required to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives into policies and strategies for economic growth, poverty reduction, economic and financial infrastructure, as well as to provide women and men with equal access to productive assets and resources (e.g. land and other property, and finance), decent work and essential services (e.g. energy and water).

Social dimension: Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental aspects of social justice. Social norms, gender stereotypes, unequal and limited access to resources, health and education services limit women's ability to participate as full and equal participants in all aspects of life.¹⁰ Despite making progress on the normative framework for gender equality and women's empowerment over recent decades, there is a long way to go to ensure women's rights within the family, community and society. Among many examples, indigenous women lack many rights and are almost forgotten or side-lined by economic policies and development strategies that do not provide environmental and social safeguards that could address their social exclusion. Social policies that encompass the principles of inclusiveness, equity and environmental sustainability would contribute to creating an enabling environment for growth to be more distributive and beneficial to different groups of

women and men—and consequently advance the attainment of sustainable development.

Environmental dimension: Women as agricultural producers, workers, and resource managers contribute to influencing sustainable consumption and production, safeguarding the natural environment and biodiversity, preserving traditional knowledge and allocating adequate and sustainable resources within the household and community. Women farmers make decisions under highly constrained conditions, which often require adopting production patterns that neglect sustainable development concerns. Within the context of the care economy, women living in poverty have to manage different allocations of scarce resources from water to energy. This is particularly the case when confronted with environmental degradation, which increases women's care burdens. In addition, it affects their consumption patterns and overall management of natural resources by the community. However, current policy frameworks place insufficient importance and consideration on these roles or how these roles are affected by market and non-market production and consumption. Providing women with opportunities and resources and engaging them in decision-making processes regarding the environment could improve their social livelihoods and well-being, and benefit entire communities in areas that advance sustainability.







SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF WOMEN

WOMEN'S AGENCY AND LEADERSHIP

Women have organized at all levels—from grass-roots to national and international—to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment, for people-centred development in policy and funding frameworks, to develop concrete initiatives that improve the lives of women and their communities and to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into decision-making and implementation.

Women's organizing and calls for change have taken place within many different types of civil society organizations, local and national governments, and in the informal and formal sectors of the economy. Women have challenged existing power relations and discriminatory laws, policies and institutions. They have advocated for women's rights, including their right to participate fully in decisions that shape their lives, whether it is access to water, safe sources of energy or the development of global norms. Similarly, feminist economic scholars have made important contributions by highlighting the role of women's unpaid care work that maintains communities and economies,

but which is often ignored in systems of national accounting and in policymaking.

Women have successfully challenged traditional views of themselves as victims and asserted instead that they are agents of change, innovators and decision makers. Women's organizing has led to some severe responses and repercussions, as illustrated by the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, which documented 33 cases of violence against women working on environmental issues between 2004 and 2009.

The success of women's leadership and organizing for change can be seen in increased calls by different stakeholders for investments in women and girls in order to achieve economic growth, reduce poverty and reach other goals. This new approach creates new opportunities for promoting equality, inclusiveness and people-centred strategies.

The local level has provided an important entry point for women to drive and lead solutions to sustainable development. Not only do women and men in local communities directly face specific problems, but they are also the most motivated to solve them.

BOX 3. Women's initiatives at the local level

Organizations such as the Self-Employed Women's Association, HomeNet, StreetNet and the Uruguayan Association of Rural Women are widely cited success stories of social transformation through collective organizing by poor women in the informal sector. In Peru, a woman-led organization, Grupo Ciudad Saludable, has organized informal and unprotected waste scavengers—a majority of whom are women—to collect, recycle and dispose of waste for a population of 4 million people in both poor urban and rural communities. Replication of this initiative has now begun in Mexico and Venezuela.¹² Similarly, women farmer groups in Malawi led the shift away from conventional 'row' planting of single crops to 'pothole' planting with mixed crop placement as a result of their observations of positive harvest yields from moisture retention and provision of shade from taller maize crops for lower growing vegetables.¹³

Lessons learned have demonstrated that a collective force of women and men is required in order to bring about change and identify solutions at the community level.

Communities—often driven by women’s groups—have engaged and resolved many land, housing, livelihood and service access (e.g. water, energy and waste management) issues. However, these small-scale interventions are not sustainable by themselves. Systematic and scalable solutions are needed that address the

systemic issues of sustainable development and place poverty reduction and gender equality at the core of interventions. Good practices show that strategic partnerships between governments and civil society can drive change through legal and regulatory reforms, planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

Larger-scale initiatives should consult end-users, particularly women, during design and implementation given women’s roles in

BOX 4. Women’s agency transforms policies

Across the globe, women leaders have stood up in defence of the environment, women’s rights and the well-being of their communities.

Wangari Muta Maathai (1940-2011), is among the best-known leaders—known for her role as the founder of the Green Belt movement in Kenya in 1977 and as the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Ms. Maathai galvanized a movement that planted more than 47 million trees across Africa and encouraged a new way of thinking and action that links democracy and sustainable development. Lesser known movements can also provide perspective as to the influence of gender advocates and activism.

A more recent success related to climate change. Gender equality advocates from around the world have increasingly drawn attention to the gender dimensions of the evolving international policy framework on climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which serves as the dominant international framework for addressing climate change, was negotiated by the General Assembly in 1990 and signed in Rio two years later. The original instrument focused on mitigation strategies and did not address gender perspectives. In 2007, it expanded into adaptation and related economic and social issues with the adoption of the Bali Plan of Action. That same year, the Global Gender and Climate Alliance united several UN and civil society organizations to raise awareness, build the capacities of negotiators and partners, and advocate for UNFCCC decisions to include gender dimensions. UN Women joined these efforts and worked closely with a range of stakeholders, including women’s organizations such as the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, to contribute to concrete outcomes. By 2010, as a result of all these efforts, the tide turned with enhanced coordination among advocates, increasing the number of women in delegations and a woman Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC. The Cancún Agreements of UNFCCC COP-16 (2010), include references related to gender-specific vulnerabilities; the need for gender-sensitive approaches to adaptation plans and gender considerations in REDD strategies; gender parity in the composition of the Technology Executive Committee; and most critically, the recognition “that gender equality and the effective participation of women ... are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change”. Most recently, in the Durban Platform of COP-17 (2011), commitments were secured that deepen the integration of gender issues into technology and climate finance, including in the Green Climate Fund guidelines. Also in 2011, the Women and Gender Constituency received status as an official Observer to the UNFCCC.

the household and the community (e.g. as primary users of household energy, water and land for household food security). For example, through their daily responsibilities for water management, women and girls know the location, reliability and quality of local water resources. The exclusion of women from the planning of water supply and sanitation schemes has been identified as a major cause of their high rate of failure.¹⁴ Evidence from India and Nepal suggests that women's involvement in decision-making at the community level is associated with better local environmental management.¹⁵

Women's effective engagement in policy development and in concrete actions at the local level to achieve sustainable development has led to hard-won gains in terms of women's social, political and economic rights. Any future development framework must translate the many commitments on gender equality into concrete measures to ensure women's full participation, equal opportunities and people-centred development.



Thematic priority areas

- Safe water and sanitation
- Food security and sustainable agriculture
- Energy access, efficiency and sustainability
- Sustainable cities
- Decent work in a green economy
- Health
- Education

ADDRESSING PRIORITIES

The examples presented here share innovative strategies, experiences and programmes by organizations and countries that champion the goals of sustainable, people-centred and gender-responsive development. At the same time, reviewing successes and failures highlights familiar issues that have for years affected all spheres of women's lives.

From the basic necessities of food and water to the more complex and long-term development objectives of attaining universal energy access and sustainability, women remain challenged by a set of factors that the development community has long recognized but made insufficient progress to address.

SAFE WATER AND SANITATION

Importance to sustainable development

Water is a basic necessity for sustaining life, from drinking and preparing food to bathing, washing, irrigating crops and watering livestock. Lack of access poses innumerable challenges, from the economic burden of having to pay for water or spending more time fetching it to considerable health hazards. Still, nearly 1 billion people lack access to clean drinking water, and 2.6 billion lack access to improved sanitation services.¹⁶ As a result, some 1.4 million children under five die every year.¹⁷

In many societies, water plays an increasingly important economic role, particularly as one of the major sources of green energy. Waterways have also historically been integral to many countries' transportation systems.

Consequently, water scarcity and quality—as a consequence of climate change, pollution or other factors—pose both economic and environmental sustainability concerns.

Watchdog organizations warn that current agricultural, manufacturing and waste management practices are not sustainable; China and India are already experiencing significant water-related economic difficulties, and some experts predict that more than half of the world will face water scarcity by the middle of the 21st century.¹⁸

Women's contributions

Though equal access to safe drinking water is widely accepted as a human right essential for full enjoyment of life,¹⁹ lack of access has a decidedly gender-specific impact: in most communities, fetching water is the responsibility of women and children.

In addition, water is central to the full range of domestic activities, which many cultures still view traditionally as 'women's domain': food preparation, care of animals, crop irrigation, personal hygiene of the entire household, care of the sick, cleaning, washing and waste disposal.²⁰ Women worldwide spend more than 200 million hours per day collecting water²¹ and have developed considerable knowledge about water resources, including their location, quality and storage methods.



Women's challenges

Privatization of common water sources, reduction of previously provided government services and market-based water allocation mechanisms are increasingly challenging poor women and men around the world. If current trends of giving priority to industrial, agricultural and power production persist, the possibility of water becoming unaffordable for the poor becomes increasingly real.

Current lack of access by the poor can result not only from economic pressures but also from multiple socio-political and environmental factors, such as armed conflict or drought. Women and girls are walking further to find water, often risking violence in politically or environmentally volatile areas. The rising amounts of time consumed by procuring water limits women and girls' opportunities to engage in other activities—such as going to school or earning an income—and often limits time devoted to childcare and other household health and wellness-oriented activities.

Though images of women carrying water are ubiquitous, few understand the true social and economic impact of this monumental task. One 2012 estimate suggests that cutting just 15 minutes off the walking time to a water source could reduce under-five child mortality by 11 per cent and a prevalence of nutrition-depleting diarrhoea by 41 per cent.²² In Ghana, a 15-minute reduction in water collection time increased girls' school attendance by 8 to 12 per cent.²³ A Bangladesh school sanitation project that provided separate facilities for boys and girls boosted girls' school attendance by an annual average of 11 per cent during the decade ending in 2000.²⁴

Similar to other areas of the formal economy, women are underrepresented in the water sector's workforce. A study in South Asia attributes this disparity as much to women's broader challenges of participating in the

labour market (e.g. lack of access to child care or work-schedule flexibility) as to their educational opportunities, which do not necessarily favour the scientific and mathematical skills currently demanded in the water sector.²⁵ Many development-oriented water projects fail due to insufficient consultations with end users, including women, on their needs, and insufficient attention to building local communities' capacity to construct, maintain and repair top-down water systems.²⁶

The way forward

Ensuring equitable provision of reliable, clean water and sanitation services requires participatory water governance, where women's equal voices influence and inform policymaking, decision-making and management of water and sanitation facilities. Given that 80 per cent of all illnesses are transmitted by contaminated water,²⁷ this area requires broad-based and coordinated action by members of the global health and development communities in close partnership with local governments and other stakeholders.

Beyond addressing the socially and physically different needs of women and girls—such as their need for more private sanitation facilities than men and boys or increased susceptibility to specific hygienic threats while pregnant—action is also needed to mitigate their socioeconomic burdens. Efforts to improve water services need to focus on the quality of water supply and distances to its sources.

In most developing countries, such efforts need to go hand-in-hand with reform that bans discrimination against women and girls in their access to and ownership of land. Equally essential are appropriate technology, financial management and capacity-building programmes, such as those on hygiene or the operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.

BOX 5. Protest vs. reform: Bolivia and South Africa take different paths to water equity

After the privatization of municipal drinking water resulted in immediate and exorbitant price increases, women and men of the Bolivian city of Cochabamba joined together to demand that control be returned to public hands. Residents formed the Defence of Water and Life Coalition that united local organizations, environmental groups, women's groups and leaders, lawyers, labour unions, economists and neighbourhood associations in a collaborative struggle to maintain control of water management. The protest of 2000 was largely economically induced, as new water fees threatened to claim as much as a third of a typical income among the urban poor.

Though the privatization process was ultimately reversed,²⁸ the Cochabamba incident cannot be viewed solely as a victory. The economic costs of the uprising were significant; the city shut down for several days as citizens took to the streets. A protest intended as peaceful actually resulted in violence and injury. Water returned to being cheaper, but it did not become more available; shortages were making news headlines in 2008. Today, the country still has considerable water supply and sanitation issues, suggesting that community action must be supported by deeper systemic change for the outcomes to be sustainable in the long term.

South Africa, for example, provides a sound legislative foundation for implementing policies to secure women's access to water, in the form of the national Constitution, the 1997 Water Service Act and the 1998 National Water Act. The 2002 Free Basic Water Implementation Strategy sets out the framework for the provision of 6,000 litres of free, safe water per household per month, with additional allowances where there are sanitation issues.²⁹

Another key initiative is the South African Water Dialogues, born out of the international Water Dialogues initiative in countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines and Uganda. This collaborative dialogue platform on water privatization provides a forum to discuss different approaches and models of water service delivery. The South African Water Dialogues is a multi-sectoral group of government representatives—spanning the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, the National Treasury, the City of Johannesburg, the Johannesburg Water Management, the Local Government Association—and other public and private-sector actors, such as the Coalition Against Water Privatization, the Environmental Monitoring Group, the Association of Water Utilities, the Municipal Workers Union, the South African Water Caucus, the Water Information Network, and Mvula Trust (the country's leading water and sanitation non-governmental organization). The group undertakes research and disseminates lessons learned in promoting the most effective safe water service delivery model.³⁰ It therefore has the potential to address gender issues in relation to water if it works closely with gender equality advocates and women's networks.

FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Importance to sustainable development

Food security is closely linked to issues of health, economic development, trade, poverty, equity and the environment. Agriculture is the largest employment sector in most developing countries. Some 2.6 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, a vast majority of them living on small farms in rural areas on less than \$1 per day.³¹ Worse yet, some 925 million people go hungry every day,³² and there is no consensus on whether the problem lies with insufficient production or distribution challenges.

Concerns over natural resources and sustainable agricultural practices are central to this sector. Global achievements in production are often associated with degradation of land and water resources and deterioration of ecosystem goods, from biomass to productive soil and water resources.³³ The application of green farming practices at small farms mitigates some of such concerns and increases yields by between 54 and 179 per cent;³⁴ however, the majority of small-scale producers, particularly in developing countries where food and agriculture concerns are exacerbated by socioeconomic inequalities, remain at a disadvantage in a market of increased competition over land and water and general lack of access to resources and opportunities. In addition, financial resources—both national budgets and official development assistance—allocated to water and land management have been on a general downward trend.³⁵

Women's contributions

Women are active in all agricultural sectors and are primarily responsible for cultivating food crops and vegetables, managing small animals and running small-scale commercial agriculture enterprises. Women account for an average of 43 per cent of agricultural jobs among developing countries, and for nearly 50 per cent in some countries in Africa and Asia.³⁶ Women represent only 12 per cent of fishery labour,³⁷

but over 65 per cent of the 400 million livestock keepers.³⁸

Many cultures revere the older woman who possesses a seemingly infinite amount of knowledge on natural resources—for example, which leaves to brew into a headache-relieving tea and how to preserve seeds for best yield next season. Though exaggerated by folklore, this mythical perception is firmly rooted in reality: indigenous women have spent centuries gathering, sharing and preserving botanical, agricultural, livestock, health and medicinal, nutritional, and other environmental knowledge—and taking economic advantage of it when market realities allow.

Many women-led projects have strong environmental components and benefits, as demonstrated by projects supported by various international development partners. Rwandan women farmers have successfully brought to market organic 'women's coffee'. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, women are protecting and planting indigenous and medicinal trees, establishing bee populations in arid areas and learning how to maintain them while processing trees and honey for sale. Women in Benin have adopted environmentally sustainable methods of oyster harvesting and are also reforesting a lagoon to ensure it can continue to provide livelihoods to local communities.³⁹

Women have greatly benefitted from the introduction of information and communication technology, which has contributed to their successful integration into the market and global value chains. Ugandan women farmers use communications technologies to interact with other parts of the country, while women fish processors in Benin use video, television and mobile phones to learn new fish preservation techniques and to sell their goods in Togo and Nigeria. In Italy, the YOURuralNET Web community allows women farm managers to share knowledge, experiences and good practices.⁴⁰

While progress has been made in the legislative arena, progress in implementation has been slow. For example, the Government of Tajikistan has advanced women's land rights in the framework of the land reform process with support from UN Women. The country's land, family and civic codes are

BOX 6. Women's groups and government agencies back women-led initiatives

While many countries continue to struggle against cultural norms that make it difficult for a woman to even speak to—much less do business with—people outside her immediate family, others have moved ahead in securing widespread national support for empowering women in the food and agriculture sector.

Local women's organizations are expectedly at the front of creating awareness of women's rights to access and control productive resources such as land—among all groups of stakeholders, and among women themselves. Women's groups and cooperatives such as the Huairou Commission and GROOTS have put pressure on land administrations to promote land rights reform.⁴¹ In Rwanda, women's non-governmental organizations have promoted marriage registration, oral and holographic wills and memory books to remedy the lack of identification cards, a major obstacle for women's acquisition of land title.

Governments are also providing financial and technical assistance. Women farmers in Fiji are adopting eco-friendly farming methods with support from three separate government departments (in charge of fisheries, cooperatives and women's issues), who have partnered to promote women's engagement in cultivating seaweed and producing virgin coconut oil, honey and pearls. The Government of Timor-Leste has supplied 2,305 agricultural groups—37 per cent of whose membership are women—with agricultural equipment including tractors, power threshers and rice millers.

now aligned, sex-disaggregated land-use data is being collected and many women now have access to free capacity building services. The government has financed some 75 district task forces, which work under the leadership of local women's committees and, with support of practicing attorneys, provide free legal and other advice. Since 2003, these task forces have provided support to more than 16,230 citizens, an overwhelming 86 per cent of whom were women. The share of women owners among new farm registrations reflects this stimulus, with an increase from 2 per cent in 2002 to 14 per cent in 2008.

Women's challenges

Despite being the main producers of food in many developing countries, very few women can access the resources or rights to fully contribute to food and nutrition security.⁴² Inadequate or discriminatory legal and social structures and cultural norms prevent women from owning land and accessing productive resources or

agricultural extension services. Women's land ownership is less than 5 per cent in Northern Africa and West Asian countries, between 5 and 30 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and only about 25 per cent in each Chile, Ecuador and Panama.⁴³ When women do have access to land—through marriage, inheritance, land reform programmes and land markets—it is often of poor quality.⁴⁴ A 2011 report estimated that women farmers produce 20 to 30 per cent less than men due to the differences in resource access and use.⁴⁵

In addition to resource poverty and lack of opportunity common among the world's most disadvantaged populations, certain cultural norms and traditions may exacerbate women's and girls' vulnerabilities. For example, men of some societies eat before women, children and the elderly; men also receive the best food. Many practitioners have theorized that this results in a higher risk of malnutrition among women and children; others say no actual evidence exists to support this theory. For example, a 1996 review of literature by the International

Food Policy Research Institute concluded that despite extensive study, “evidence of pro-male biases in food consumption is scarce”.⁴⁶

In contrast, women and girls have physiologically different food requirements, where lower quantities are balanced out by the need for a higher concentration of nutrients such as, for example, iron. Women also have increased nutritional requirements during pregnancy. Poverty, lack of access to or availability of appropriately nutritious foods, and often lack of education puts women at an increased risk of malnutrition; many simply do not know their own nutritional needs.

Children of mothers involved in agriculture are at a similar disadvantage. There is evidence that women who balance long days of farm work with household responsibilities have little time and energy to tend to and prepare nutritious family meals or weaning foods.⁴⁷ Smaller children particularly suffer when the demand for agricultural labour is high. Data also reveals a correlation between women’s rights and child welfare: countries where women lack land ownership rights have 60 per cent more malnourished children; countries that restrict women’s access to credit have 85 per cent more.⁴⁸

The way forward

There is a strong case for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in agriculture. Evidence suggests that investing in women-owned food and agricultural enterprises could narrow the resource gap and increase agricultural yields to reduce the number of hungry people by 100 to 150 million.⁴⁹ Hunger will only be exacerbated if the global society does not adopt a more sustainable approach to food cultivation. Rising population numbers are expected to require 70 per cent more food production globally by 2050, compared to 2009. This increase can be as high as 100 per cent for developing countries, which already suffer from land and water scarcity to a greater degree than the rest of the world: availability of cultivated land per capita in low-income countries is half that of high-income states, and the quality—and, therefore, the yield—of such land is typically lower.⁵⁰

In this context, empowering rural women and girls to collectively take on the challenge of future food production becomes all the more important. As a first step, legislative reform and public policy measures are needed to ensure women are afforded the rights and capacity to own the means of production, such as land, technology and other inputs. In parallel, the development community and national government will need to address issues of access—to financial services, infrastructure, technology and transportation—and build women’s and girls’ capacities by providing networking and educational opportunities and training to enable women to benefit from previously unfamiliar business and economic concepts and markets (such as, for example, fair trade).



ENERGY ACCESS, EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Importance to sustainable development

Energy is both a requirement and catalyst for promoting social and economic development, reducing poverty and furthering gender equality. Enhancing energy services can reduce women's and girls' unpaid care work burden, which can create space for other activities. Reducing dependability on inefficient biomass fuel stoves not only reduces these burdens, but also reduces indoor air pollution. Securing adequate lighting infrastructure can reduce crime and enhance the quality of life within a community. Improved energy access decreases waste associated with productive activities and lowers the amount of inputs needed to generate goods and services. Clean and renewable sources of energy are environmentally responsible and are necessary for climate change mitigation.

Women's contributions

Currently, 1.4 billion people lack access to modern forms of energy.⁵¹ Approximately 2.7 billion people rely on open fires and traditional stoves for cooking and heating.⁵²

Women and girls bear the primary responsibility for collecting fuel (e.g. wood, dung and crop waste). Extending the power grid to people living in rural areas entails high costs and is often inadequately implemented. Communities around the world have moved directly from traditional to clean energy sources, such as solar and wind energy. Women have taken a leadership role in forming collaborative, community-based energy initiatives.

One such initiative is the Solid Waste Management and Community Mobilization Programme in Nepal—the first-ever winner of the 2011 UN Women-UNEP SEED Gender Equality Award.⁵³ Covering more than 1,000 households and businesses, the Programme recycles organic waste and uses it to produce biogas. Another initiative, the women-led Solar Sisters in East Africa, is a social enterprise established to eradicate energy poverty. It provides women with working capital for a 'business in a bag' (a start-up kit of solar lamps and phone chargers), business training, marketing support and a women-centred direct sales network. To date, Solar Sisters has provided almost 20,000 people with solar equipment.

In partnership with the Barefoot College of India, UN Women is supporting the promotion, expansion and sustainability of community-managed, controlled and owned solar lighting. Rural women receive hands-on training to become solar engineers, capable of fabricating, installing and maintaining solar lighting systems. At the completion of the training, they have the capacity and knowledge to ensure that 60 households in their villages become technically and financially self-sufficient.

Women's challenges

The growing market for land and urban expansion, in combination with poor governance and weak legal protections, has created serious risks for local communities and owners of small farms.⁵⁴ Green economic policies legitimize intensive and mass-scale production of maize and oil-seed plants for bio-fuels with immediate impacts on communities and on women's land-use options, income and livelihoods, food affordability and related costs of living. While the full trade-offs between women's reduced access to land and water and women's increased access to energy have yet to be explored, many women have already been



faced with eviction or exclusion from land. The current economic paradigm prioritizes the interest of the global export economies at the expense of small farming communities.

When sources of modern energy are limited or non-existent, many women must walk long distances to collect fuels for household needs and daily household tasks take longer to complete. In Fiji, women spend approximately 35 hours per week on cooking and washing.⁵⁵ In Kenya, investments in infrastructure and time- and labour-saving technologies, specifically improved stoves, reduced fuel wood requirements by approximately 40 per cent.⁵⁶ In the Philippines, the prevalence of malnutrition was reduced from 64 to 42 per cent through these types of infrastructure investments combined with nutrition and weaning education programmes.⁵⁷ Case studies from Bolivia, Tanzania and Viet Nam show that with increased access to household energy, women were able to combine income-generating activities with household duties.⁵⁸

Every year, indoor air pollution from open fires and traditional stoves used for cooking and heating kills an estimated 2 million people—85 per cent of whom are women and children,⁵⁹ a number likely to dramatically rise in the medium term.⁶⁰ Biogas digesters and solar cookers can offer lower emission options for

cooking than traditional biomass stoves, and can substantially reduce indoor pollution. In India, 2.2 million deaths would be prevented over a 10-year period through the introduction of 150 million cleaner burning biomass cook stoves.⁶¹ One improved stove—requiring 50 per cent less biomass fuel—can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one ton per year.⁶²

The way forward

Progress requires a new development paradigm, one that puts people at the centre of energy access, efficiency and sustainability. Access to sustainable energy services should be an economic and social right with protections in place for those who need energy most—vulnerable and excluded groups of women and girls. Policies and programmes need to be coupled with large-scale investments in local infrastructure and time- and labour-saving technologies, such as renewable fuels, fuel-saving stoves and mills. Easy access to affordable, clean and renewable energy can only be realized through collaborations among multiple stakeholders—governments and the international community, along with the civil society and private sector—and the implementation of cross-sectoral, rural and urban policies.

BOX 7. United Nations calls for commitment to Sustainable Energy for All by 2030

In response to 2010 recommendations of the UN high-level Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Sustainable Energy for All initiative to improve access, efficiency of use and sustainability of energy resources. The launch coincided with a December 2010 General Assembly resolution to designate 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.⁶³ The initiative aims to mobilize public and private action and commitment to meeting three objectives by 2030: ensuring universal access to modern energy services; doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. The initiative emphasizes that without access to modern energy it will not be possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goal on gender equality and women's empowerment and other goals focusing on reducing poverty (MDG1), broadening the reach of education (MDG2) or improving women's and children's health (MDG4+5).⁶⁴

Importance to sustainable development

More than half of the world's population—approximately 3.4 billion people—live in urban areas, including more than 1 billion in slums. Forecasts suggest that by 2030, every region of the world will have more people living in urban than rural areas⁶⁵—even in Africa and Asia, which are among the least urbanized. By 2050, cities are expected to account for 69 per cent of the global population.⁶⁶

Though population growth is a contributing factor, the main driver of this slow but steady shift is urban migration, spurred by a wider range of economic opportunities and more advanced, easier to access educational, healthcare and other public service systems. Yet poverty and inequity persist in cities as they do in more rural areas, with some groups of city dwellers more disadvantaged than others.

Urbanization presents numerous problems, chief among which is inadequate planning leading to unsustainable infrastructure, environmental degradation and poor living conditions. Urban poverty is characterized by lack of the most basic necessities, such as food and water. Social and environmental problems—such as homelessness, informality and illegality, crime and pollution—may also exist in more rural areas but are often exacerbated in urban settings.

The intersection between health and urbanization is particularly worrisome. City dwellers, chiefly those living in mega-cities, often face what is referred to as a 'triple threat': an intersection between the rampant spread of infectious diseases in densely populated areas; an increase in the incidence and longevity of noncommunicable and chronic health conditions ranging from asthma to alcoholism; and injuries, which can result from violent crime or, in developing countries, from legislative inaction, such as appropriate traffic laws failing to keep up with technological progress.⁶⁷ Violence remains a daily occurrence in the cities of both developed and developing countries,

where many women and young girls face sexual assault or harassment on streets, public transport and in their own neighbourhoods.⁶⁸

Women's contributions

Women-headed households are becoming more common in urban areas. They comprise, on average, about 20 per cent of urban households in 160 countries. Women head more than one in three households in the cities of Colombia, Ethiopia, South Africa and Viet Nam,⁶⁹ and increasing numbers of countries in every region also show more women-headed households in urban areas than rural areas.⁷⁰

For women, drivers of urban migration include not only a lack of rural economic opportunities, but also violence against women, patriarchal authoritarian systems of family and community control, and family pressures.⁷¹ In Nairobi, thousands of women live in informal settlements after having been driven from their homes and land upon the death of their husbands.⁷² In Tanzania, growing numbers of adolescent girls migrate to cities seeking education, work or escape from abusive family relations and forced marriage.⁷³

Women and women's groups in cities and towns around the world have led initiatives that address women's unique challenges in urban settings. For example, Liberia's Sirleaf Market Women's Fund provides financial support and literacy, business and other training opportunities to market women. The Fund works to improve existing markets and construct new ones that include access to nursery schools, storage, health and sanitary facilities (e.g. potable water, functioning toilet facilities and mobile health units).⁷⁴ Numerous programmes—including those in India, the Philippines, South Africa and pilot cities of the collaborative United Nations Safe and Friendly Cities for All initiative—focus on reducing gender-based violence and risk of harassment in cities.

Initiatives designed to combat violence and harassment of women and girls in urban settings are increasing in all parts of the world. In the slums of New Delhi, young women and men have helped to make local parks, streets and public spaces safer and more accessible.⁷⁶

BOX 8. United Nations and local governments invest in safer cities for women

In June 2011, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT and UN Women jointly launched a five-year Safe and Friendly Cities for All initiative designed to increase safety and prevent and reduce violence—including sexual violence and harassment against women and girls—and mobilize and empower women’s group and youth and children’s advocates to shape their urban environment. The initiative currently supports eight large cities and capitals, including Beirut, Dushanbe, Manila, Marrakesh, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, San Jose and Tegucigalpa. Drawing on the use of innovative, gender-sensitive and evidence-based approaches, Safe and Friendly Cities for All works to enable local authorities and advocates to take action to combat urban violence. The initiative also aims to ensure the capacity and engagement of women, youth and children in budgetary decision-making processes for urban development, infrastructure and services in their neighbourhoods. In the future, Safe and Friendly Cities for All plans to scale up innovative and effective solutions to end violence in vulnerable communities by, for example, improving street lighting and providing training to community-based police units.⁷⁵

The Cape Town, South Africa township of Khayelitsha is working on reducing gender-based violence through better lighting, indoor toilets, more secure schools and increased training of police officers.⁷⁷ Some cities have undertaken initiatives to reduce women’s risk of harassment on public transport, particularly in overcrowded buses or trains. For example, women-only vehicles operate in Belarus, Brazil, Egypt, India, Japan, Mexico and the Philippines. Similarly, the first two carriages of Manila’s light underground railway are reserved exclusively for women and children. During rush hour in Mexico, some buses and metro carriages are also reserved for women, with police escort to ensure the policy is respected.⁷⁸

Women’s challenges

Political participation and ability to mobilize support for different causes are among the draws of urban environments for both women and men. However, women’s participation also lags in urban settings. Women have attained positions as city council officers or mayors in many urban locations around the world; however, their representation remains limited despite quotas and other affirmative action mechanisms. Between 2003 and 2008,

women made up less than 5 per cent of mayors in Western Asia and Caribbean countries, and only 5 to 10 per cent in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, South Eastern Asia, Central and South America, and Eastern and Western Europe. Out of the 77 countries or areas with available data, the ones with the highest proportion of women mayors include Latvia (25 per cent), Mauritius (40 per cent), New Zealand (26 per cent) and Serbia (26 per cent).⁷⁹

Reasons for these low numbers include negative gender stereotypes; lack of family co-responsibilities for unpaid care work within households; difficulties combining family life, work life and politics; lack of financial resources to pursue a candidature; and the prevalence of a masculine model of political life.⁸⁰ The lack of women in decision-making positions and a general absence of gender expertise among local decision makers significantly hinder women’s engagement in—and integration of gender perspectives into—urban planning and design of infrastructure and services. In turn, lack of engagement limits the potential of women’s specific needs being addressed.

A wide range of other factors challenges women alongside their male counterparts living in urban environments. These include inadequate

housing and lack of access to water, sanitation, health care and transportation services. While both poor women and men in urban centres face inadequate housing and insecurity of land tenure and shelter, women-headed households often suffer disproportionately as a result of discriminatory laws and socio-cultural norms.

Despite progress on water access, some 141 million urbanites continued to rely on unimproved sources of drinking water in 2008,⁸¹ with major health and social consequences. Though 29 per cent of developing countries' urban dwellers lack basic sanitation,⁸² restricted access and expensive, poor or non-existent facilities can have severe implications for urban women's and girls' health, education and safety.

The way forward

Building and transforming cities that are people-centred and based on the principles of human rights, gender equality and wellbeing is critical for achieving sustainable development

for all. Local governments and city councils play an important role in such transformation and in ensuring urban planning strategies for universal access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, energy and adequate housing and that take into account women's and girls' higher risk of gender-based violence in the market place and public transportation by putting in place lightening of streets, transport-stops and stations. Sustainable urban planning can foster equality, address the environmental, economic and social challenges of today, and prepare for urban populations of tomorrow. Cross-ministerial dialogue and strategic partnerships with key actors, including civil society and the private sector, would be required to promote an integrated and coordinated approach to sustainable development, drawing on their respective comparative advantages in their economic, social and environmental spheres. Women's full participation as citizens and decision-makers in such dialogues is critical.



DECENT WORK IN A GREEN ECONOMY

Importance to sustainable development

Decent work and job creation contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, social progress and inclusion. Generating new opportunities for employment and income for women and men living in poverty can help them ensure that they and their children are healthy, educated, well-adjusted and able to contribute to the future labour force.

As countries transition to green economies, the labour market will gradually transform itself. New jobs will be created (e.g. production of clean-energy devices and services), while others will be substituted (e.g. from land filling and waste incineration to recycling), eliminated, transformed or redefined as day-to-day skill sets, working methods and profiles are being 'greened'.⁸³ In an ideal scenario, such changing patterns of production, consumption and employment would have systemic and synergistic effects that will benefit women and men equally. This would require eliminating gender-based occupational segregation, gender pay gaps and other forms of labour market discrimination. It would also require full and equal access to all forms of education, skills building, employment, and management and leadership positions.

Women's contributions

Between 1980 and 2009, women's labour force participation increased from 50 to 52 per cent, while the male rate fell from 82 to 78 per cent. In 2010, the global unemployment rate for men stood at 6 per cent and for women at 6.2 per cent.⁸⁴ Though unemployment rates appear similar, there are significant and systemic differences between women's and men's jobs. Only a small portion of employed women work in industry (18 per cent compared to 26 per cent of all employed men). Women are more likely than men to work in agriculture (37 per cent of all employed women compared to 33 per cent of all employed men), and in the service sector (46 per cent of all employed women compared to 41 per cent of men's employment).⁸⁵

Renewable energy will likely generate a large share of green jobs. In 2008, this sector employed approximately 2.3 million people, and projections show that by 2030, employment in alternative energies in wind and solar alone will rise to 2.1 million jobs and 6.3 million jobs, respectively.⁸⁶ Women account for approximately 20 per cent of energy sector jobs, most of which are in non-technical fields such as administration and public relations.⁸⁷ In April 2012, a coalition of nine countries launched the Clean Energy Education and Empowerment Initiative to attract more young women to careers and leadership positions in the energy field.⁸⁸ The member countries of this coalition are Australia, Denmark, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The export sector provides an important source of waged employment for women in some countries and regions. Women's participation in trade and services has contributed not only to their own economic empowerment, but also to national competitiveness.⁸⁹ For example, women are heavily engaged in manufacturing ready-made garments: they make up more than 80 per cent of such workers in Bangladesh and more than 75 per cent in Kenya.⁹⁰ The expansion of the information and communications technology sector has increased employment opportunities for skilled women in several countries. In past decades, data-entry and data-processing work generated employment in countries including Barbados, Jamaica and the Philippines. More recently, software call centres and telecommunications-related work has generated employment in countries such as India and Malaysia.⁹¹ In some cases, higher female employment in the export sector has been accompanied by wage gains. Evidence from China shows that women workers receive higher wages in the new export-related industries than in older state industries.⁹²

Innovative schemes to improve workers' rights in the informal sector involve labour inspections, trade unions and organizing by workers themselves. In the State of Gujarat in India, for example, the Self-Employed Women's Association assists in monitoring the conditions of homeworkers and establishing minimum piecework rates consistent with the minimum wage.⁹³ In the Sudan, women working in the informal sector have formed associations to cover their health needs.⁹⁴

BOX 9. Greening social protection and ecosystem programmes

Social protection floors are important tools for reducing poverty, stimulating economies and hedging against the impacts of economic crises. Though conceived primarily as a socioeconomic crisis mitigation strategy, social protection floors can also make a broader and longer-term contribution to attaining sustainable development if they reach beyond the social and economic space to integrate the environmental development dimension. Several countries—including Brazil, Ecuador and India—have pioneered social protection strategies that result in improving not only peoples’ lives, but also local economies and the environment.

In the lead-up to Rio+20, Brazil is encouraging other countries to follow in the footsteps of what it refers to as a ‘socio-environmental protection floor’: the Bolsa Verde (Green Grant) Support Programme on Environmental Conservation, which was launched in mid-2011 and concedes a trimestrial benefit of approximately \$150 to poor families who adopt environmental conservation actions. Bolsa Verde delivers cash through and augments an older social protection scheme, the Bolsa Família (Family Grant) federal cash transfer programme, which provides the poorest families with financial support on the condition that children attend school, are vaccinated and are monitored for growth and weight, and that pregnant women receive pre- and postnatal care.

The two programmes present an example of an integrated strategy that cuts across all three dimensions of sustainable development: Bolsa Família has a socioeconomic mandate of improving the quality of life of the poor in the present and a long-term poverty eradication view of producing more educated, healthier citizens better positioned to break the cycle of poverty and dependence on government assistance. Bolsa Verde augments the socioeconomic and adds an environmental dimension, generating additional income for the poor in the present and helping conserve environmental resources and protect livelihoods that depend on them for future generations.

Though programme objectives do not explicitly mention gender or women, programme design demonstrates a gender sensitivity that marks most successful sustainable development initiatives.⁹⁵ Health care for pregnant women is a condition of receiving support, and its amounts vary based on whether or not a member of a given household is pregnant at the time. Women are the primary recipients of funds transfers and make up 93 percent of programme debit-card holders in the hope that this setup benefits children the most. Beneficiaries, almost always new to using debit cards, also receive financial training—an important capacity-building step towards financial inclusion of women.

Gender-specific programme outcomes have been similarly positive. Women beneficiaries have experienced a rise in household bargaining power, particularly in Brazil’s poorest regions; not depending on their husbands for at least a portion of the family income has enabled women to better negotiate with their husbands and play a more active role in household decision making. Women also report attaining higher social status in the community and a new availability of credit as local merchants recognize the improved purchasing power.

Stressing the need for policies that encompass all three dimensions of sustainable development, the Government of Brazil is calling for including the concept of socio-environmental protection in the final outcome of Rio+20—and other countries have already adopted similar strategies.

Established in 2008, Ecuador’s Socio Bosque Programme offers economic incentives to individual landowners, peasants and indigenous communities who voluntarily commit to the conservation and protection of native forests, marshes, or other native vegetation for a period of 20 years. The programme aims to combat deforestation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the living conditions of rural populations.

In India, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a cash-for-work programme that also offers a guarantee of employment and specific wage to the rural unemployed and underemployed. Launched in 2005, it is an example of a social protection floor initiative that contributes to environmental protection through the creation of productive green jobs that focuses on natural resource generation. The programme has also been an entry point for access, at work site facilities, to other social services, including health services and safe water.

Women's challenges

Worldwide, women are less likely to have access to decent work than men. Indigenous women, women with disabilities, women refugees, women in post-conflict settings and migrant women, face additional constraints in the labour market. As a result of gender norms and attitudes and gender-segregated labour markets, women are disproportionately concentrated in informal and vulnerable⁹⁶ forms of work; they are concentrated in low-productivity jobs; they earn less; and they do disproportionate amounts of unpaid domestic labour and family care work. Women's increased participation in paid work has not been accompanied by a reduction in their unpaid work, partly because economic policies tend to overlook the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work. Power relations and institutional barriers hamper women from advancing to more senior and managerial positions.⁹⁷ A lack of options pushes many women into subsistence or needs-driven entrepreneurship.

The differentiated impacts on women and men of an economic transition to sustainable economies will depend on a range of factors, such as their existing labour-force participation; the extent of gender-based occupational segregation; existing education levels and skill sets; and policies and programmes that make green education and training relevant and accessible to all people.

Worldwide, the number of adolescents and young people is at an all-time high. There are over 1 billion youths between the ages of 15 to 24.⁹⁸ Creating decent work for them is a global challenge. On average, young women and men are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Labour force participation rates for young women are lower than for young men. Improved access to training opportunities will help increase the employability of young women and improve their future earnings and socioeconomic conditions.

However, fewer women than men pursue training in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, fields that provide the necessary skills for accessing many green jobs and contributing to innovation and technology development. In 2007, the global median share of female students was only 21 per cent in



engineering, manufacturing and construction.⁹⁹ In 2008, women made up less than one third of graduates in computer science.¹⁰⁰ This global data masks some important variations across countries. For example, Uruguay and Mongolia are closest to achieving gender parity in engineering. In countries such as Germany, Japan, United States, United Kingdom and Switzerland, women represent only one tenth to one fifth of graduates.¹⁰¹

The way forward

Equitably transitioning to sustainable economies and decent work will require putting in place a range of measures. Investing in women's equal and effective participation in the workforce is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive growth and human development. Labour market institutions need to monitor and facilitate market adjustments to ensure ample opportunities are created and adjustment costs are minimized. It is important to adopt explicit measures to ensure that women are not marginalized in sectors with precarious and low-paid jobs.¹⁰² Efforts are also required to ensure decent work for both women and men and to support women's career advancement to managerial positions.

BOX 10. Access to employment and decent work

Work is central to people's well-being and their social and economic development. The International Labour Organization developed the Decent Work Agenda, which is achieved through four strategic objectives—with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective. The four direct objectives are creating jobs; guaranteeing rights at work; extending social protection; and promoting social dialogue. There is broad international consensus among governments, employers, workers and civil society that productive employment and decent work are key elements to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development.

Governments have taken a range of measures to support the decent work agenda. The new gender equality law, adopted in Spain in 2007, encourages reconciliation of work and family life and promotes equality plans in public companies. In Italy, legislation obliges public and private firms employing more than 100 employees to provide biannual sex-disaggregated data on work conditions. In Jordan, the government amended its labour laws in 2008 to include domestic workers.¹⁰³

To support family responsibilities, the Nordic countries (which are also the countries with the highest female labour force participation rates) have undertaken the most systematic promotion of equal caregiving roles and equal sharing of unpaid work.¹⁰⁴ In Iceland, the length of parental leave is 9 months, divided into thirds, with three months for the mother, three for the father (non-transferable) and three months that parents can share.¹⁰⁵ The Dai-ichi Life Insurance, Japan, established a family-friendly system that includes various employee benefits such as maternity and paternity leave, shortened working hours for childcare, and subsidies for childcare expenses. As a result, the rate of male employees taking paternity leave has increased from less than 2 per cent in 2004 to 34 per cent in 2011.¹⁰⁶

Care services have targeted specific groups. In Colombia, community nursery homes have been established to enable poor families to engage in paid work.¹⁰⁷ In the Dominican Republic, services for care of the children of university students and lower-income employees of the university have been established. In some cases, change is promoted by focusing on the role of men.¹⁰⁸ The Sonke Gender Justice Network in South Africa uses innovative approaches to strengthen men's capacity and commitment to care for children including orphans affected by HIV and AIDS in rural areas.¹⁰⁹ In Jamaica, the Bureau of Women's Affairs partnered with NGOs and social agencies, such as Fathers Incorporated, to support and strengthen men's involvement in caregiving.

Social protection floors are needed to cushion the negative effects on the most vulnerable. Efforts must be stepped up to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities in education, training and employment, as well as equal access and ownership of productive assets to enable their engagement in green employment and the setting up of green

businesses. Special measures in areas such as reliable and affordable provisions of care facilities and services for children, the sick and elderly, as well as incentive systems for employers, could support the increased number of women in these sectors. Effective social dialogue among all stakeholders will be essential if there is to be a just transition.

Importance to sustainable development

Sustainable development cannot be achieved if people are not healthy or if their functional capacity is undermined by disease, hunger or insecurity. Environmental degradation, mismanaged resources and unhealthy consumption and lifestyle patterns are the primary factors affecting health.

In addition, ill health begets poverty and limits economic development. The link between health and the environment is more apparent among the poor, who often live in unsafe locations, including underserved rural areas in city slums and outskirts.¹¹⁰ Such segments of the population are more likely to be subjected to pollution and other health risks in their homes, communities and work places; they are also more likely to consume insufficient nutrition.

Such circumstances, many of which result from pervasive social inequalities, combine to undermine the affected communities' ability to lead socially and economically productive lives and can have an effect as profound as disrupting a poor country's ability to develop. Further influencing this dynamic are global trends of urbanization, pollution, and lack of appropriate sanitation and access to basic services among the world's poorest citizens.

Women's contributions

Recognizing women's contributions to health implies recognizing their role and value beyond being recipients of social and development services. When women earn income, they reinvest significantly more of it into their families than men do.¹¹¹ Women also provide the bulk of global healthcare services in both formal and informal settings, as well as in their homes. Data indicates that women comprise over 50 per cent of the health workforce in many countries, which translates to 30 million of the almost 60 million full-time health workers around the world.¹¹²

Still, women remain concentrated in occupations that are perceived to be of lower status—including working as nurses, midwives and community health services

providers. Fewer women are among the highly trained and better paid professionals.

Beyond those formally engaged in the health field, millions of women are informal providers of unpaid health care.¹¹³ Women devote countless hours of unpaid care work to their households and communities. For example, when AIDS enters a tightly knit social community or the household, women invariably are the first to respond.

Data from sub-Saharan Africa reveals the economic value of unpaid care work in the context of HIV and AIDS, and the numbers are staggering: tens of thousands of unpaid female caregivers between the ages of 20 and 49 routinely donate on average of 69 hours per month to care for the sick and vulnerable—a contribution equal to significant economic value.¹¹⁴ While resilient, women need support to mitigate the impact of serious diseases and disabilities, particularly when their countries' or communities' health systems are not functioning well enough to provide required services—or simply do not exist.

In Malawi, research shows that social protection programmes, such as cash transfers to rural young girls to stay in school, are resulting in reduced HIV and sexually transmitted infections. In addition to decreased HIV prevalence, the study found that girls receiving cash transfers chose younger partners and had less frequent sexual activity than girls who did not receive payments.



A study from South Africa provides evidence that a combined microfinance and training intervention has the potential to generate social and economic benefits, and lead to significant reductions in levels of intimate partner violence among programme participants over programmatic time frames. These examples illustrate that there are important benefits of a multi-sectoral approach to promoting health and well-being that embeds gender equality at the centre.

Women's challenges

Though women tend to live six to eight years longer than men on a global scale, there are considerable regional disparities. For example, African women score lower than the rest of the world in terms of life expectancy at birth, which was benchmarked at only 54 years in 2007. In contrast, women of 35 countries among other regions can expect to live past 80 years old.¹⁵

Still, beyond odd statistical phenomena—such as the leading cause of death among adolescent girls being attributed to traffic injuries in

high- and middle-income countries—the leading health concerns of women and girls are concentrated in developing nations and among the poorest and most marginalized segments of more industrialized societies.

While cardiovascular disease, mental health issues leading to suicide and other forms of self-harm, and other similarly serious health issues plague and kill women in both advanced and developing societies, the most serious health challenges fall on those who already carry the heaviest socioeconomic burdens. Practically all maternal deaths occur in developing countries. While all women and girls are at risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, those born in less advanced societies are disadvantaged by lacking access to information and modern forms of family planning that could prevent such situations. Pregnancy-related complications are the leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-old women in developing countries, and unsafe abortions make a substantial contribution to the annual death toll. The death toll due to cervical cancer is also considerably higher in the developing world due to practically nonexistent screening.



BOX 11. Health Enables Returns project builds a peer-to-peer model for health education

The most promising of recent global initiatives designed to address root causes of persistent maternal mortality is Every Woman, Every Child. Launched by the United Nations Secretary-General under the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, the initiative aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015.¹¹⁶

Since its inception in September 2010, 203 partners—including governments, donor countries and philanthropic institutions, UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, representatives of civil society and the business community, health care workers and their professional associations, and academic and research institutions—have made 217 commitments to the Every Woman, Every Child effort.¹¹⁷ Such commitments range from ensuring service delivery that guarantees women and children access to life-saving prevention, treatment and care, to policy commitments that mobilize political support, improve accountability, and commit financial resources.¹¹⁸

One innovation of this campaign is the Health Enables Returns, or HERproject, which responds to the health education needs of millions of young women working in export factories in developing countries.¹¹⁹ Many of the young women in factories are migrant workers and have to endure long work hours; they are also unable to access traditional support networks that could assist them with their healthcare needs.¹²⁰ These women also have low levels of health awareness, including reproductive health issues. In response to this gap in health education and access, HERproject invests in training factory workers, line supervisors, clinic nurses and human resource staff to educate their peers on health topics ranging from family planning and pre- and post-natal care to nutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual harassment and violence.

The way forward

Advances in sustainable development are intrinsically tied to addressing health needs. To this end, policies must be put in place to eliminate health inequalities, particularly gender-based inequalities; ensure health is prioritized in all settings, sectors, policies, and planning processes; address the social and structural determinants of health, and invest in developing health systems that are designed to address and respond to the different needs of women and men.

More than ever before, the global development community has recognized the improvement of women's health and the achievement of gender equality as critical priorities. To move towards gender equality in health implies both the elimination of discrimination against women and attention to the differentiated needs of women including, but not limited to, reproductive health. Women's health cannot be defined only by their biological reproductive role; it must include their general health, which is affected by social, cultural, and economic factors.

EDUCATION

Importance to sustainable development

Education is the most productive investment nations can make with a view to economic recovery and building prosperous, healthy and equitable societies. Education empowers individuals to fully participate in society, claim their rights and achieve their optimal potential. It improves individual livelihoods and employment opportunities for future generations.

Education—and, more specifically, quality education—goes beyond providing job market opportunities. It promotes the skills necessary for innovation and the values, behaviours and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for social transformation based on equality, human rights, justice, sustainable growth and human development.

Educational opportunities have expanded over the last decades, enabling a larger share of the world population to access formal education. The ratio of girls' to boys' enrolment

has steadily improved, reaching 97 girls per 100 boys at the primary level, 96 girls per 100 boys at the secondary level and 108 women per 100 men at the tertiary level in 2008.¹²¹ As more children complete primary school, the demand for secondary education has been growing. As higher levels of competencies, knowledge and skills are required by the labour market, access to secondary education has become increasingly important. Yet, in many countries children are unable to pursue secondary education due to its costs, household chores or employment obligations.¹²²

Women's contributions

It is widely acknowledged that gender equality in education is key to achieving equality, development and peace. The global society ranks better on education than other development indicators: two thirds of the world's countries achieved gender parity in primary enrolment, worldwide.¹²³ Women's enrolment at the tertiary level has grown almost twice as fast as that of men over the last four decades in two thirds of the countries with available data—mainly due to social mobility, enhanced income potential and international pressure to narrow the gender gap. The vast majority of young people in the world are literate, and improvements in youth literacy rates have been accompanied by declining gender disparities.¹²⁴

The proportion of female teachers has increased globally since 1995. The largest increase occurred in East Asia and the Pacific, where women now account for almost half (49 per cent) of all secondary school teachers. The reverse is true in sub-Saharan Africa, where the proportion of female secondary school teachers decreased from 33 per cent to 29 per cent between 1995 and 2009. Globally, women account for 62 per cent of primary school teachers, compared to 49 per cent for lower secondary levels of education.¹²⁵ Female teachers play an important role as role models for girls and boys, particularly in fields such as science and technology. However, both women and men teachers can perpetuate gender stereotypes and thereby expand or limit young people's opportunities.¹²⁶

Education is critical to attaining development objectives. Data suggests that if all students



in low-income countries were to acquire basic reading skills, 171 million people—12 per cent of the world’s poorest—could be lifted out of poverty.¹²⁷ One additional year of schooling can increase a woman’s earnings by 10 to 20 per cent. Educated women are more likely to attain decent work conditions, delay childbearing, resist violence and participate in political processes.¹²⁸

There are also direct linkages between women’s education and health—not only in the sense of well-being but also straightforward survival, for both women and their children.¹²⁹ Women with post-primary education are five times more likely than illiterate women to be educated on HIV prevention. In sub-Saharan Africa, if mothers had at least some secondary education, they could save approximately

1.8 million children’s lives (based on 2008 data). It is estimated that between 1970 and 2009, increased education among women of reproductive age was responsible for preventing some 4 million deaths of children younger than 5 years.¹³⁰

Women’s challenges

Despite global understanding of education’s importance and the long-term commitment by governments and other stakeholders to ensure education for all, attaining this goal continues to be a challenge. As with other development and social challenges, women are more disadvantaged due to centuries-old cultural norms that have prioritized male advancement and often even prohibited that

BOX 12. United Arab Emirates promotes women’s participation in sciences of the future

According to the Government of the United Arab Emirates¹³¹, women’s higher-education enrolment in the Emirates is among the highest in the world as compared to men: 41 women per 22 men.¹³² However, women’s participation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is still low compared to their male counterparts. The government is seeking to bridge this gender gap and to empower both women and men to play a more active role in the transition towards a green and knowledge-based economy. The Government of Abu Dhabi partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to establish the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology for graduate studies in renewable energy, sustainability, environment, water resources, systems engineering and management, and advanced materials science and management.

The Institute commenced in 2011, and targeted efforts have sought to promote women’s enrolment (currently at 37 per cent) to ensure women are equipped to become pioneers and innovators in a green economy.¹³³ During an April 2011 forum of the Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment Initiative in Abu Dhabi, female leaders highlighted the important role for women in the clean energy revolution, and the need to overcome barriers to their participation and leadership in clean energy-related fields. “Increasing the representation of women in [STEM] can benefit society through ... drawing from a larger pool of talent ... to develop the clean energy solutions that will mitigate the impact of climate change,” said Dr. Georgeta Vidican, Assistant Professor in Masdar’s Engineering Systems and Management Programme, during a panel discussion on women’s leadership in clean energy. Findings from the Institute’s research demonstrate that women with female role models are twice as likely to consider STEM careers in the STEM field as women who do not—which means that the more women work in these fields, the more will follow in their footsteps.

of women. Consequently, women account for two thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate adults, and their share has remained unchanged over the past two decades. More than half of the 72 million children out of school are girls.¹³⁴

Compared to participation at the primary level, a significantly lower share of the population attends secondary school, and only 39 per cent of countries have equal proportions of boys and girls enrolled in secondary education.¹³⁵ The distribution of tertiary enrolment across various fields of study shows gender inequalities worldwide, with women dominating the spheres of education, health and welfare, social sciences, humanities and art yet severely underrepresented in the fields of science and engineering.¹³⁶ Women

also remain underrepresented in research and development, be it in academia, the public sector or private companies, while men continue to dominate the highest levels of study, accounting for 56 per cent of PhD graduates and 71 per cent of researchers.

Furthermore, improved access to tertiary or higher education does not always translate into career opportunities for women, including opportunities to use doctorate degrees in the field of research.¹³⁷ The quality and content of curricula also remains problematic, often perpetuating the same traditional gender stereotypes as the cultures in which it is developed—even among more advanced societies.



Women's exclusion and over-representation in particular educational fields is grounded in socioeconomic discrimination that persists within the family, community, market and state. Such discrimination is often rooted in patrilineal principles of family and kinship systems that view only the male child as a permanent member of the natal family and its economic and social lifeline. By contrast, girls are seen as members of their future marital families, destined by marriage to contribute to another household and therefore often viewed as dispensable, not worth the investment of education or other resources—particularly when such resources are scarce. A greater investment in education is consequently made in boys.

Familiar stereotypes of woman as homemaker and man as breadwinner—and associated trait stereotypes of the nurturing, emotive, physically appealing woman and the rational, technologically adept and intellectual man—continue to entrench women on the margins of education and exclude them from certain jobs. Factors that contribute to such exclusion include sex segregation, early marriage, control over female mobility and interaction, lack of gender-appropriate school facilities and infrastructure, lack of safe and secure transportation and school environments, and lack of state support for women's education. Such inequalities are exacerbated in times of economic and financial crises, natural disasters and political conflicts, further undermining economic opportunities for disadvantaged girls and boys, particularly those born to indigenous and minority groups in remote rural areas.

The way forward

Challenges in the education sector are not unique to the developing world. Quality of education needs improving the world over, from providing teachers and aspirants with quality education before placing them in classrooms to recruiting more teachers, improving their working conditions and bringing their salaries in line with the profession's importance to society's continual advancement.

The concepts of gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights must be integrated into primary, secondary, tertiary and higher education. Measures must be taken to encourage both women and men to pursue non-traditional areas of study, such as science and technology for women, and nursing and other care fields for men.

Matching available education opportunities to market demands is another area that needs attention. Young people need quality education that prepares them for the expectations of the modern labour market, including knowledge, skills and values related to sustainable growth and human development. Current global challenges make it more urgent than ever to sustain and advance the gains made in the last decade in the field of education—gains achieved as a direct result of strong political leadership and commitment, combined with sound policies and financing.

Governments must ensure that the recruitment, retention and promotion of teachers at all levels are based on principles of equality and non-discrimination to ensure women's full participation the national and the global workforce, including in senior management positions.





THE FUTURE WOMEN WANT

The paradigm shift towards sustainable development must be based on the premise of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment. This shift requires a renewed focus on people-centred development that prioritizes the expansion of capabilities, the eradication of poverty and the reduction of all types of inequalities, and that promotes the rights and agency of women. It is a shift to a world where women and men, girls and boys—not profit—are placed at the centre of action and decision-making, and all people take responsibility for sustainable production and consumption and respect the earth's resource limits.

The new development agenda should value women's unique, adaptive and innovative potential, and their concrete contributions, paid and unpaid, to their families, societies and economies. Stronger measures are needed to reduce the unpaid care work women do, and to share this work among women, men and institutions more equitably.

The three dimensions of sustainable development and their integration cannot be fully addressed without recognizing the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The post-Rio+20 and post-2015 development agenda needs to be built on this paradigm shift and draw from the principles of the global normative framework developed over the last decades, including the comprehensive standards laid out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other commitments such as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Any new set of goals must be built on the MDGs, mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment and contain gender-sensitive targets and indicators. There should also be a separate gender equality goal that moves beyond the current MDG3 and captures the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. UN Women will continue to work with governments, civil society and other stakeholders to develop any new set of goals.

The 2005 strategic priorities of the Millennium Project Task Force are still relevant and should

be core components of this enhanced goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. These include promoting women and girls' full and equal access to post-primary education; protecting and securing their sexual and reproductive health and rights; investing in infrastructure that reduces their time burdens; guaranteeing their property and inheritance rights; eliminating gender inequality in employment; increasing women's participation in parliaments and local governments; and combating sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.¹⁹⁸

The new framework should be universal and based on human rights principles. It should capture poverty, deprivation and other inequalities that intersect with gender inequality, such as discrimination on the basis of age, income, location (rural or urban), race, ethnicity, disability and other factors, including the specific situations of indigenous peoples and people living with HIV and AIDS. This framework must also include a specific target and indicators on ending violence against women and girls. It is critical that the ideals and vision of the Future We Want drives the process of developing the goals, targets and indicators for the new development framework.

Accountability for all actors—governments, the United Nations and other international organizations, international financial institutions and regional banks, civil society and the private sector—should be integrated into the new paradigm and framework. The participation of civil society, including women's rights organizations, must be central to the discussions and debates around the setting of goals and priorities and in monitoring and evaluating progress.

We have all the knowledge, technology and resources required to act *now*. We need leadership and political commitment for urgent and comprehensive action. Women are dynamic partners for promoting coherence, integration and innovation in sustainable development.

We call on governments to reaffirm and strengthen the global norms on gender equality and women's empowerment. We call on governments to accelerate the full implementation of those standards. We therefore call for action to:

A. Enable women to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development

- Provide universal access to essential services, such as safe drinking water and basic sanitation, energy, education and health, including sexual and reproductive health, and ensure equal representation of women in management and service provision.
- Guarantee women's right to own productive resources and assets, such as land, natural resources, finance, technology and information, in order to enable women's economic empowerment and sustainable management of these resources.
- Ensure that women participate in and benefit from education and employment opportunities in sustainable economies.
- Develop green jobs that have a strong focus on women's economic empowerment.
- Scale up and transfer cost-effective gender-responsive technologies such as labour and time-saving technologies.
- Adopt the social protection floor approach with a gender perspective to provide basic social protection for all.
- Take measures to ensure long-term financial support for basic social services for women and men, girls and boys, particularly those working in the informal sector.

B. Leverage women's agency and leadership for sustainable development

- Promote women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making and governance processes at all levels in the economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- Take temporary special measures to accelerate women's access to decision-making processes.
- Ensure that women, including young women, are equal participants in the development of any sustainable development institutional framework, mechanism or implementation tool.
- Recognize the contributions of women and women's organizations to innovation and transformation.

C. Create an enabling environment for gender equality in sustainable development

- Prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment in policies and strategies on trade, development cooperation, foreign direct investment, transfer of technology and capacity development.
- Integrate gender perspectives into national planning and budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation frameworks in order to align gender equality commitments with sustainable development goals.
- Ensure dedicated financial investments for gender equality and women's empowerment in all programmes and projects, including for community-based programmes and infrastructure support.
- Engage women scientists, innovators and decision makers fully in the development and design process of green technologies.
- Improve the quality of development cooperation and increase its development impact by prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Invest in knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity-building on gender equality and sustainable development.
- Collect, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by sex, age and rural/urban areas and other factors, and develop gender-sensitive indicators to serve as a basis for gender-responsive policy.

D. Establish a gender-responsive development framework

- Fully recognize and integrate gender equality and human rights in the overall mandate of any future institutional framework for sustainable development.
- Elaborate and adopt a specific sustainable development goal on gender equality and women's empowerment and support the integration of gender-sensitive targets and indicators in all other goals.
- Promote coordination, coherence and integration of gender equality in the implementation of commitments for sustainable development, including the Beijing Platform for Action.

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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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