



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 March, 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to enclose, herewith, the Summary of the key messages that emerged from the High-level Event on the Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which I convened on 6 and 7 March, 2014. A copy of the Summary is available also on my website, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/>.

I extend my thanks for your active participation during the high-level event which provided an opportunity to identify and present views on areas where we can move forward to achieve a transformative sustainable development agenda building on the contributions on women, the young and civil society.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John W. Ashe".

John W. Ashe

To All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations

**Summary of the President of the General Assembly
on the
High-level Event on the Contributions of Women, the Young
and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Theme: Equality, inclusiveness and participation

**6 – 7 March, 2014
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

The following is a summary of the key messages that emerged from the High-level Event on the Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda:

SECTION I: Lessons learned: Challenges, Opportunities and the Way Forward

1. There was **broad agreement that women, the young and civil society are key drivers to an inclusive, transformative and sustainable post-2015 development agenda** in spite of the multifaceted disadvantages and challenges they face in terms of *equality, participation and inclusiveness*.
2. The **shortfalls and the unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were acknowledged as challenges to a new development agenda**. There is an urgent need to scale up efforts to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication, particularly for the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded groups of our societies, including, but not limited to, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, youth, older women, persons living with HIV and AIDS, persons living in rural communities, migrants, and women, girls and youth living under foreign occupation.
3. While there has been notable progress in implementation of the MDGs and with less than 700 days to the 2015 target date, a **reaffirmation of existing commitments to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015** is needed if we are to achieve the goals related to gender equality, education and health. Violence and discrimination against women and girls and non-fulfilment of their human rights; discrimination on the basis of sexuality; lack of access to quality education, including vocational training, decent work and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; increasing levels of child malnutrition, maternal and child mortality and lack of access to early childhood development were identified as some of the main challenges to equality and the eradication of poverty.
4. The **lack of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)** impedes women and girls, children and young people from enjoying their rights and living to their full potential.
5. **Inequality is a major challenge to the achievement of the 'Future We Want' and is driven by various economic, social, cultural, political and environmental factors**. Closing the inequality gap in terms of wages, unequal distribution of resources within the household, lack of access to resources, credit, land,

justice, productive employment and economic opportunities, education, health, information, and participation in decision-making at all levels for women of all ages and young people is critical to the process ahead. So too, is the need to address the root causes of inequality and discrimination.

6. The **collection, analysis, transparency and dissemination of disaggregated data based on, inter alia, sex, age, race and disability is important** to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the goals of the new development agenda. For developing countries, data collection and analysis are a major challenge and requires increased access to financial and technical resources to improve its availability.
7. Opportunities to **strengthen capabilities and to create more transparent and accountable institutions and frameworks**, through, inter alia, increased global consultations to provide a voice for women, the young and civil society, and the development of new partnerships were highlighted as vital to the new development agenda and its effective implementation.

SECTION II. Contributions to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing: goals, targets, inter-linkages and means of implementation

Goals and Targets

A number of goals and targets were proposed as a contribution to the ongoing process. There was general agreement that the process should be **rights-based and the enhancement of rights should be mainstreamed across all goals and targets.**

I. Gender equality and empowerment of women

There was **broad support for a transformative and comprehensive stand-alone goal on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**, and for gender to be mainstreamed across all other goals, targets, and indicators in promotion of the rights of women and girls of all ages. In relation to gender equality, goals and targets were proposed in the following areas:

Support for a **stand-alone goal on ending violence against all women, children and youth**, including 'femicide', with specific targets to address the pandemic of domestic violence. There were calls for men and boys to be engaged in efforts to end violence against women and girls and for consideration to be given to boys, particularly those in vulnerable situations who face specific forms of violence and neglect.

Stand-alone goal on employment and decent work, with a special emphasis on women and youth, and the **inclusion of targets to ensure equal opportunities for women in labour markets** is critical to eradicating poverty.

Support for the **integration of targets in a stand-alone goal on energy in promotion of women's health and empowerment**, in particular for women in rural communities.

Broad agreement for the **incorporation of gender-sensitive targets and indicators in the new development framework** to determine the scope of the challenges faced by women and girls.

II. Youth

Inclusion of a stand-alone goal on youth, with explicit targets and indicators in at least the following **five priority areas**: quality education - free, gender-sensitive and inclusive education for all with attention to children with disabilities; skills development, **employment** and entrepreneurship; health, including sexual and reproductive health; governance; and **peace and security**.

Integration of a youth perspective into other goals to ensure that the goals adopted by the post-2015 development framework include measureable targets that promote and protect the rights of all youth, including vulnerable and marginalized youth, and ensure their participation in the decision-making process.

Development of a global strategic plan to eradicate youth unemployment, including the creation of a global youth network for experience swaps, as well as creation of a global fund for youth employment opportunities.

III. Civil Society

Increased recognition of and respect for the role of civil society: Civil society is a key partner in the crafting and implementation of a future sustainable development framework and must be given the space to participate fully, actively and meaningfully in the process. There was recognition that while governments have the primary responsibility for development and establishment of institutional governance, opportunities for better synergies between policy-makers and civil society organizations should be explored while taking into account different national circumstances and stages of development of countries.

IV. Health

The health and well-being of women and girls, children and young people remain a concern. While progress has been achieved with declines in child and maternal mortality, too many children and women are still dying from preventable deaths. There was broad support for the inclusion of a **universal goal on health, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health**, with consideration to the special needs of women and adolescent girls. The right of women to have control over their sexual and reproductive health, reduction in child marriages and teen pregnancies were identified as possible targets in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

SECTION III: The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Issues for further consideration – strategic vision and overarching principles, participatory decision-making and partnerships, and accountability

Implementation of a people-centered, human rights and “bottoms-up” based approach must be at the heart of the new development agenda if we are to eradicate poverty and confront new and emerging global challenges post-2015. This approach must take into account the issues of inequality and discrimination and their root causes; respect for and fulfilment of the rights of women and girls; and the

involvement of women, the young and civil society in decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and international levels.

1. **Fulfilment of existing commitments must underpin future efforts:** It is fundamental that Governments continue to reaffirm and strengthen implementation of their existing commitments in all areas - economic, social, environmental, as well as in the area of peace and security. These commitments should be aligned and strengthened in the post-2015 development agenda and further opportunities explored for expansion of their strategic inter-linkages.

Conclusion

Eradication of poverty must be at the heart of the new sustainable development framework. The post-2015 development agenda should incorporate goals and targets that empower women, children, youth and civil society. Their participation is required at all levels and in all spheres.

The high-level event was successful in identifying a convergence of views on areas where we can move forward to achieve a transformative sustainable development agenda building on the contributions of women, the young and civil society.