



Remarks

by

H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe

President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

High-level Event on the Contributions of Women, the Young and Civil

Society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Closing Ceremony

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Excellencies,
Former President Halonen and Minister Adna, Chairpersons of the panels,
Secretary-General,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the close of this High-level Event on the contributions of women, youth and civil society to the Post 2015 development agenda.

I want to thank you, member States, the UN system and representatives of civil society, for your participation, engagement and energy during the last two days. As I mentioned yesterday, the stage setting for the post 2015 framework, which began with our thematic debate last month, continues to be unprecedented in its commitment to equality, participation and inclusiveness, and through your deliberations over these past two-days, we have taken an important step in taking that commitment forward.

Let me begin by recalling some of the key points that we heard from Member States and other participants during the General Debate yesterday. There was significant emphasis on the importance of empowering women with many calls for a standalone goal on gender. At the same time, we also heard that gender must be mainstreamed through the entire development agenda. Specifically, there were calls to provide women and girls with affordable education, including literacy for adult women; to eradicate gender-based violence and provide support for victims; and to prevent teen pregnancies and early marriages. Mention was also made of the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as the outcomes of their review conferences.

Member States told us yesterday that inequality often transmits from generation to generation and for this reason investing in youth is critical. Specific mention was made to the need to provide more employment opportunities for youth. We also heard about the

needs and rights of children, who require access to healthcare, education, and nutrition; in this context, a number of speakers mentioned the role of families. Some delegations mentioned a possible sustainable development goal focused on youth.

Emphasis was placed on the need for both groups – women and youth – to have a voice in national and international decision-making, as well as in the formulation and implementation of the post-2015 agenda. Many Member States also supported the expanding role of civil society to this end, and reinforced their role of ensuring participation of the most vulnerable.

Speakers also focused on challenges faced by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, as well as MICs in the quest to achieve sustainable development for all. Good governance and the rule of law were emphasized as ways to ensure transparency and accountability on the national and international levels, as well as human rights and gender equality.

As we just heard in the comprehensive summaries by the respective Chairs of the panels that were held today, there was mention about the linkage between the rights of women and youth, and peaceful and stable societies; the relationship between culture and development; the need to extend our efforts to all marginalized groups including indigenous groups, LGBT, people living with HIV, people with disabilities and others; and the importance of monitoring at all levels national, subnational and local, including through the use of disaggregated data by age, gender and other factors. We also heard broad support for a standalone goal on ending violence against youth and children; the importance of investing in young people as assurance for the future of the world, especially in their education, skills development and entrepreneurship; and calls to ensure their rights to sexual and reproductive health. Further, we heard about the importance of ensuring decision-making spaces for all civil society and children and young people and the need to change global financial systems.

The panel discussions also highlighted the role of good governance supported by institutions that enable the full realization of human rights for all social groups. We heard

calls for a data revolution to provide citizens with the information they need to empower themselves. It was noted that while new technologies and social media can play a critical role, in particular to reach out to youth, it is important to ensure that information is accessible and understandable by all. In this respect, some pointed to the importance of capacity building to support the participation of women, youth and civil society in the elaboration and implementation of programs that affect them. Climate change and environmental concerns also featured strongly today.

Your inputs during this event have been extremely valuable and will be put to good use. In the following days, my staff, with the support of the UN Secretariat, will prepare a summary of key messages, which have emerged from this debate, and we will submit them to Member States, the Open Working Group, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the Secretary-General for consideration in his synthesis report. These key messages will be followed by a more substantial report of the discussions and presentations, which will be available on the website of the President of the General Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we move forward in the direction of a development agenda that speaks to our highest aspirations, I remind you that a shared development agenda means that it belongs to each and every one of us. We are all participants in this process; we are all shaping our collective future. Let us stay focused, positive and moving toward a future that is sustainable, peaceful, equitable, inclusive and just.

Thank you.
