

**Recommendations on Gender Inequalities and Women's Rights for the 8th Session of the UN Open Working Group (OWG)**

Brussels, 6 February 2014

Dear Commissioner Piebalgs,

The CONCORD -the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs- Gender Working Group is pleased to share with you its recommendations on Gender Inequalities and Women's Rights for the 8th Session of the UN Open Working Group (OWG) welcomes the focus on gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls through the proposition of a stand-alone-goal in the post-2015 framework. As highlighted by UN Women a stand-alone gender equality goal must be complemented by a gender mainstreaming approach throughout all areas as a precondition to achieving other development goals. A new framework addressing discrimination should include universal and zero-based goals to reach all rather than a proportion of the population. This requires explicit gender targets in each area and the collection of quality data disaggregated by sex/gender, as well as by other social criteria to support accountability mechanisms and to measure progress against eliminating inequalities and the exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups of women and girls.


It is especially important to note that the fulfilment of women's and girls' rights is an obligation embedded in international human rights law that requires specific measures as well as earmarked and adequate funding. Furthermore, women's and girls' empowerment is broadly acknowledged to facilitate track leverage for all development efforts. Efforts aimed at removing structural systemic causes of gender inequality, including through a focus on those areas in which women and girls suffer the most severe discrimination, can break a vicious circle and make the total difference for women's lives as well as contribute to inclusive social development.

Therefore, we would like to draw your attention to key issues for women's and girls' human rights and gender equality, as compiled by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service for the 8th OWG session:

1. Reform Macroeconomic Policy to Ensure Gender Equality and Fulfil Human Right
2. Promote Women's Access to Decent Work and Social Protection, and Address Unpaid Care Work.
3. Ensure Gender-Equitable Distribution and Safe Use of Natural Resources.
4. Eliminate Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence.
5. Ensure Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.
6. Address the Gendered Nature of Armed Conflict, Peace Making, and Transitions to Peace.

We urge the EU Commission and EU member states delegations to the OWG to support the above mentioned key women's and girls' rights' recommendations (1-6 above) in the OWG discussions and follow-up negotiations. We encourage the EU and EU Member States to ensure women's and girls' meaningful and effective participation in formulating, implementing, and monitoring the post-2015 agenda. It will be of utmost importance to show with concrete proposals and globally binding targets that the EU and its member states are willing to contribute towards building a socially more balanced and gender-just world.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Johansson and Elena D'Urzo (CONCORD Europe Gender Working Group Co-chairs)