



Women's rights and gender equality in the Post-2015 Framework

Position paper: FIDA (Kenya), LIWOMAC (Liberia), WILDAF (Ghana), Womankind Worldwide (UK).



With funding from the Dutch government's FLOW programme, Womankind Worldwide and our partners Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya, Liberia Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) Ghana are campaigning for women's rights to be at the heart of the Post-2015 Development Framework. This paper sets out our shared vision for a framework with the potential to transform the lives of women and girls. Central to this is a standalone goal on women's rights and gender equality, and transformative targets and indicators which mainstream gender equality throughout all goals. This position paper is based on our shared expertise and understanding of women's rights, with particular emphasis on violence against women and women's civil and political participation.

A strong and explicit focus on women's rights and gender equality

"We believe that four principles should guide the Post-2015 Framework on women's rights"

Despite some gains made since the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the persistence of gender inequality and denial of women's rights remain a significant global challenge. The emerging Post-2015 Framework must therefore contain a strong and explicit focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

We believe that four principles should guide the Post-2015 Framework on women's rights.

Universality:

Gender inequality exists in all the UN Member States. The approach to women's rights should therefore be universal in its application, with priority resources given to reaching the world's poorest and most marginalised women.

Structural change:

The Post-2015 Framework must tackle both poverty and inequality. To this end its targets and goals should be transformative, challenging the structures which pose barriers to the full realisation of women's rights. Transformative targets will usually be ones that increase women's choices and

control over their own lives, beyond the immediate removal of hardship. These could include women having more control over when and whether to have children, greater voice and influence in political decision-making, or greater ownership and control of economic assets such as income, land and property. This may require a change in legislation, or in the social norms which perpetuate and justify discrimination.

The participation of women:

Women's rights organisations and social justice groups working with marginalised women for gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment should be enabled to meaningfully engage at all levels of consultation.

Coherence with existing agreements:

The framework should be coherent with existing international policy initiatives and aligned with established human rights agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Platform for Action.

A standalone goal and mainstreaming, with transformative targets

For the Post-2015 Framework to make significant advances in promoting women's rights it must include a dedicated goal on gender equality and women's rights. Securing this standalone goal must be the priority for all governments committed to tackling gender inequality. Targets and indicators will need to specifically address the structural causes of inequality and include both violence against women and women's civil and political participation as priorities.

1. A standalone goal on women rights and gender equality

It is critical that the Post-2015 Framework contains a standalone goal on women's rights and gender equality. This is essential to provide leadership, create the political will, and leverage the necessary funding. Moreover given the existence of Millennium Development Goal 3, anything less will be seen as backtracking and a signal that gender equality has been de-prioritised.

A dedicated goal also allows space for targets that tackle specific dimensions of inequality that do not fall easily into other goal areas (such as violence against women), and for targets to address gender-specific issues that may be lost under other goals (for example property rights in the economic sector, and sexual and reproductive rights in the health sector).

2. Women's rights mainstreamed throughout

The promotion of women's rights should also be mainstreamed across the new framework. This will require targets and indicators that specifically address the structural barriers that women face in achieving equality, beyond the creation of equality of opportunity and the measurement of progress. (Recognition could, for example, be given to: sanitation in schools as a barrier to girls' education; reproductive rights as a factor in reducing

maternal mortality; or unpaid care as a barrier to women's formal employment).

It will further require the disaggregation of data, at individual not household level, and the development of data measuring changes in social norms

3. Transformative Targets and Indicators

Womankind works primarily with partner organisations specialising in the areas of women's participation and leadership and violence against women and girls. Our proposed targets, rooted in the priorities of the women our partners work with, are therefore on these themes. We also support the proposals put forward by our partners globally and by fellow members of the Gender and Development Network in calling for targets that promote women's economic empowerment (including decent work, social protection and the recognition of unpaid care), reproductive health rights, and education.

i) Women's participation and leadership

The scope of the Post-2015 Framework should go beyond the current focus on participation in national politics to include local decision-making bodies that often have a more direct impact on the lives of women affected by poverty. Participation could include leadership roles outside formal politics, in schools, civil society, the media and the Judiciary. Proposed changes must also extend to decision-making roles within the household, where social norms frequently constrain women's voice. Effective change will mean women not only participate, but have actual influence over decisions, and targets must reflect this. Furthermore, to achieve progress the political, social and economic barriers that prevent women from participating effectively need to be tackled directly and this should be reflected in the indicators of success.

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Front cover: Womankind partner organisations showing support to the delegation attending Commission on the Status of Women 2014 – partners (top left clockwise) are Graceland Sierra Leone, Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal; Afghan Women's Resource Centre and Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

Suggested target:

Ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all decision-making at international, regional, national, community and household levels.

Possible Indicators of success:

- Proportions of women in key decision making positions at all levels, including roles outside formal politics.
- Female politicians' perceptions of the impact that they have on political decisions.
- Number of women's rights organisations active at national and local levels.
- Social norm change on household decision making and attitudes on how decisions should be made on household income.

Possible Indicators of progress:

- Repeal of laws and policies that outlaw women's equal participation.
- Close funding gaps that prevent women running for formal leadership roles.
- Reduce the burden of unpaid care work that denies women the time to participate in politics.
- Men and women believe that women should participate and influence decision-making at all levels.

ii) Violence Against Women and Girls

The omission of this issue within the MDGs is now widely recognised to have been a major oversight. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing World Conference and Platform for Action (1995), UNSCR 1325, 1888, 1889, the UN Secretary General's 2006 report on violence

against women all contain commitments towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. Action is needed in the areas of: prevention; care and support for survivors; survivor protection; legal redress requiring changes in and enforcement of laws; the provision of services; a change in attitudes and behaviour.

Suggested target:

Eliminate violence against women and girls through effective prevention measures, funded support to survivors, improvements in and enforcement of laws, and a change in social norms.

Possible indicators:

Prevention

- Prevalence of violence against women and girls – percentage of women who have experienced violence in the past year.
- Legislation on violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, sexual assault or rape, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, sexual harassment, trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- Percentage of people who think it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife/partner.
- Number of women's rights organisations active at national and local levels.

Response

- Provision of shelters/refuges/safe spaces per head of population.
- Availability of continuum of care services.
- Percentage of people who believe that women are treated equally by the police and formal and informal justice systems.
- Percentage of women survivors of violence who accessed healthcare and/or counselling.

For more information or to discuss the issues in this briefing, please contact Womankind's Head of Policy and Influencing on lee@womankind.org.uk.



Womankind Worldwide is an international women's rights and development organisation. Based in the UK, we partner with women's rights organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America who enable women to challenge the discrimination and violence that affects their daily lives.

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