

Economic and Social Council

2016 Integration segment

Policy innovation and integration for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

UN-Women key lessons learned

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a comprehensive and far-reaching agenda that responds to the urgent and complex challenges of our time - increasing inequalities within and between countries, persistent conflict, environmental degradation and the ongoing impacts of the economic and financial crises. The 17 goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda are universal, indivisible and rights-based, promising to “leave no one behind”.

Gender inequality remains the most pervasive form of inequality around the world, and progress in reducing it remains unacceptably slow with stagnation in several areas. Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are at the center of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda positions the Beijing Platform for Action as a foundational framework for sustainable development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls addresses many of the important barriers to advancing women’s human rights. These are accompanied by gender-sensitive targets across other goals. Ensuring these commitments are fulfilled in all countries has the potential to transform the lives of women and girls across the world.

Based on UN-Women’s analytical work and operational activities, a number of key lessons have emerged that should guide all stakeholders in all efforts to ensure a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- **All countries need to prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in a comprehensive manner.** The fulfilment of all gender equality commitments and the realization of women’s and girls’ human rights will be essential to the achievement of all SDGs by 2030. The entire agenda must deliver for women and girls. Universality is a key feature of the new agenda and this means that all countries must step up to the challenge of addressing gender inequality.
- **“Leaving no one behind”.** The 2030 Agenda will not be achieved unless all women and girls live a life free from discrimination. Tackling inequality and discrimination in the context of all of the Sustainable Development Goals will require going beyond averages. To do so, better disaggregated data and better knowledge of the impact of multiple forms of discrimination on the rights of different groups of women and girls are needed, and appropriate responses through laws, policies, programmes and changes in social norms and gender stereotypes. Careful attention needs to be paid how policies, practices and attitudes impact the lives of the most marginalized groups of women and girls, as the 2030 Agenda demands to reach the furthest behind first. Whether it is education, social protection

policies, sexual and reproductive health services or frameworks to address violence against women, the specific needs and experiences of marginalized women must be at the forefront of policy-making.

- An **‘all of government’ approach must be pursued**, with gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at its core. It is critical that the entire implementation effort contributes to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. While SDG 5 is central to that effort, all SDGs and the entire 2030 Agenda must be implemented in a gender-responsive manner. As national sustainable development plans and strategies and their funding are being aligned to the 2030 Agenda, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be prioritized so that women and girls benefit fully, especially those most marginalized. Gender equality advocates and women’s organizations must participate in multi-stakeholder consultations on national sustainable development planning and implementation. Structures need to be in place to ensure that all parts of government address gender equality concerns in their planning, decision-making, policy action and budgeting. This means stepping up coordination between national gender equality mechanisms and other ministries – health, finance, environment and justice, for example. All parts of government should design policies to implement the SDGs with women and girls as a central priority, not as an afterthought.
- **Effective and inclusive national institutions**, including a strong role for gender equality mechanisms to help drive evidence-based and gender-responsive implementation and follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and all its SDGs. National institutional arrangements tasked with guiding the work towards achieving all the Goals and targets need to ensure that planning, decision-making, policy action, budgeting and monitoring reflect gender equality considerations and benefit all women and girls. National mechanisms for gender equality need to be an integral part of such national institutional arrangements need to be strengthened and supported to influence implementation across all policy areas.
- Enabling **economic environments and significantly increased financing are key to fulfill the gender equality commitments** in the 2030 Agenda. Gender-responsive, inclusive and sustainable macroeconomic frameworks and domestic resource mobilization and allocation are needed to redress the **historic underinvestment in gender equality and women’s empowerment**. A range of policy options are available, including tax and fiscal policies. Official development assistance and other sources of funding, including for women’s organizations, should prioritize gender equality and women’s empowerment to complement domestic resources. Investments in gender equality need to be **prioritized in all areas and all sectors, from rural development and agriculture to health, education, water and sanitation, and social protection**. Gender-responsive budgeting should be used to track and monitor such investments.
- Enabling spaces and a conducive environment for the effective **participation of women’s civil society organizations**. Women’s organizations have a crucial role in gender-responsive

implementation, given their pivotal role in promoting reform, influencing policies and ensuring monitoring and accountability. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will benefit from women's participation, leadership and expertise at all levels.

- Gender-responsive **data collection and use, and follow-up and review are needed.** Data requirements to effectively monitor progress towards the SDGs for women and girls will be substantial and significant investments and capacity building will be needed to fill data gaps. National statistical offices, line ministries and national mechanisms for gender equality all have to contribute to this effort to ensure the regular production, analysis and use of high quality gender statistics. Collaboration will be needed between global, regional and national actors in areas of gender statistics where standards and methodologies need further development. Out of the 14 indicators to monitor [SDG 5](#), on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, comparable data does not exist for six indicators in most countries, including on women's rights to land, and an agreed standard for measurement is lacking. For another five, capacity to monitor is lacking across a large number of countries. Supporting this required methodological work and capacity building efforts is essential for delivering on the 2030 Agenda for women and girls.
- **Governments and all other stakeholders - the private sector, philanthropic foundations, the UN system and civil society organizations - must be held accountable for their contributions to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.** In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Governments committed to ensuring gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, as well as to gender mainstreaming and targeted actions and investments.

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