



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Sixtieth session

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network, and Women Thrive Worldwide, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals creates a unique opportunity for women and girls living in poverty to be equal partners in — not just recipients of — this new global agenda for a better world. In addition to Sustainable Development Goal 5 that seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, gender equality is fundamental to the achievement of all 17 goals. Women and girls' voices must be heard and heeded in the planning and implementation of all goals.

Women Thrive's Alliance for Women's Solutions is a network of 180 local women's groups and civil society organizations in developing countries committed to promoting women's solutions in development policies and programs. For some 17 years, Women Thrive connected Alliance members with decision-makers, securing them a seat at the policy-making table where they can voice their priorities and solutions, and directly engage in local and global development dialogues.

Over the past three years, Alliance members focused on education have engaged in the Sustainable Development Goals process in order to achieve a goal focused on quality inclusive equitable learning outcomes. This process has been more inclusive than the Millennium Development Goals, but civil society still had to fight for a seat at the table. The representation of women's voices in the process that they fought for has ensured that the education goal is more representative of women's needs, that Civil Society Organizations able to participate in the process feel more ownership of the agenda, and that now these participants are better placed to be a full partner in implementation. Engagement must continue for the Sustainable Development Goals implementation process to be effective and sustainable — women and girls must be afforded a seat at the table, rather than have to fight to participate.

We, members of the Alliance, come together to urge the authentic and strategic inclusion of women's participation, priorities and solutions within Sustainable Development Goal implementation policies and programs.

Within the 47 countries represented in the Alliance, we will be working with our governments to ensure that women and girls are present at the table and that their priorities and solutions are central to policy-making. We will be holding our governments accountable to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5. In order to achieve equitable and sustainable development, we need an enabling environment that heeds women's voices and applies their local solutions to broader development challenges.

Members of the Alliance for Women's Solutions have identified two priorities fundamental to women's effective engagement in Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

- Women and girls need to be full participants in policy making: their participation should not be tokenistic or merely consultative. Instead, it must be meaningful. The voices, perspectives and solutions of women and girls' living in poverty must be included in policy conversations that affect their lives and communities. This is the only way that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will be successful. Representation of their views is not enough.

- Women's groups and collectives must have access to adequate funding in order to fully participate in the Sustainable Development Goals implementation process. There must be an increase in funding streams by donors, governments, and the private sector, to bolster these organizations' capability to be partners in and not just recipients of developments and programs.

In order to achieve these two goals, we recommend the following actions be taken by all involved in Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

- Efforts and investments must be made to include women and girls in development conversation. One effective way to do this is to invest in technology in order to connect women and girls living in poverty with global advocacy movements, decision-makers, and learning opportunities to provide them with the access and ability necessary to fully participate in Sustainable Development Goal implementation.
  - Development conversations at the global level must be led by stakeholders in developing countries.
  - Conversations at the national level on poverty reduction must be led by people living in poverty. Women and girls, comprising the majority of those individuals, deserve to be leaders and co-leaders of these discussions.
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