

Joint Statement on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment
in the Revised Post-2015 Draft
IGN7 - 21st July 2015

Co-Facilitators, I have the honor to make these remarks on behalf of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Peru, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay and my own country Costa Rica.

If the Post-2015 Development Agenda is to be truly transformative, it must **transform the lives of women and girls** as well as the structures that perpetuate gender based discrimination, and enable them to reach their full potential. In order to fully achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the fulfillment of their human rights, we must engage all, including men and boys, to end the discrimination, violence and negative gender stereotypes, and eliminate injustices as well as ensure that all legal, social and economic barriers to women and girls' empowerment should be removed.

The principles of gender equality must be integrated in all elements of the post-2015 development agenda – in the declaration, the goals and targets, the means of implementation, global partnership, follow-up and review as well as in the indicators. The post-2015 development agenda and its subsequent implementation must build on and carry forward existing obligations and commitments on gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls, as contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the ICPD Programme of Action and other international commitments.

Declaration

The Declaration framing the new sustainable development goals must provide strong and inspirational guidance for all, including governments at all levels, the UN system, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and global citizens. The achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the fulfillment of their human rights must be a key component of our declaration, since they are half of the world's population and provide an enormous potential for sustainable development.

We are pleased with the emphasis the declaration has on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the revised version of the draft even though we are disappointed with losing the specific emphasis on gender equality in the preamble. The preamble should reflect gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a cross-cutting issue. We will make specific points to rectify this in the course of our discussions and to strengthen the declaration further.

We question the appropriateness of including a reference to the role of the family in the new draft. The family is not referenced in the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 and 2010 outcome documents, nor in the Future We Want. We would note were it considered appropriate to include references to families, references need to be formulated to recognize that various and diverse forms of families exist, because all of them contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development. With this agenda we pledge to **leave no one behind** and this must include the various forms of families.

Implementation

In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which was adopted last week by our Heads of State and ministers, the international community agreed on the importance of **gender equality as a means** to implement the SDGs and as a smart policy measure for countries who want to achieve their full development potential. Our high ambition for a strong and comprehensive stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in conjunction with gender equality across many of the other goals must be matched by equally ambitious means of implementation.

Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is not just the right thing to do. It's **smart economics**. None of our goals can be fully achieved without the inclusion of **women and girls as agents and drivers of change**. The full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a prerequisite and a driver for the realization of poverty eradication, sustainable development and economic growth as well as for peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Framework must not only recognize the existing normative framework for gender equality, but also set a clear context and guideline for our ambitious goals, which can only be achieved if we have the collective courage to commit to fully achieving gender equality and the full empowerment of women and girls, and recognize their valuable contribution to a better future for all. Because gender equality benefits all: each and every individual, society as a whole, and the economy and each and every country in this world.

I thank you.
