

ONE-PAGE STATEMENT ON THEMATIC POINTS

Co-Chairs, Members of the Open Working Group,

I am Harriette Williams Bright of Femmes Africa Solidarité speaking here on behalf of the Women and Children and Youth Major Groups to respond to the **Focus Area 19: Peaceful and non-violent societies, capable institutions.**

It is critical that the Post-2015 SDG agenda address root causes of violence and conflict and builds on existing commitments to promote sustainable development and peace.

First, the SDGs should strengthen investment in peace rather than current investments in violence and conflict. We call for targets to reduce spending on militaries and armaments, eliminating stockpiles and production of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, and demilitarizing the lands, territories, waters and oceans particularly of Indigenous Peoples.

Second, the SDGs should strengthen support for inclusive and gender equitable participation. We call for a separate focus area on governance, which includes a clear mandate and mechanisms for how civil society and marginalized groups, including children, youth, women and indigenous people, can influence government at the national and international levels. This should include the establishment of platforms for participation and co-creation, and public access to information, in which civil society could play a role in data gathering and monitoring.

Third, we demand state and non-state actors take action to eliminate and implement protective measures against human rights abuses including child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour killings, and other harmful traditional practices, and violence committed on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We ask that the SDGs recognize the critical contribution of women's participation and rights to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Finally, the SDGs should ensure the rule of law to address impunity – particularly regarding sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. We call for strengthened accountability mechanisms at the international, regional and national levels, including for police and private military corporations, to prevent human trafficking, arms smuggling, and the proliferation of drug cartels. Mechanisms should include strategic response plans to control and prevent endemic community violence from groups such as urban gangs, vigilante organizations, and/or ethnic militias.

We thank you for this opportunity.