**Intersessional Expert Meeting**

**on the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls and the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

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| **Date:****Venue:** | **2-3 May****Palais des Nations, Room XII** |

**Statement of Ms Christine Loew**, **Director, UN Women Liaison Office in Geneva**

*The 2030 Agenda promises to make human rights real for everyone, everywhere.*

* Its focus on sustainability, equality, peace and human progress provides a powerful counter-narrative to the current rise of extremism, conflict and environmental degradation.
* Its pledge to leave no one behind challenges the trend of deepening inequalities within and across countries.
* Building on a long history of human rights treaties and conventions, its commitment to gender equality is cross-cutting and comprehensive.
* “Turning promises into action”, UN Women’s new flagship report, provides the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment to date of progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of all 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs) (SDGs) from a gender perspective.
* Based on robust statistics and new analysis, the report reveals pervasive gender inequalities in every dimension of sustainable development and shows that in many areas, progress remains too slow to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

*Let me now mention a few of our findings:*

* In 89 countries with available data, there are 4.4 million more women than men living on less than $1.90 a day. Across regions, the gender gap in poverty increases *significantly* during the reproductive years: for the age group between 25 and 34, for 100 men 122 women are living in extreme poverty.
* Despite recent progress, access to quality education is still not universal: 48.1 per cent of adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa remain out of school compared to 44 per cent of boys.
* Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic. 1 in 5 women experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months.
* Climate change and environmental degradation have a disproportionate impact on women and children, who are 14 times as likely as men to die during a disaster.

*Even where progress is made, it often leaves large swaths of women and girls behind.*

* A rural woman in Colombia is 12 times as likely as an urban woman to give birth without a skilled health professional attending.
* In the United States, Native American/Alaska Native and Hispanic women are almost 3 times as likely as white women to lack health insurance.

These inequalities among social groups persist globally: across all countries and regions

*The need for action*

*To turn promises into action we need to step it up now.*

*The report identifies four key areas for action.*

FIRST, we need to get much better in monitoring what works for women and girls:

* With 54 gender-specific indicators, the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is more comprehensive and ambitious than that of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But there are many challenges ahead:
* Out of 232 indicators, 54 are gender-specific. This means they are targeted at women and girls, explicitly call for disaggregation by sex or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. Over one quarter of the gender-specific indicators (14) can be found in SDG 5. An additional 40 gender-specific indicators can be found under SDGs 1, 3, 4, 8 and 16 and their targets. Together, these indicators monitor varying dimensions of gender equality but not all of them.
* Six of the 17 SDGs lack gender-specific indicators altogether. They are concentrated in the economic and environmental pillar of the 2030 Agenda: Goals 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15 lack gender-specific indicators covering water and sanitation, industry and innovation, sustainable consumption, energy and the environment (oceans and terrestrial ecosystems).
* On top of this, there is currently less than a third of the data *needed* to assess the status of gender equality in the 2030 Agenda; and an even lower share of this data is recent.
* To address these gaps, we need to strengthen gender statistics and support national statistical systems, particularly in developing countries.

The SECOND key to achieving the SDGs for women and girls is to put gender equality at the center of implementation, i.e. we need policies that can leverage synergies and thereby become transformative:

* When the rights of women and girls are strengthened, the benefits reverberate across society.
* Integrated approaches to implementation, with gender equality at their core, can harness such synergies.

THIRD, we must close the financing gap. Without adequate resources, progress will remain elusive.

* Far from a world of scarcity, we live in a world of unprecedented opulence, where resources are unfairly distributed and do not reach those who need them the most.
* In 2018 alone, 124 countries are expected to be cutting their budgets—eroding safety nets and essential services on which so many women and girls depend.
* In virtually all countries, there is scope for raising additional revenue to avoid such cut-backs and *instead:* scale up gender-responsive investments.

The FOURTH and last key area of action is accountability: We need to strengthen accountability for gender equality commitments at all levels.

It is critical to hold decision-makers accountable for gender equality commitments.

But this requires not only a revolution in gender data, but also a sea change in democratic governance:

* All member states should localize the global goals by *integrating* them into national development strategies.
* Spaces for democratic debate and accountability platforms are needed to hold governments accountable on their promises.
* Responsibilities for fulfilling gender equality commitments must be clearly defined.