

**Informal Notes of the Breakfast Dialogue on the Follow-up Rio+20
and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 23 April 2013**

Topic: Gender Equality as an Essential Prerequisite to Sustainable Development

Organized by the Baha'i International Community, International Movement ATD Fourth World
and Women's Environment & Development Organization.

A diverse group of stakeholders¹ convened to informally discuss key issues on the topic of gender equality as an essential prerequisite to sustainable development. The following are highlights of the comments made during this discussion:

- Women play an essential role in sustainable development. Every human being is entitled to reach its full potential, and gender equality is an intrinsic aspect of sustainable development. Sustainable development must happen in a way that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Planetary limits must be taken into account so that the future generation can meet their needs.
- We can't achieve the well-being of humanity without women participating. Women from the poorest circumstances need to be in leadership positions otherwise the solutions will not reach the women who haven't passed those boundaries. The exclusion of women sometimes is caused by sheer discrimination based on gender prejudices regarding how women think, organize and lead.
- Any post-2015 framework that aims to lift people out of poverty needs to address the issue of gender equality. Investing in education for women and girls, which reduces maternal and child mortality and enhances their health will be one of the most crucial parts of addressing this issue.
- Participants addressed the importance of inclusive growth. With regards to whether inclusion or growth should be considered at the expense of the other, we should put people first. When policies are inclusive, we will have growth.
- UN Women announced a forthcoming paper on the gender goal with a focus of the issues from the perspectives of 1.) safety—peace and security and violence against women and girls, 2.) choice—economic, social, providing enabling environments, and 3.) voice—which goes beyond participation.
- The interlinkedness and interconnectedness between inequality and structural issues, as well as economical, social and environmental dimensions, must be addressed in the new framework. There are structures and systems in place that systematically exclude women from finding solutions to their problems.
- Setting goals and targets in the current development paradigm will not be enough. The paradigm, including structural issues, needs to be addressed as the goals are set. For true change, there needs to be a shift in paradigm.
- Women constitute 61% of the world's poor. 829 million girls are living below the poverty line.
- The women's movement is at one of its weakest moments because women's organizations in and out of the UN are underresourced and underfunded. But the women's movement is one of the most vital sources of expertise and advocacy for gender equality, at all levels.
- To achieve transformation in development, women must participate and assume leadership positions so they can share their knowledge and experience.
- When discussing the subject of women's rights, we must make sure to address the issues of human trafficking affecting girls and women living in extreme poverty.

¹ The following Permanent Missions were represented: Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Thailand, United Kingdom and Viet Nam. The following UN agencies were present: Executive Office of the Secretary-General, UN DESA, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UN-NGLS, UN Secretariat to the High-Level Panel and UN Women. The following civil society organizations were present: Amnesty International, the Baha'i International Community, CARE International, CIVICUS, Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia (Gender Equity: Citizenship, Work and Family), Franciscans International, Global Call for Action Against Poverty, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Global Policy Forum Europe, Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office, International Committee for October 17, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Presentation Association, International League for Peace and Freedom, International Women's Health Coalition, Mercy International, Plan International, SOS Children's Villages, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, UN Foundation, What Moves You?, Women's Environment and Development Organization, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy and Youth Women's Christian Association.

- Women's economic rights, the rights to possess land, property, intellectual property and access to decent work must be guaranteed.
- Women form the majority of agricultural workers, water collectors, food producers, and care takers. Despite the skills and the experience women gained and the contributions they have made, they are excluded from decision-making.
- Current patterns of production and consumption don't take into account environmental and social costs. The right for decent work and human rights, especially with regards to gender equality, have to be incorporated.
- To guarantee women's rights, there must be a real accountability mechanism. Laws and policies that discriminate on the basis of sex, but also on sexual identity, need to be changed. There should be no fear of controversial topics regarding gender equality and the deprivation of rights.
- Girls must not be forgotten when addressing gender issues.
- Underlying structures in society need to be examined in regard to gender equality. How is gender discrimination embedded in cultural norms, social behaviour, work load, access to education and public decision-making?
- The importance of access to information and knowledge on digital was highlighted.
- The accessibility of social services for improved economic independence was also addressed.
- The role of women in responding to climate change and adaption is critical.
- Among other things, achieving gender equality will encompass putting an end to violence against women, guaranteeing reproduction rights, improving health and access to education.

Questions posed:

- How do we include structural issues of gender inequality in the post-2015 development agenda?
- How do we organize our economies and society so they do not foster deprivation and inequality?
- How do we recognize the agency of activism for women to transform society?
- Where do ethics come into the post-2015 agenda?

The following announcements were shared:

- The International Movement ATD Fourth World announced a Dialogue Day and Panel Discussion where UN community representatives will discuss the new sustainable development agenda with people living in poverty.
- The Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future announced the launching of an online platform, called the [SDG e-Inventory](#) established for stakeholders to crowdsource proposals on global goals for the post-2015 framework.