



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2017 HLPF Thematic review of SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls¹

The gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents an enormous opportunity to achieve gender equality, end poverty and hunger, combat inequalities within and among countries, build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, protect and promote human rights, and ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. The SDGs provide an important framework for collective action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their full enjoyment of all human rights. This work requires continued attention to the implementation of outcomes of major United Nations conferences and Summits, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as sustained implementation of international human rights treaties.

Status of progress

As part of the broader ongoing effort to highlight progress, gaps and challenges in SDG implementation, this section provides brief analyses of trend data for SDG 5 targets and status updates since the inaugural report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2016/75). At this early stage, data is not yet available on trends that can illustrate SDG 5 implementation.

5.1: Some progress has been made in recent years to end discrimination against women and girls in laws, policies and practices,² but currently there is no comprehensive overview of data on legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. Discriminatory constitutional and legislative provisions are still in place in many countries, including in family, divorce and personal laws, penal codes, nationality laws, and laws relating to inheritance and ownership and control over land and other resources.

5.2: Violence against women and girls in private and public spaces is a persistent phenomenon that no country has managed to eliminate. Comparability of data regionally and globally remains a major challenge. Latest comparable data for 87 countries from 2005 to 2016, including 30 from developed regions, shows that 19 per cent of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months. Data also shows that one in three

¹ This background note has been developed by members of ECESA Plus as a coordinated contribution by the UN system to the 2017 HLPF in depth review of SDG 5. Co-leads UN-Women, UNFPA and UNESCO with contributions from OHCHR, UNCDF, UNAIDS, UNIDO, ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA, ECLAC, UNECE, RCNYO, IFAD, IOM, World Bank Group, ITU, UNICEF, UN-OCHA, ILO, WHO and UN-DESA.

² Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/dashboard>



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

women experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime. Women who have experienced intimate partner violence are 50 per cent more likely to acquire HIV than women who have not.³ Data on prevalence of violence against women and girls with disabilities, women and girls from ethnic minorities, women migrant workers and women above the age of 49, who are not included in many violence against women surveys, is lacking despite such surveys having been conducted in more than 100 countries.

5.3: While the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) has been gradually declining over the past three decades, rates are still unacceptably high. Over 750 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday, meaning that just over 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood, which indicates a decline from nearly 1 in 3 around 1990.⁴ Although uneven across regions and countries, progress on marriage of girls under 15 years, which has declined from 11 per cent in 1990 to 8 per cent today – representing an average annual rate of reduction twice that of marriage by age 18. Rates of FGM/C have declined by 30 per cent overall, but progress is not universal and the pace of decline is uneven. At least 200 million girls have undergone FGM/C in the 30 countries with representative prevalence data, or more than one third of girls aged 15 to 19 today, compared with nearly one in two in the mid-1980s.⁵ Collecting consistent and reliable data on FGM/C is challenging due to the sensitive nature of the issue, and despite enhanced surveying on FGM/C in relevant countries, data sets are not necessarily comparable as different methodologies are used across and within countries.

5.4: Women and girls perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work, including caregiving and household tasks, in every region. On average, women spend 19 per cent of their time daily on unpaid care work, compared with 8 per cent for men. This disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, together with paid labour, means women and girls work longer hours and have less time for rest, self-care, learning, and other activities, such as political participation.

5.5: Parliamentary elections were held in 53 countries in 2016, which led to an increase in the global average of women in national parliaments, from 22.6 per cent in 2015 to 23.3 per cent in December 2016.⁶ This constitutes a modest 6.5 percentage point gain in ten years. Women remain underrepresented in managerial positions, especially in senior and middle management. In the past decade, the share of women in senior and middle management positions increased in only 44 per cent of the countries with available data.⁷ The proportion of women in managerial positions in media have declined from 28 per cent in 2010 to 27 per cent in 2015.⁸ Participation of women in scientific research

³ Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. World Health Organization (WHO), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South Africa Medical Research Council. (2013). http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf?ua=1

⁴ UNICEF global databases (2017), based on DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2003-2016.

⁵ UNICEF global databases. (2017). Based on DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2004-2016.

⁶ Women in National Parliaments, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2017). <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

⁷ Women at Work: Trends 2016. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2016). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf

⁸ Global Media Monitoring Project <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-2015>



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

is also limited, as women represent less than 30 per cent of the world's researchers, and even lower percentages at higher decision-making levels.⁹

5.6: Women's access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights is often limited by legal and other barriers, such as restrictions by marital status, third party authorization and age.¹⁰ Lack of supportive legislation is also a challenge, particularly to enable access for marginalized groups, such as migrants and indigenous women. The impact of legal barriers can be evidenced in women's ability to make their own decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, HIV prevention and health care. Only 50 percent of women, aged 15-49 years, married or in union, make their own decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care, according to data available from 45 countries.¹¹ Currently there is no comprehensive overview of data on laws and regulations that guarantee women and men aged 15 and older full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.

5.a: Control over and ownership of assets can provide women with greater protection and enhance their bargaining power within the household and their capacity for economic independence. Gender differences in land tenure and access to productive resources are particularly relevant, as rural women are significant contributors to global food production. Gains associated with eliminating the gender gap in agriculture can potentially increase national production by 2.5 to 4 per cent, as suggested from countries where data is available, and can potentially lead to associated declines in rates of undernourishment of 12 to 17 per cent.¹² Data on women's access to economic resources, including land, property and financial services, remains limited and not internationally comparable.

5.b: The spread of new technologies, particularly mobile phones and internet, has increased opportunities to communicate, and access information and services. However, women in developing countries face unique challenges in accessing information and communication technology (ICT) to unlock educational and employment opportunities. In low and middle income countries women are 21 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone than men. In 2016, women's internet use was 12.2 per cent lower than men's, with a significantly higher gap in LDCs (30.9 per cent). The global gender digital divide has widened by 1.2 per cent since 2013, equivalent to a total gap of some 257 million more men online than women. This has an impact on the way in which goods and services are created, produced, distributed and accessed in the digital environment. Women are not adequately represented as stakeholders, co-creators, and beneficiaries of technology-based interventions and often lack access to technology, digital skills, and media and information literacy.

5.c: There is a need to significantly increase investments for gender equality and track public allocations for gender equality. Of the 80 countries with available data, only 47 per cent have systems in place to

⁹ Women in Science. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics.

http://www.uis.unesco.org/_LAYOUTS/UNESCO/women-in-science/index.html#!lang=en

¹⁰ "Sexual Health, Human Rights, and the Law." World Health Organization (WHO). (2015).

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/175556/1/9789241564984_eng.pdf?ua=1

¹¹ UNICEF global databases. (2017). Based on DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2015

¹² "The State of Food and Agriculture, Women in Agriculture: Closing the gap for development 2010-2011." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2011). <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

track and make public allocations for gender equality.¹³ Transparency in gender tracking systems is critical for effective policy formulation and for accountability.

Principal interlinkages of SDG 5 with other goals and how they impact policy-making

The 2030 Agenda takes a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of sustainable development, and prioritizes gender equality as a standalone goal and a cross-cutting issue, without which the overarching aims of the Agenda cannot be realized. The SDG framework includes comprehensive commitments across the board that contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and in this regard policy decisions should harness these interlinkages. The following mutually reinforcing linkages between SDG 5 and other SDGs, while not intended to be exhaustive, demonstrate how implementation of targets across the framework significantly contributes to outcomes for women and girls.

Ending all forms of discrimination: Ending discrimination against women and girls (5.1, 5.c, 10.3, and 16.b) is a prerequisite to achieving many other SDGs, such as ensuring equal access to quality and affordable education at all levels (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 5.5), access to the labour market (8.3, 8.5), and political participation (5.5 and 10.2). Ending all forms of discrimination empowers women and girls to contribute to poverty eradication (1) and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (16), and promotes women's engagement in trade activities, the formation of small enterprises and their access to full and productive employment and decent work, including equal pay for equal work or work of equal value (8.3 and 8.5).

Eliminating violence and harmful practices: Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls is central to the overall achievement of gender equality, as well as the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development, peace and security and human rights (5.2, 5.3, 16.1, 16.2). Measures in other SDG targets demonstrate the important contribution of the SDG framework to the elimination of violence against women and girls, including through promoting a culture of peace and non-violence (4.7), and providing safe public spaces (11.7) and transport (11.2). In addition, registering girls at birth (16.9) and recording their marriages provides legal backing against harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage (5.3).

Promoting economic empowerment and financing: The promotion of women's economic empowerment is prominent across several SDG targets, particularly with a focus on poverty eradication, women's and girls' education, equal rights for women and men to social protection systems, economic and productive resources and gender-sensitive development strategies (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.b, 2.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5 and 5.a). Ensuring women's economic rights, including women's equal opportunities to organize for better wages and working conditions, and improving their access to land and resources, including financial services and control over income, is critical to achieving full and productive employment and decent work (8.5 and 9.5) and contributes to peaceful and inclusive societies (16). Women's access to decent work (8) is often hampered by the disproportionate share of time devoted to unpaid care and domestic work (5.4), thus linked to lack of available infrastructure and technology (9.1 and 9.4). Supporting enterprise growth, generating employment and promoting sustainable industrial

¹³ "Making development co-operation more effective." Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (2016)
http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Report_Web.pdf



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

development (9.2) requires financial services, including affordable credit, and women's integration in value chains and markets (9.3). Volatile and rising food prices have a detrimental impact on women's access to food, which underlines the importance of policies to prevent food price hikes, and the need for governments to ensure the affordability and accessibility of food (2.3). Trade liberalization (17.11, 17.12) in labour-abundant economies can support the transition from agriculture to industry and services. Implementation of gender equality targets requires adequate financing from all sources, including domestic resources, private sector financing and official development assistance (17.3).

Ensuring participation and leadership in decision-making: Women's full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making, in political, economic and public life (5.5) is a strong enabler for other SDG targets, including those on water and sanitation resource management, reducing inequalities, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (6.b and 16.7). Women's full participation in economic and political life (5.5 and 16.7) can increase productivity, create decent work (8.3 and 8.5), enhance agricultural productivity in smallholder farms (2.3), and strengthen women's agency in making decisions about their health and rights (3.1, 3.3, 3.7 and 5.6). Women's full and equal participation is also critical to contribute to climate-change related planning and management (13.b) and the sustainable use and management of terrestrial ecosystems (15.1 and 15.2), taking into account the specific knowledge of indigenous women.

Ensuring healthy lives: Access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (5.6) and sexual and reproductive health services (3.7) are directly linked to the reduction of maternal mortality (3.1), and ending communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS (3.3). Women's and girls' lack of autonomy and decision-making over their sexual and reproductive health can severely limit their economic and other outcomes, such as education (4), employment (8) and their ability to promote peaceful and inclusive societies (16). Further, women's critical roles in the global health workforce, comprising 67 per cent across 123 countries, provide a strong link between investing in the health workforce (3.c), recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work (5.4) and achieving full and productive employment and decent work (8.5). Improving sanitation and hygiene addresses the needs of women and girls, including menstrual hygiene, and contributes to realizing several goals (3, 4, 5, 8).

Detailed look at implementation

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Member States have put in place mechanisms to support the implementation of the SDGs. In some cases, governments have established inter-ministerial committees to strengthen implementation efforts through policy coordination and coherence. Governments have taken steps to integrate the SDGs into national sustainable development strategies, and in this regard, have assessed existing national capacities for implementing and monitoring the SDGs, including financial resources and statistical capacity.

In an effort to strengthen institutional effectiveness to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, some Member States have strengthened the mandates of national mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality (Australia and Philippines), and set up local level gender equality



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

mechanisms (Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia and Nepal).¹⁴ Member States have prioritized gender mainstreaming in SDG implementation through establishing gender equality as a cross-cutting priority in national sustainable development plans (Mexico, Paraguay and Qatar), and making gender mainstreaming a central strategy for development policies (Kenya). In the context of strengthening national statistical capacities to monitor the implementation of SDG 5 some Member States have enhanced inter-agency mechanisms on gender statistics (Colombia, Cuba and the Philippines), or strengthened gender statistics focal points in their national statistics offices (Jamaica and Norway). In this regard, Member States have also made progress in developing and enhancing methodologies for measuring different forms of gender-based discrimination, including on violence against women (Albania, Argentina, Mexico, the Philippines, Paraguay, Peru, Spain and Sri Lanka) and on unpaid care work (Kenya, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines) through, in particular, time use surveys.¹⁵

Challenges identified for implementation at the national level

Despite extensive efforts made by governments to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls through enacting legal frameworks, women and girls continue to be subjected to discrimination, violence and harmful practices and denied the full realization of their human rights. Throughout the world, women face barriers in realizing their economic rights, due to entrenched gender stereotypes and negative social norms that limit women's equal access to land, property and financial services, and which in turn shape outcomes for women related to labour markets, entrepreneurship and innovation. The promotion of gender stereotypes through the media remains a challenge to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The lack of adequate infrastructure and access to information and communications technologies for women and girls limits their educational opportunities and access to labour markets. Women's ability to decide freely on their sexual and reproductive health, in some cases, is undermined by third-party consent requirements and restrictions on essential information and health services and contraceptive services.

Inadequate resources for the implementation of national action plans on gender equality and other gender equality policies is a significant challenge across all countries. While governments are increasingly adopting gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring public expenditures on gender equality, the impact of such efforts is reduced when overall budgets for gender equality policies and the provision of services, social protection and infrastructure are inadequate. Chronic under-investment in rural infrastructure and technology has a disproportionately negative impact for women living in rural areas, as women often engage in time consuming unpaid care work, including fetching water and fuel, which prevents them from engaging in paid work.

One of the key challenges that hampers the implementation and monitoring of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at the national level is the lack of adequate gender-sensitive data, including data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant characteristics in national contexts. Of the 230 unique global SDG indicators, currently 53 (23 per cent) make explicit reference to women, girls,

¹⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on the Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions from the fifty-eight session of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2017/4)

¹⁵ Ibid.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

gender or sex, including the 14 indicators under SDG 5. In addition, many gender-related indicators in other SDGs currently lack methodologies for data collection to support comprehensive and periodic monitoring. Such lack of data on key areas of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls weakens the ability of Member States and other stakeholders to develop evidence-based policies. The absence of statistics in these areas may be attributed to a lack of prioritizing gender equality in data collection and from a lack of resources. Targeted actions by governments, development agencies, civil society organizations and communities, including through improved funding, can enhance the collection, analysis and use of gender statistics, including sex-disaggregated data, in areas such as poverty, education, health, employment, social protection, income distribution within households, unpaid care and domestic work, violence against women and girls, and women's access to, control over, and ownership of assets and resources, including water.

Opportunities identified for implementation

There are important opportunities at the local, national, regional and global levels that governments and other stakeholders can leverage to promote the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the local level, a focus on improved local government service delivery and spending on the greatest gaps can help overcome gender-inequality. At national level, eliminating gender-based inequalities in legal frameworks and policies should be a key priority, together with strengthening of national gender equality mechanisms to ensure their leadership and effective contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, including by placing such mechanisms at the highest possible level of government with increased authority, capacity and funding. At regional and global levels, governments can utilize existing mechanisms to demonstrate progress toward the implementation of gender equality commitments, including reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by States parties. The quinquennial reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development are also opportunities to assess progress in implementation of SDG 5, identify regional trends and opportunities for peer learning as well as identify gaps and challenges in implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

The implementation of the SDGs provides an opportunity for decision-makers to embed the multi-stakeholder principles of the 2030 Agenda into their policy agendas and promote coordinated efforts with civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors. Close monitoring through participatory processes will be essential for ensuring the effective implementation of the SDGs. Active civil society participation and involvement in decision-making at the national level, including by women's organizations, women's human rights defenders and youth-led organizations should be an integral part of such efforts. During the elaboration of the 2030 Agenda, women's organizations were particularly effective in building coalitions and alliances across different interest groups, and implementation should build on their involvement. Engaging the private sector to implement relevant components will also be crucial, including through the provision of technical and financial support for programming. National human rights institutions, can provide an important contribution by ensuring implementation of national development plans adhere to human rights principles.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN system

To address data gaps in monitoring the implementation of SDG 5 and other gender-related targets, the United Nations system is stepping up its efforts to help countries close gender data gaps through direct technical and financial support and has strengthened its internal coordination mechanisms to effectively support Member States. United Nations entities are also leading the collection of data for various SDG indicators as well as the development of methodologies and standards for indicators for which methodologies and standards do not yet exist. At its session in March 2017, the UN Statistical Commission reviewed and endorsed the methodology to measure asset ownership from a gender perspective developed through the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) programme, paving the way for more consistent data collection in the future. In areas where acute data gaps have been identified such as sex, disability and age disaggregated data, various initiatives are underway to improve data production and use. Additionally, the creation of an Inter-Agency Group on Violence against Women Data and its Technical Advisory Group will facilitate the compilation of harmonized country level data on violence against women, which will support global reporting on violence against women and girls, including in the context of SDG implementation. Similarly, the UN Joint Programme on Essential Services for Victims and Survivors of Violence, the Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media and the World Water Assessment Programme, have worked to strengthen gender data collection.

The United Nations system has also developed joint programmes and other collaborative efforts to support coordinated approaches to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). Joint programmes to support governments and other stakeholders include: the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting; the UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage; the Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education; the High-level Working Group on Health and Human Rights; the High-level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth and the ILO/OECD/WHO Working for Health Programme; the Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender Equality and HIV; the UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security; the Inter-agency Task Force on Violence Against Women; the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence; the Global Alliance on Media and Gender; the Island Women Open Network for Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience in Island Nations; and the Joint Global Programme on Inclusive and Equitable Local Development.

Recommendations

Areas where gaps exist

As governments and other stakeholders continue to implement SDG 5, concerted efforts will be needed to address existing gaps in implementation, particularly regarding structural barriers to gender equality, strengthening accountability mechanisms at the national level, increasing investment and financing for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and increasing data collection capacity.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Governments should place greater focus on policies that address the structural, power and political dynamics that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls and are barriers to gender equality, especially against women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Emphasis should be placed on removing and repealing discriminatory legal frameworks, implementing policies that promote women's labour force participation, including through women and girls' equal access to education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, and ensuring universal health coverage including sexual and reproductive health and universal social protection and services.

In the implementation of SDG 5, specific attention must be given to building accountability mechanisms into interventions and strategies, monitoring the functioning and effectiveness of those mechanisms and processes and taking remedial action to ensure that they are responsive to the rights of women and girls. Establishing and maintaining such accountability mechanisms requires dedicated and sustained resources.

Significantly increased investment to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, will be required to address existing gaps in the implementation of SDG 5. Governments and other stakeholders can contribute to increasing investments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by promoting investments across all sectors, including social protection, infrastructure, agriculture, health, education and culture, justice, care services and water and sanitation through domestic resource mobilization, including reforming national tax policies and increasing tax revenues. Moreover, gender equality-focused global resource mobilization by closing tax loopholes and enhanced ODA and other resources remains important.

Governments, in coordination with other stakeholders, will need to strengthen national statistical systems to ensure that they can collect and produce data that is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts to monitor the implementation of all SDG indicators. The collection of disaggregated data will also support evidence-based policy formulation as well as strategic planning. To fulfil the promise to 'leave no one behind', the monitoring of progress on SDG indicators can benefit from wider human rights reporting, such as reporting to United Nations treaty bodies and the universal periodic review or through national processes led by national human rights institutions. Human rights monitoring and documentation methodologies, which include qualitative indicators and context-specific analysis, are critical complementary tools to indicator selection and measurement to enable a fuller understanding of whether States are meeting their human rights obligations, towards women and girls. Furthermore, to be effective, the implementation and monitoring of SDGs needs to foster local and national ownership by promoting the participation of civil society organizations, including women's organizations. Efforts by such groups to participate in the decision-making and monitoring processes should be supported with more sustainable funding.

To accelerate the implementation of SDGs, a comprehensive approach, leveraging the synergies between Goal 5 and all other SDGs, should be pursued. As stated in the 2030 Agenda, the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial and realizing



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets.

Areas in which intergovernmental bodies can play a more visible role and provide guidance

Intergovernmental bodies at regional and global levels can play a critical role in providing guidance to Member States on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the United Nations Regional Commissions, including through annual regional sustainable development forums, should continue to provide opportunities for Member States to discuss regional challenges in the gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs as well as identify good practices. United Nations Regional Commissions should support the participation of other stakeholders, including civil society, in regional discussions on the implementation of the SDGs as well as foster regional multi-stakeholder partnerships to address challenges in implementation.

At the international level, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including their sub-subsidiary bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, as well as thematic intergovernmental bodies, can make a critical contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, through ensuring that gender perspectives are fully integrated into their work and outcomes. The Commission on the Status of Women has an important role in supporting the gender-responsive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and its outcomes can effectively support the high-level political forum (HLPF) in integrating a gender perspectives into its deliberations and outcomes. The other functional commissions of ECOSOC, such as the Commission on Population and Development, can also make a critical contribution to work of the HLPF.

The HLPF maintains a central role in overseeing the network of follow-up and review processes at the global level through facilitating the sharing of experiences among stakeholders and providing policy guidance and recommendations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, the HLPF has a critical role in promoting the gender-responsive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and should ensure that gender perspectives are systematically integrated into its work, including in its negotiated outcomes. The HLPF should also use all relevant opportunities to call on Member States to systematically integrate gender perspectives into their voluntary national reviews. The HLPF should also leverage the contributions of all stakeholders to the achievement of sustainable development and ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions where they exist, national gender equality mechanisms, civil society organizations, including women's organizations, community and grass-roots organizations feminist groups, youth-led organizations, the private sector, and trade unions. These actions will reinforce the cross-cutting nature of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girl, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda.