



WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP

**STATEMENT TO THE 3RD GLOBAL SIDS CONFERENCE PREP-COM 2*¹
AFTERNOON SESSION 26 JUNE, 2013, UNHQ, New York**

***IN RESPONSE TO NEGOTIATIONS, ON REQUEST OF CHAIR AND STATES**

Distinguished Co-chairs, government delegates, Major Groups, CSOs and friends,

In this closing session, we make a few brief remarks on this week, and looking forward to the 3rd International Conference on SIDs in Samoa, in September. As you know, Major Groups and civil society have participated in the entire preparatory process, including at this meeting. We will be strongly participating in Samoa, dependent on resources.

As well as following the negotiations on the Outcome document, many of us have also been working on the pre-conference programmes and logistics for the 28, 29, and 30 August events.

However, we have a few remaining key concerns, some issue-based and others on process, moving forward to September and beyond:

First, as Major Groups who will be present in Samoa we call for access to the text in more systematic way, as we were not provided here with soft-copies at this meeting. If governments expect substantive text proposals and input, then we need the updated text during the meeting. Perhaps one way round this is to provide texts systematically to the SIDS MG and OS Committee members, through a designated focal point, or UNDESA.

Secondly, as the Women's Major Group, we reiterate that gender equality and women's human rights and empowerment is absolutely critical for **overall community wellbeing of SIDS peoples, and sustainable development to be possible across all dimensions.**

¹ *CHECK ON DELIVERY

As we contemplate the title of the document, Samoa accelerated modalities of action (SAMOA Pathway), we ask everyone to remember the Barbados Programme of Action, with the clear commitment 20 years ago, that, **“all obstacles to the equal participation of women in this process should be eliminated to allow both youth and women to participate in and benefit from the sustainable development of their particular societies.”**

We thank the SIDS states and international community here for standing firm on long-agreed gender equality and human-rights related definitions, at a time when unfortunately there are those including here this week, who would try to roll back women’s rights, questioning even the most basic issues, and I would say, wasting time, because of retrogressive anti-woman, anti-gender equality, and anti-human rights and sustainable development agendas. As women from the south, we have fought hard for decades for these rights. So this is insulting to SIDS women and girls, as it is to our families and communities. Thank you for being clear on this, this week. It is an example for other multilateral tracks.

To close on a positive note, we have actively tracked the BPOA and MSI and we can say that there is clear advancement in the SAMOA Pathway document, but is that enough? Not nearly so! **We still have not sufficiently addressed the many and linked key drivers of gender inequality**, including ending sexual and gender based violence, and for universal access to SRHR without qualifications, to advance on women and decision-making in all areas of society, and proactively addressing the most difficult structural drivers of inequality and poverty that affect women and their communities in SIDS, including dealing with increasing ecological damage, climate change and disasters.

Lastly, as we move to the 3rd Global Conference, we call for States to send highest representations to the consultations pre-conference days in Samoa. **We are also grateful to the decisions made by the SIDS Conference bureau to accommodate all the proposed side events in the programme of the Samoa Conference, and ensure that all the side events will take place.** We call for clear and transparent channels from pre-conference actions to the main plenary, we call for integrated MG spaces in the plenary itself, as already agreed, and for the partnerships roundtables to concretely move partnership proposals of the Major groups and CSOs following the conference.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to working further with you in Samoa, on 28–30 August, and into the conference itself.

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