



**Implementing
the Sustainable
Development
Goals to advance
women's rights
and gender
equality:** An
advocacy guide

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to advance women's rights and gender equality: An advocacy guide

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How to use this guide

This guide provides advice on how to advocate to ensure commitments to women's rights and gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals are fully implemented, resourced and monitored at national and local level. It is aimed at women's rights organisations and those working on women's rights and gender equality in other civil society organisations.

It is the third instalment of Womankind Worldwide's advocacy toolkit series, and follows the previous '*Women's rights and the Post-2015 development framework: An advocacy guide*' (February 2014). It directly builds on and should be used in conjunction with Womankind Worldwide's flagship '*Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit*' (October 2011). Both are available at **www.womankind.org.uk**.

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Section one

Introduction to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed by UN Member States in September 2015 as the successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs are a new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years (2015 – 2030).

With 17 goals and 169 targets covering the social, economic and environmental spheres, the SDGs are part of the '*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*'ⁱ. This important political consensus document declares UN Member States' intent to work collectively to achieve people-centred sustainable development by 2030. Importantly, while the MDGs were aimed at developing countries, the SDGs are universal and apply to all countries.

The negotiations leading the SDGs were at times complicated and technical, but were much more participatory than the closed process that led to the MDGs. Yet, the agreement of the SDGs is only the beginning – what matters now is how it is implemented within countries. There is no 'one size fits all' approach, meaning nationally- and locally-relevant strategies will need to be developed.

It is essential that women's rights organisations (WROs) and movements are informed and able to carry out strategic advocacy to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the SDGs. The SDGs are likely to inform the policy and funding priorities of governments and donors until 2030. However, while the framework's commitments are among the most wide-ranging of any global agreement to date, governments will be able to set priority areas for implementation – meaning there is a crucial role for WROs in ensuring that goal 5 on gender equality and related targets are high on their government's agenda.

This guide aims to equip women's rights advocates with the tools and knowledge to ensure they can take full advantage of the opportunity that the SDGs offer to galvanise gender transformative change by 2030. It provides an overview of the commitments made, identifies key areas for action, and provides guidance on developing a tailored advocacy strategy.



For ease of reference, the relevant commitments and their location by paragraph within the *2030 Agenda* document are linked throughout the guide using this symbol.

1.1 Where are we now? Challenges and opportunities

The SDGs are not an end in themselves: as with the MDGs, they are a tool which can be used to push for action on gender equality (*see below on **Lessons from the MDGs***). While not legally binding, as an internationally-agreed policy framework, governments will be encouraged to demonstrate progress against the goals and targets on the international stage. WROs will have a key role in keeping the spotlight on government action nationally and internationally, by monitoring this progress and holding governments to account for their commitments, from now to 2030.

The road to progress will be long and, at times, difficult. Yet, never before have so many diverse actors been in agreement that women and girls must be at the centre of development. Reaching out to forge new alliances across social movements, embracing high-level political will where it exists, and working with 'new' development actors to ensure their support for women and girls is harnessed for transformative change will be critical to the success of the SDGs for women's rights and gender equality.

Lessons from the MDGs

The MDGs, adopted in 2000, were criticised by many WROs because of the exclusionary nature of their development and adoption and because they were seen as a rollback on the commitments made five years earlier in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)ⁱⁱⁱ. Yet, the MDGs were taken seriously by many Southern governments and donors.

Though not binding, the MDGs proved useful in galvanising political will and guiding policy priorities as well as for advocacy by WROs, who used them as an instrument to secure improved state responses to women's rights - particularly in the areas covered by the global indicators under MDG 3, such as women's representation in national parliaments^{iv}.

"FIDA Kenya always made reference to MDG 3 in holding government to account. We also used MDG 3 to provide a benchmark for government responsibility when generating Shadow reports."

Teresa Omondi, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya)

“As MDGs came from a top down approach, women’s organisations from the South Asia region did not want to own them. Many expressed concern that this would shift focus from the Beijing Platform for Action, which was considered by many WROs as the roadmap for gender equality and women’s empowerment. They even renamed MDGs as the ‘Most Distracting Gimmick’. However, after realising that all development partners and governments were only speaking the language of MDGs, we explored the linkages between the MDGs and the BPFA and CEDAW. WROs then used the MDGs to further the objectives of the BPFA and increase funding. Soon we realised that the MDGs were opening doors to interact with stakeholders whom WROs had never partnered before.”

Bandana Rana, Saathi

Finally, MDG 3 leveraged financial resources for gender equality. For example, the Dutch MDG 3 Fund had substantial reach and demonstrated the significant positive impact that a dedicated fund accessible to WROs can have on gender equality*.

Therefore, despite its limitations, MDG 3 provided a valuable platform on which to build in the SDG era. The SDGs are an opportunity to learn from the MDG experience, and to build on progress where it has been achieved.

1.2 What do the SDGs say about women’s rights and gender equality?

The ‘2030 Agenda’ outcome document contains a short preamble, a declaration outlining the vision and principles of the new framework, the goals and targets, and sections on the means of implementation and follow-up and review.

Thanks to sustained campaigning by the global women’s movement, including by Womankind Worldwide and its partnersⁱ, the SDGs are significantly stronger than the MDG commitments, and contain a standalone goal to ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ (**Goal 5** – see [next page](#)). This goal includes targets on key areas missed by the MDGs, such as violence against women and girls (**5.2**), and contains improved commitments to other key areas, such as ensuring women’s effective public and political participation (**5.5**). Perhaps the biggest achievements,

however, are the calls for universal access to sexual and reproductive health (5.6) and to recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work (5.4), which were strongly contested in the SDG negotiations.

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4** Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

Means of Implementation

- 5.a** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

The *2030 Agenda* also acknowledges that gender and equality and women's empowerment will contribute to progress across all the goals and targets, commits to increased investment to close the gender gap, and to mainstreaming gender throughout implementation of the Agenda. (📌20). It reaffirms commitments to the BPfA and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see page 21).

While the MDGs did not reference the structural change needed for their achievement, the Agenda 2030 clearly calls for a transformative approach to sustainable development and an end to all discrimination against women and girls (📌8, 20, Goal 5 Target 5.1).

Crucially, the *2030 Agenda* also embraces the 'Leave No One Behind' principle, calling for the disaggregation of data by *inter alia* age, sex, income and geographic location, with governments also declaring they will 'endeavour to reach the furthest behind first' (📌4). Making this aspect a reality will be crucial if the SDGs are to deliver real change in the lives of the world's most marginalised, hard-to-reach women and girls.

See **ANNEX** where links are given to further reading and analysis

Section two

Understanding the next steps

It is now up to WROs and others interested in gender equality to ensure that the SDGs are implemented. There will be a number of steps needed in the coming years to make this happen^{vii}. This section will help you understand these better.

The three key areas where governments will need to act on the SDGs are:

- Developing a national implementation plan
- Financing
- Monitoring, reporting and accountability

2.1 Developing a national implementation plan

Ultimately, it will be action at the national level that will drive forward implementation of the SDGs. The *2030 Agenda* agreement calls on all UN member states to develop national strategies on the SDGs as soon as possible.

The form national strategies take will depend on the context – they may be standalone gender equality action plans, SDG target specific (e.g. focused on violence against women), or with SDG 5 commitments integrated into wider national or sectoral plans. To achieve full impact, the cost of implementing SDG strategies will need to be worked out, and financial resources allocated to meet this cost.

Notably, although many other targets start with ‘by 2030’, no SDG 5 target incorporates a time limit. Therefore, the strongest SDG 5 Action Plans will also have clear timelines for their achievement to address this omission. In some cases the development of sub-national Action Plans will be relevant.

To ensure strong implementation plans, the following steps will need to be made at country level. Therefore, you may want to integrate these into your advocacy objectives as you push for action on the SDGs (*see also **Diagram One: Ideas for advocacy objectives for you to adapt to your context, focus and timeline, page 15***).

- All member states agreed the *2030 Agenda*. However, **securing high-level political support** within countries will be a crucial initial step to achieving progress on the SDGs.
- **Reviews of national and sub-national policies, plans and strategies will need to take place.** This is to identify all existing gender equality commitments, and assess whether they are ‘fit for purpose’ against the SDGs. This review will ideally also include national-level analysis of how SDG 5 implementation fits in with other relevant women’s rights and gender equality commitments, including the BPfA, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 framework and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- The *2030 Agenda* states that “Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with state, academic and voluntary bodies”^{viii}. Therefore, **governments should facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue or consultations to decide how to implement the SDGs, including SDG 5**, with women, including women from marginalised and harder-to-reach groups, and gender experts - notably WROs - playing a central role^{ix}.
- The *2030 Agenda* highlights the need for the removal of “legal, social and economic barriers to [women’s] empowerment”^x. To fully achieve SDG 5, the structural barriers to gender equality and women’s empowerment, such as discrimination and negative social norms, must be tackled. Given the long-term nature of social norm change, achieving transformative outcomes is also likely to be a medium- to long-term endeavour. Therefore, **governments must commit strategies that take a long-term approach to gender transformative change.**

2.2 Financing

Securing significantly increased amounts of funding that are not accessible to WROs is a crucial step if the promise of the SDGs is to become a reality for women and girls^{xi}. There is currently a severe deficit in the funding needed to implement the SDGs^{xii}.

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development (also known as FFD3), held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, was an important moment for governments to agree the way forward on meeting the huge funding shortfall. However, the outcome was disappointing overall, with structural gender imbalances in the control and distribution of financial resources largely unacknowledged.^{xiii}

Moving forward, discussions on funding sources, modalities and how to ensure finance reaches WROs and movements are crucial. Key sources are likely to be governments and public institutions, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, the private sector, and WROs and movements, as well as a range of 'new' actors^{xiv}. While overseas aid will remain important in the SDG era, government responsibility for financing gender equality is also key, with domestic public finance - including progressive fiscal policies and taxation - a crucial source of funding for gender equality.

2.3 Monitoring, reporting and accountability

It is crucial to know and understand what change has taken place to identify how close or far countries are from reaching the SDG targets. Furthermore, making sure this information is robust, comprehensive and fully accessible is important to holding governments to account and ensuring they are fulfilling their SDG commitments.

While there are some important steps at national level, SDG monitoring, reporting and accountability at the global level will also be important.

National level

Agreeing robust and ambitious national, and in some cases sub-national, indicators to accompany implementation strategies will be essential to tracking changes in gender equality under the SDGs. Indicators that cover the structural barriers that need to be tackled for gender equality to be realised are likely to be the most useful^{xv}.

To be effective in measuring change in social norms and attitudes, qualitative as well as quantitative indicators will need to be employed^{xvi}. Delivering on the SDG focus on 'Leave No One Behind' will also require detailed data, disaggregated by multiple strands, and reinforced capacity for National Statistics Offices.

The *2030 Agenda* document contains lengthy provisions regarding the follow-up and review of the SDGs. In line with this, a critical step at the national level will be establishing national review and accountability mechanisms, such as periodic reporting and parliamentary oversight, which give a clearly defined role to civil society and WROs in monitoring progress.

International level

The MDG experience showed that political will and resources often went into ensuring progress against the agreed global indicators, and the SDGs are likely to be a similar story (see [Lessons from the MDGs, page 5](#)). The development of global indicators has been led by the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) **ANNEX**. The indicator set is likely to be formally approved in June 2016, and a crucial test for the SDG 5 will be whether technically robust indicators, which are true to the ambition of the targets, are adopted.

International-level monitoring and accountability mechanisms will also be crucial to track country progress and galvanise international pressure for SDG implementation, as discussed further in **Section Four** (see [page 20](#)).


This checklist will help you to identify if the key steps towards SDG implementation are in place.



To help strengthen your case as you work on each area, the relevant commitments and their paragraph number in the *2030 Agenda* outcome document are highlighted throughout the guide using this symbol.

Developing a national implementation plan



High-level political commitment to the achievement of SDG 5 secured  **3, 91**



Review of current national policies and plans for women's rights and gender equality takes place  **11, 19, 55, 60**




Participatory consultation processes established by governments, with women and women's rights organisations / movement actors central  **60, 79, 84, 89**



Government commits to a long-term approach to gender transformative change  **7, 8, 20, 35, 41, Goal 5**



A fully costed, financed and time-bound implementation plan is agreed.  **55, 60, 63, 78**

Financing



Funding to fully implement the national implementation strategy is secured, and is accessible to women's rights organisations  **20, 40, 41, 62, 63, 66, 86**

Monitoring, reporting and accountability



Robust and ambitious indicators adopted (national and global)  **48, 57, 75, 76**



Strong SDG review and accountability framework agreed (national and global)  **45, 47, 72, 73, 74, 77, 79, 85**

Section three

Your SDG advocacy strategy

The next sections will help you to plan your advocacy strategy, and include guidance on possible aims, objectives, targets and methods.



DON'T FORGET!

You can use this guide in conjunction with Womankind's '*Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit*'^{xvii}. This symbol highlights where you can find the relevant section in the Toolkit, which will give you more detailed information on how to plan that part of your strategy.

3.1 Possible aim 🔄4:31

For many organisations, the aim is likely to be: 'The women's rights and gender equality commitments in the Sustainable Development Goals framework are fully implemented'.

3.2 Mapping the context 🔄4:36

Mapping the external context is important so that you understand the current situation and can determine what change is needed. Knowing the 'starting point' in terms of political commitments and the existing legal and policy framework for gender equality in your country will help you to identify the best advocacy objectives to achieve your aim.



IMPORTANT

Don't miss the boat!

While getting up to date on the external context is necessary, the SDG implementation process is moving fast in some countries. Therefore, you will need to find a balance between analysing the situation and building relationships with key targets and influencers about what you want to happen.

Understanding the current 'state of play' from the point of view of your government is essential. To do this you could:

- Introduce yourself to officials within the key government Ministries and Departments – ask for a meeting to understand their priorities and see what stage they are at in responding to the SDGs and developing their national plans (*see also **Identifying advocacy targets** on page 17*).
- Get involved in the process as early as you can - preferably when the Government is deciding and designing its response to the SDGs. Once the process is in motion, you will have fewer opportunities to influence.
- Make contact with the National Statistics Office to find out more about their plans to monitor SDG progress.



TIP

For guidance on how to carry out lobby meetings see [6:91](#)

Other mapping activities you may want to carry out include:

- Reflect on your government's priorities and position on women's rights and gender equality during the SDG negotiations, and take stock of how relevant the SDGs, women's rights and gender equality are to current government priorities at home. In the face of many competing priorities (and in some cases active resistance), you may need to work hard to push gender equality up the agenda - or keep it there if it is already a priority.
- Examine government commitments to other international women's rights frameworks. Which is the government most strongly committed to implementing? Make the links between those and the SDGs to bolster your case (*see also **Section Four**, page 20*).
- Do an 'SDG fit for purpose' review, by analysing existing national plans and strategies, including those due to expire soon, to see how well they match up to the SDG commitments, and identifying improvements that need to be made.

- Researching the data currently collected by your National Statistics Office, and whether the quality and quantity is sufficient to measure progress across your priority areas. If not, try to understand why not. Is it a question of capacity, political will or resources?
- Identifying Parliamentary mechanisms that could be used to push for SDG implementation and accountability. This could include committee inquiries, parliamentary debates and questions, or 'reports to parliament' that accompany policy reviews.
- Assessing how much awareness of the SDGs there is among government officials and parliamentarians. Low awareness could mean that you may want to prioritise activities that raise the profile of the goals.

3.3 Objectives ↻4:43

Steps towards SDG implementation are the concrete changes that will contribute to the fulfilment of your aim. These changes are also known as 'objectives'. Ideas to inform these possible objectives for your SDG Implementation work are presented in **Diagram One** (see *next page*) – you can make these more specific based on the mapping discussed above.



REMEMBER

An objective should ideally include:

- What action is needed
- Who will take the action
- When they will take it
- Where or how they will do it

Diagram One

Ideas for advocacy objectives for you to adapt to your context, focus and timeline

Developing a national implementation strategy



Objective: To ensure the development of costed, time-bound and financed SDG 5 Implementation Plan by end 2016.

Objective: By mid-2016, secure high-level political commitment to the achievement of SDG 5.

Objective: To persuade the government to review the current institutional framework for women's rights and gender equality by mid-2016.

Objective: To persuade the government to establish multi-stakeholder dialogue and participatory consultation processes, including a central role for women and women's rights organisations, by mid-2016.

Objective: To persuade the government to development of a long-term approach to gender transformative change, which informs the National Action Plan / Strategy and all programmes following from it, by end 2016.

Financing



Objective: To ensure the implementation plan is fully financed, including long-term, sustainable and flexible funding accessible to women's rights organisations.

Monitoring, reporting and accountability



Objective: To influence the adoption of robust and ambitious indicators (national and/or international) by end 2016.

Objective: To secure agreement on a strong SDG review and accountability framework (national and/or international) by end 2016.

3.4 Identifying advocacy targets 🎧4:46

There are two types of targets. Primary targets – also known as decision makers - are the people who have the power to make the changes you want to see. Secondary targets – also known as influencers – are people who have influence or connections with decision makers. It is crucial to identify the right people or you will waste valuable time and effort.



REMEMBER

Although the women's ministry or gender focal points are likely to have a role in SDG 5 implementation, they may not be the ultimate decision maker or may not have the power to make all of the changes you want.

In some countries, SDG implementation will be led by a cross-departmental body or 'taskforce'; in others it may be led by individual ministries or institutions. It is important to know where overall and sectoral responsibility lies in your context.

- Identify the ministry(s) or institution(s) responsible for your focus area. Remember that more than one ministry may be involved.
- Find out if there is a national or local-level body or 'taskforce' that leads on or has overall responsibility for coordination of SDG implementation (e.g. Cabinet Office in the UK). If there isn't already a dedicated body, you could push for one to be created to improve coordination and impact.
- Be creative about who you will work with as an influencer. This is an opportunity to strengthen your alliances with others who are also looking at how to influence SDG implementation (*see also Alliance building, page 18*).
- Consider which parliamentarians, academics, media representatives and other influencers have shown an interest in the SDGs. If they already have the ear of the Minister or officials responsible for SDG implementation, convincing them of the importance of gender equality and women's rights could be a good route for advocacy – and success!
- The women with whom you work can be powerful political actors too! Think about how you could support these women to have their voices and priorities heard. Raising awareness and understanding about the *2030 Agenda* and its relevance to their lives may be a crucial first step.



TOP TIP

Achieving gender equality and women's rights requires looking at the 'whole' and not working in siloes. Therefore, coordination between government ministries will in many cases be crucial to achieving SDG 5. If you think a ministry or government body should be involved but has not been to date, this is a key opportunity to make that case to them and the government's SDG lead.

3.5 Alliance building 🕒4:50, 6:85

Your allies are people who share your goals and who have influence over your target.

- Identify others also working on the SDGs – including those outside traditional 'women's movement actors'. The push to 'Leave No One Behind' means there may well be an increased incentive for a range of groups to take an approach that takes into account multiple types of inequality – meaning they are looking at gender inequality for the first time. Think about with whom you may be able to build new alliances as a result of this. This could include other social justice movements and activists, parliamentarians, researchers, academics and the media, among others.
- Think about reaching out to the women's movement beyond your local and national networks **ANNEX**. This could be to carry out joint advocacy at regional or international level (see **Section Four**, page 20). Sharing information about how other governments are implementing SDG 5 could also give you ideas to take to your own government.



TOP TIP

You are not alone – everyone is trying to work out where to go next with the SDGs. Some policymakers are looking for quick answers on how to implement the SDGs, and may therefore be more open than usual to ideas or policy 'solutions'. This means there may be increased opportunity to present your ideas to them. Presenting evidence of good or promising practice from other countries may also help you towards your advocacy aim. 🕒5:63 (see also **SDGs in practice – from the global to the local**, page 26-27)

3.6 Activities ↻6:83

The activities you choose will depend on the nature of your objectives. For example, if your issue is not already on the government's agenda or if they are resistant, then you may want to consider public campaigning. On the other hand, working to achieve some objectives will require technical messages that are not necessarily of interest to public supporters or the media.

Consider what influences your target and what your strengths are, and where the two overlap. Finally, it is important to assess the resources available to your organisation and plan your activities accordingly. But remember – the most expensive activities are not necessarily those which are most effective! Even if your budget is limited, spending your resources wisely can have a huge impact.



TOP TIP

The SDGs are likely to become increasingly high on the agenda of many donors, who are looking to see how they can support their implementation. This may be an opportunity to pitch your strategy to them to increase the resources available to your organisation for focused SDG advocacy.

Section four

Beyond borders – links to international commitments and processes

The real value of the SDGs will come when they change women's lives at all levels, and it will be national institutions that will decide whether or not that happens. Therefore, much of the work of gender advocates will need to be focused on their national context. However, international-level mechanisms can be effective in pushing for full implementation of and accountability for global agreements, and, as such, they are useful advocacy 'tools'.



TOP TIP

Be strategic about which international mechanism you use, especially when resources are limited. Focusing on the one(s) your government takes most seriously is likely to be more effective.

4.1 Using international women's rights and gender equality agreements to push for implementation

"The most effective way to get action on the goals and targets in the SDG agenda is to link them to any existing commitments by your government that address the same issues."^{xviii}

International Planned Parenthood Federation

While the MDGs, and now the SDGs, may be the 'order of the day' for many governments and donors, many governments have also made commitments to other ambitious international policy frameworks that are relevant to gender equality and women's rights.

11, Goal 5 Importantly, the outcomes of several major UN conferences are reaffirmed in the *2030 Agenda*. This includes the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which provides strong language on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the wide-ranging Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), which many gender advocates still see as the 'blueprint' for women's rights.^{xix}

- Strengthen your advocacy case by drawing attention to the reaffirmation of existing frameworks in the *2030 Agenda* and, where relevant, reminding your government they have agreed to implement them.

Human rights treaties

Many governments have ratified a number of binding human rights treaties with strong provisions related to women's rights and gender equality, and they should pay attention to the interlinkages between the SDG goals and targets and related human rights obligations and standards to ensure they meet minimum core obligations.^{xx}

Notable examples include:

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) (UDHR)
- *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) (CEDAW)
- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) (ICCPR)
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966) (ICESR)
- *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* (1952)
- *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1967)
- *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict* (1974)
- *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (1993)
- *Universal Declaration on Democracy* (1997)
- *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1999)

Regional instruments, such as the following, may also be relevant:

- *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*
- *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*
- *The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003)
- *Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence against Women* (*Belém do Pará Convention*) (1995)

While the SDGs are a politically negotiated agreement and their fulfillment is ultimately voluntary, human rights treaties are legally-binding when ratified by states. Therefore, pointing out synergies between them and the SDGs can add significant weight to your advocacy asks.

- Review human rights treaties ratified by your government and your national reviews, and see where mentions or recommendations have been made relating to women's rights and gender equality commitments.
- Consider submitting a shadow report to the next treaty body review. Joining forces with other interested CSOs to benefit from each organisation's specialism when drafting the report may mean it gets picked up more easily by the reviewing committee.
- Think about participating in your country's next Universal Periodic Review.

4.2 Using international mechanisms for tracking progress and accountability

Once implementation of the *2030 Agenda* has started, global-level follow-up and review processes will be used to track country progress. While this should not override national accountability structures such as parliaments, scrutiny from regional and international bodies and other countries has an important role in keeping the pressure on governments to make progress on the SDG goals and targets. Gender advocates have a key role in highlighting where governments have not fulfilled their commitments during SDG progress reviews.

Key international mechanisms and processes include:

- High Level Political Forum
- Economic Social Council
- United Nations General Assembly
- UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Forum on Financing for Development
- ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum
- ECOSOC Partnership Forum
- CEDAW Committee
- Work with your government to ensure civil society involvement in international SDG follow up and review processes, including formal, resourced roles for WROs.
- Ensure you understand the data collected by your National Statistics Office for these reviews. This may mean engaging them in conversation, or working with research and data specialists.

- Develop your own robust, comprehensive data collection systems to supplement national data sets, which will enable you to judge whether SDG commitments are being fulfilled. Use this data to report against SDG 5 indicators, either as part of official monitoring processes or in shadow reports.

Women's rights-specific UN mechanisms will also have an important role in reporting and monitoring progress on the *2030 Agenda's* gender equality and women's rights commitments.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

ANNEX The CSW played a key role in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on women's rights and gender. During the CSW's annual two-week sessions, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organisations and UN entities gather at UN Headquarters in New York. Civil society participation in CSW is facilitated by UN Women and ECOSOC.

The CSW takes a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and gaps in the implementation of the BPfA, and is likely to be a key forum for review of progress against SDG gender commitments.^{xxi} Most years, UN Member States develop 'Agreed Conclusions' on further measures needed to accelerate progress on gender equality and women's rights during CSW. This means CSW is an important forum to galvanise further action from governments on the SDGs.

- Consider working to influence the Agreed Conclusions to ensure they reflect current challenges and successes in SDG implementation and make concrete recommendations to governments on next steps.
- CSW can be a very crowded space for civil society and WROs. Working in coalitions ahead of and during CSW can be an effective way to make your voice heard, either in your country or in dedicated global alliances such as the Women's Major Group and Post-2015 Women's Coalition, or the Regional Women's Caucuses.
- Lobby with your Government to include civil society representative in the official delegation to the CSW.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

ANNEX The ‘weight’ of the Convention often comes from the periodic reviews carried out by the CEDAW Committee. These reviews are key advocacy opportunities, as governments will have to act and explain how they have responded to the Committee’s concluding observations. As governments tend to present an idealised view of their work in reviews, well-evidenced and carefully-worded civil shadow reports are often taken very seriously by the Committee in their review and recommendations.



REMEMBER

The Convention has 30 broad overarching articles, which are in many cases not contextually or thematically specific. This means that they can be interpreted carefully (yet creatively!) to support your advocacy asks.



TOP TIP

Most Convention articles say that states should take ‘all appropriate measures’ towards their fulfilment. Use your evidence and expertise to inform your proposals for the concrete measures states should take to achieve women’s rights and gender equality, but also be bold and ambitious!

- Analyse your country’s SDG 5 implementation to identify concrete areas where progress has not been made, then see where these areas of neglect fall under the Convention’s articles. Working with feminist legal experts may help you to do this.
- Include your evidence in a shadow report or submission to the Committee drawing attention to the areas where your government has not acted on its obligations.



LOOKING FORWARD!

The Committee issues General Recommendations that offer States Parties clear guidance on the application of the Convention in particular situations^{xxii}. Gender advocates already want to see a strong General Recommendation on the *2030 Agenda*, which would make the relevant aspects of the framework binding to ratifying states.



SDGs in practice

From the global to the local

Colombia


In February 2015, long before the adoption of the SDGs, the **Colombian** President demonstrated commitment to the new agenda by passing Decree (No. 280), following which a High Level Inter-Agency Commission was created. Responsible for preparing and implementing the SDGs, the Commission works with national and local government entities, as well as academia, private sector and civil society. Recognising that ‘sustainable development can only be constructed from the bottom-up in an inclusive and participatory manner’, local SDG strategies are also under development. Within this, local government is working with NGO coalitions and other actors such as UNDP. For more information see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/13299presentationcolombia.pdf>

Peru

A number of Womankind partners were active in the campaign for a standalone goal on gender equality and women’s rights in the SDGs and for strong language in other relevant goals. Now they are turning their attention to implementation. Our partners, Estudio para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (DEMUS), **Peru**, are monitoring steps being taken by the Peruvian Government to take forward the SDGs and will be participating in meetings aimed at strengthening the role of civil society. They want to ensure that the implementation of the SDGs in Peru recognises and pushes forward commitments already made through the BPfA and other mechanisms.



Advocacy in Practice:
Womankind's
partner organisations



Governments already
making progress on
implementing the SDGs



Nepal

Our partner in **Nepal**, Saathi, has worked with other women's groups and civil society organisations in the country to develop a position paper outlining their position on the priorities that the Government should pursue in implementing the SDGs and developing national indicators to track progress, emphasising the importance of action on gender violence, gender equality, an end to harmful practices, women's property rights and access to women's reproductive and sexual rights as priorities for action – alongside the effective gathering and disaggregation of data.

Germany

The **German** Federal Government began informal consultations on what the SDGs could mean for Germany in late 2014, using early proposals on the goals and targets as their reference point. There have also been further ad hoc consultations following the publication of a position paper on the goals by the Federal Council on Sustainable Development. Ministries have also been asked to assess what will be required for Germany to implement the SDGs and the Federal Government is planning to launch a formal national consultation in autumn 2015 which will result in an updated National Sustainable Development Strategy and an implementation plan, which will be published in early summer 2016.

Section five

Annex – Resources and further information

Womankind Worldwide

- Reports, briefings and resources from Womankind Worldwide and our partner organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America:
www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources
- Resources on women's rights and gender equality in the SDGs:
www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/women's-rights/sustainable-development-goals

SDG resources and analysis portals

- UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, which includes all the major outcome documents and working papers from the SDG negotiation process:
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>
- Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs):
<http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>
- UK Gender and Development Network:
www.gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/?tag=Post-2015
- Women's Major Group:
www.womenmajorgroup.org/category/news/news-on-sustainable-development-and-post-2015
- Post-2015 Women's Coalition:
www.post2015women.com/the2030agenda
- Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID):
www.awid.org/special-focus-sections/post-2015-development-agenda
- Overseas Development Institute (ODI):
www.odi.org/odi-on/3040-sustainable-development-goals
- Development Progress (from ODI):
www.developmentprogress.org/dimension/sustainable-development-goals

- Southern Voice:
www.southernvoice-postmdg.org
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):
www.oecd.org/dac/post-2015.htm

Other toolkits

- GADN resources for campaigning for gender equality
www.gadnetwork.org/campaigning-on-gender-equality
- International Planned Parenthood Federation's (IPPF), 'Sustainable Development Goals: A SRHR CSO guide for national implementation':
www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/sdg_a_srhr_guide_to_national_implementation_english_web.pdf

Women's rights coalitions at regional and international level

- Women's Major Group (WMG)
www.womenmajorgroup.org
- Post-2015 Women's Coalition
www.post2015women.com
- CSW Regional NGO Caucuses:
www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/regional-caucuses

Regional coalitions across Asia, Africa and Latin America

Africa

- FEMNET
<http://femnet.co/>
- African Feminist Forum (AFF)
www.africanfeministforum.com

Asia

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
www.apwld.org

Latin America

- Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (CLADEM):
www.cladem.org
- Articulación Regional Feminista por la Justicia de Género:
www.articulacionfeminista.org

Further reading on other areas mentioned in this guide

- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA):
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/index.html
- UN WOMEN BPfA 20year review portal:
<http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en>
- Commission of the Status of Women (CSW):
www.unwomen.org/en/csw
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw

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- ii International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). 2016. *'Sustainable Development Goals: A SRHR CSO guide for national implementation'*. Available online: www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/sdg_a_srhr_guide_to_national_implementation_english_web.pdf
- iii Hunt, A. 2015. *'At the crossroads: Women's rights after 2015'*. Womankind Worldwide. Available online: bit.ly/1PCdTvD
- iv Woodroffe, J. 2013. *'Women's rights and the Post-2015 Development Framework: An advocacy guide'*. Available online: bit.ly/23WYbQl
- v For further information about the impact of the MDG 3 fund see Batiwala, S. 2013. *'Women Moving Mountains: The Collective Impact of the Dutch MDG 3 Fund'*. Association for Women's Rights in Development. Available online: www.awid.org/publications/women-moving-mountains-collective-impact-dutch-MDG-3-fund
- vi For more information see: www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/campaign-successes
- vii This section was informed by an article published by Development Progress on 5th January 2016: Hunt, A. *'Five steps to turn SDG gender commitments into action'*. Available: www.developmentprogress.org/blog/2016/01/05/five-steps-turn-sdg-gender-commitments-action
- viii United Nations. 2015. Paragraph 45.
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- x *'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'* www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E, Declaration, paragraph 8. United Nations. 2015. Declaration, Paragraph 8.
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- xv Woodroffe, J. *'"Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development" A reflection from the Gender and Development Network'*. Available online: bit.ly/1Q70gUB
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- xx IPPF. 2016. p. 7.
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- xxi For more information see – bit.ly/1Q72yTr
- xxii For more information see: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/index.html



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About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide is the UK's leading international women's rights and international development organisation, working to support the work of women's rights organisations across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

www.womankind.org.uk