



# Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Post-2015 Framework

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## **The Gender and Development Network**

The Gender & Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Our role is to support our members by sharing information and expertise, to undertake and disseminate research, and to provide expert advice and comment on government policies and projects.

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**Front cover image:** Christopher Davy/ActionAid

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# Executive Summary

*'The problem is not a lack of practical ways to address gender inequality but rather a lack of change on a large and deep enough scale to bring about a transformation in the way societies conceive of and organise men's and women's roles, responsibilities, and control over resources.'*<sup>1</sup> UN Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality

To achieve real and sustainable change, the post-2015 framework should focus on the social transformations required to eradicate poverty and empower the most marginalised and excluded people. Such transformation cannot happen without tackling the underlying causes of gender inequality and removing the barriers to women's empowerment.

## **Why does gender matter in a post-2015 framework?**

Any new development framework must prioritise gender equality and women's empowerment primarily because of the pervasive injustice faced by women around the world, with women disproportionately represented among the poorest and most marginalised. It must also be a central focus because of the damaging impact of this inequality on achieving other development goals, and due to the vicious cycle that poverty and gender inequality creates.

While there has been some progress over the last decade, much more needs to be done. Women continue to face discrimination across economic, social and political spheres and entrenched gender disparities remain a major driver of poverty. There is also danger of a backlash against the advances made thus far.

The pursuit of women's empowerment is applicable to all countries. Each woman and girl experiences discrimination differently, but there are also shared realities and barriers. In no country has gender equality yet been achieved.

## **The need for a 'twin-track' approach**

Examination of the current post -2015 debates suggests a general consensus on the need to promote gender equality (although not always women's empowerment). However there is much less agreement on how best to do this and some proposals represent a significant backtrack for women's rights. For example, we argue that suggestions that a women's empowerment goal should be subsumed under a general inequalities theme would send a dangerous signal that gender inequality is now of less priority, and would therefore result in the scaling back of resources and political commitment.

Evidence from academic research and our members' own experience, together with lessons learnt from the current MDG framework, suggests that the best way forward is

a ‘twin track’ approach that combines a standalone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment with mainstreaming throughout the framework.

The report draws out two major policy lessons from the available evidence. Firstly, to be effective, mainstreaming gender needs sufficient resources, leadership and political will, and must be based on targets that transform social relations and tackle the root causes of inequality.

Secondly, a standalone goal on gender equality is necessary because gender equality is a goal in itself, deserving the political commitment and dedicated resources that a specific focus brings. A dedicated goal also allows for targets which tackle the root causes of inequality, rather than just supporting the achievement of other development goals and creates space for issues which are specific to, or have a higher priority for, women and girls than men and boys. Mainstreaming efforts to promote gender equality across a framework are also far more likely to succeed if complemented by the resources, commitment and expertise that a standalone goal can bring.

### **What a gender goal might look like**

We propose that while the goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment should be universal, resources should be clearly focused on the poorest and most marginalised women and girls.

In identifying possible priority areas under a gender equality goal, we review some of the many consultations that have already taken place. Not all of these surveys specifically address a post 2015 framework, but they are a valid expression of women’s choices nonetheless. A number of areas emerge as priorities including violence against women and girls, women’s leadership and empowerment, and women’s economic empowerment.

In this report, rather than making our own suggestions for targets within a new framework, we examine criteria which may be useful for selecting targets on gender equality and women’s rights. Such criteria could consider whether potential targets are:

- Reflective of the priorities of marginalised women;
- Transformative - addressing the structural causes of gender inequality;
- Politically relevant for the international community and national governments; and
- Not already covered or best placed under another goal.

### **Improving targets, indicators and data**

Within the ‘twin track’ approach to gender equality proposed in this report, targets and indicators must be transformative so that they reflect a lasting change in the power and choices women have over their own lives, rather than just an (often temporary) increase in opportunities. We argue that transformative targets should: provide voice

and agency for marginalised women; address the root causes of gender inequality; recognise all the barriers that women face in accessing their rights, including those created by social norms and values; and address unequal power relations at all levels of society including within the household.

We argue that indicators should reflect development priorities and not the availability of existing data, particularly given that capacity for data collection is, at least in part, a reflection of political choices. Indicators must also measure inequalities within the household such as control over resources and income and the distribution of household tasks.

The collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data must also be central to the new framework. Without this data it is impossible to measure progress and make informed decisions about what works for women and girls.

## **Recommendations**

As a UK network, we make no claims to represent views beyond our members. Consultation with organisations in the Global South working to promote the rights of women and girls, particularly those representing marginalised women, is crucial and must inform the development of targets and indicators in any new framework. However, the arguments presented in this report are based both on in-depth research and the experience of our members and their partners in the south, and we aim to provide a contribution to the debate, including the following specific recommendations:

### **1. A new post-2015 framework should:**

- Focus on the most marginalised people in society, recognising that the majority of these people are women and girls.
- Reflect an understanding that women's poverty is, in part, a result of their socially enforced gender roles and relations and that, without specifically addressing the causes of gender inequality, women's poverty will persist.

### **2. Gender equality should be mainstreamed throughout the framework by:**

- Agreeing specific targets under each goal that reflect the gender barriers women and girls face and attempt to tackle the structural causes
- Developing gender sensitive indicators, based primarily on need rather than availability of data
- Providing incentives within targets and indicators to reach the poorest and most marginalised people in society, explicitly including women from socially excluded groups
- Ensuring all indicators are disaggregated by sex
- Substantially increasing the availability of data disaggregated by sex

### **3. There should be a standalone goal or domain on gender equality that:**

- Prioritises the poorest and most marginalised women and girls
- Reflects the priorities of these women themselves
- Meets their long term strategic interests by tackling the roots of gender inequality
- Provides politically feasible targets and indicators that will contribute towards the transformative goal
- Complements the other goals

### **4. Consultation and implementation mechanisms must:**

- Occur at every level (local, regional and national) including within the household
- Provide dedicated space and resources to enable women's organisation to contribute
- Draw on the experiences of women whose voices are often absent from key decision-making positions.

The post-2015 framework represents a vital opportunity to build on current momentum and ensure gender equality remains an international priority. A strong and well-resourced standalone goal on women's empowerment and gender equality, together with the mainstreaming of transformative gender targets across the framework, is the approach most likely to address the structural inequalities which persist for women and girls and to foster the necessary political will, resources and national ownership to create sustainable and effective action on gender equality and women's rights.

## Introduction

*'The global development agenda should seek not only to address and monitor the elimination of specific gender gaps, but also to transform the structural factors that underpin the widespread persistence of gender inequalities, gender-based violence, discrimination and unequal development progress between women and men, girls and boys. The empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights should be centre-pieces of the post-2015 agenda.'*<sup>2</sup> UN System Task Force on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, June 2012

To achieve real and sustainable change, the post- 2015 framework must focus on the social transformations required to eradicate poverty and empower the most marginalised and excluded people. This report argues that such transformation cannot happen without tackling the underlying causes of gender inequality which, in turn, will not be successful without the political will and resources that a standalone goal on gender equality can provide.

At a time when the post-2015 debate is focusing on the 'big picture,' an examination of how gender equality and women's empowerment should inform the development of a new framework is particularly pertinent. We argue that it is critical to maintain a strong and explicit focus on gender in any new global framework with priority given to reaching the poorest and most marginalised women and girls. A standalone goal on gender equality, together with mainstreaming gender across the framework, is the approach, we believe, that is most likely to address the structural inequalities that persist for women and girls and to foster the necessary political will, resources and national ownership to create sustainable and effective action on gender equality and women's rights.

This report is designed to supplement the briefing which was prepared by the GADN in July 2012. It provides a more in-depth look at the importance of a twin-track approach to addressing gender inequality in any new framework and is intended to be a useful resource for those engaging in the post-2015 consultation processes and debates.

Part one examines why addressing gender inequality is so crucial for tackling global poverty while part two highlights lessons that can be learnt from the current MDG framework, and in particular, the positive impact of MDG3. We then provide detailed analysis in parts three and four as to why a standalone goal on gender equality should form part of the post-2015 framework together with illustrative criteria to inform discussion around what a new gender goal and gender sensitive targets may look like. While we propose in this report that a specific focus on gender is essential, we see this as a complement to more effective mainstreaming of gender targets under other goals.

Our aim is to stimulate further discussion and debate and we make no claims to represent views beyond the scope of our network. As we discuss in part five of this

report, consultation with organisations in the South working with women and girls is crucial and must inform the development of targets and indicators in any new framework. Our suggested recommendations are then outlined in the final section.

# Part One: Why does gender matter in a post 2015 framework? The gender dynamics of power and poverty

The post-2015 framework represents a vital opportunity to ensure gender equality remains an international priority. In part three of this report we examine, in detail, why there is a need for a standalone goal on gender equality as well as gender mainstreaming across any new framework. However, as a starting point, it is important to consider why addressing gender inequality is so crucial for tackling global poverty.

## 1.1 Gender equality and women's empowerment – what and why?

### Box 1: What do we mean by gender equality and women's empowerment?

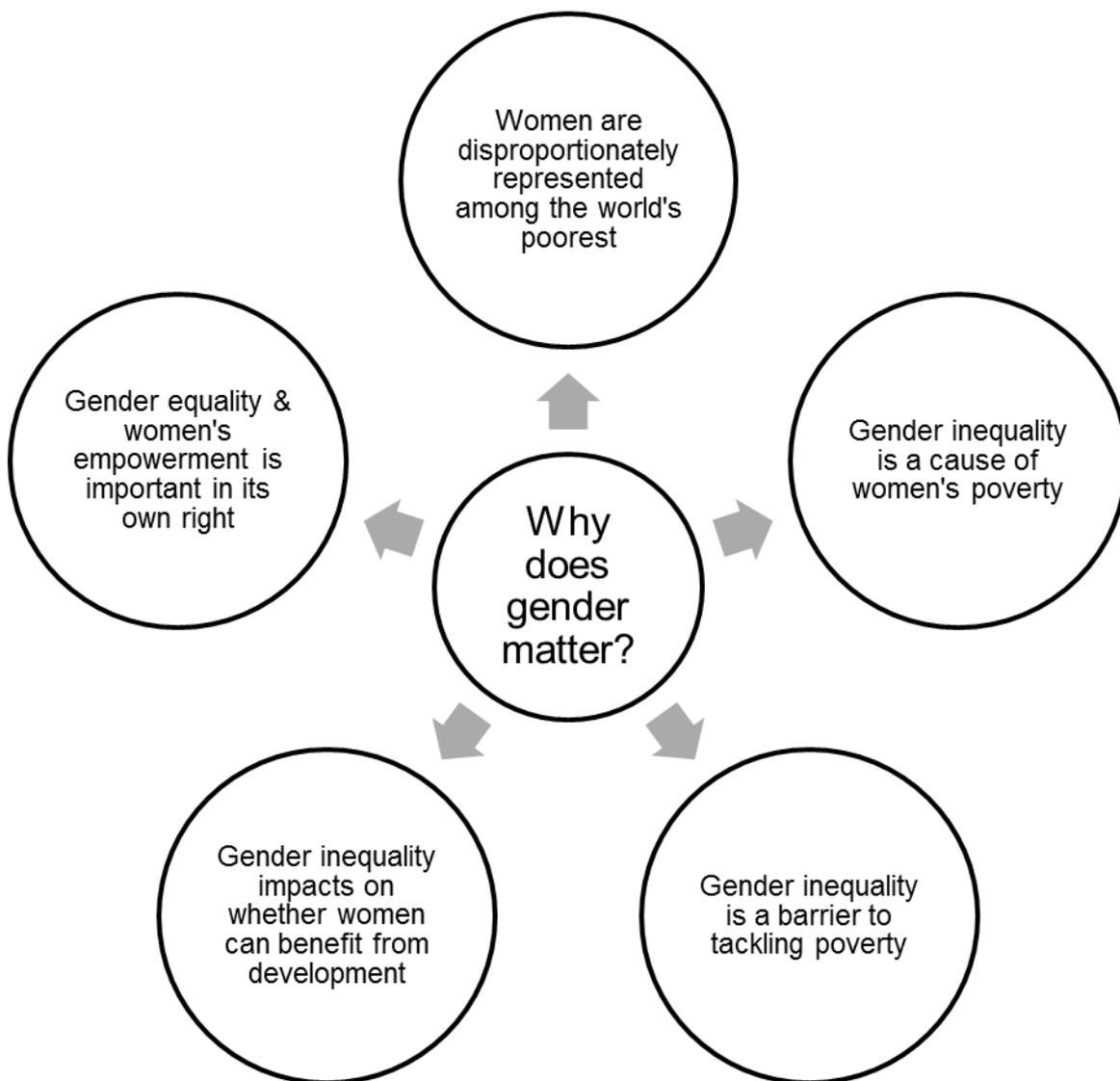
By gender equality, we mean equality between women and men, girls and boys in all aspects of life including education, health, nutrition, access to economic assets and resources, political opportunity and freedom from coercion and violence.<sup>3</sup> To achieve gender equality, progress must be made across all of these areas.

Women and girls are subject to inequality not only in the public sphere but also within the private sphere such as within the home and their intimate relationships. Tackling the continuum of inequality in both the public and private spheres is therefore essential to addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

Women's empowerment is closely related to, but goes beyond, gender equality to cover not just women's condition relative to men's, but their power to make choices and their ability to control their own destiny.<sup>4</sup> It must go hand in hand with efforts to address gender inequality. Women should be empowered to make choices and decisions and to use their rights, resources and opportunities. Important elements of women's empowerment include access to and control over resources, meaningful political participation, the reduction of women's unpaid care responsibilities, and the ability to have control over their own bodies such as living free from violence and making decisions in relation to fertility.

Figure 1 sets out the gender dynamics of power and poverty that will be explored in this section. It is important to recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are important in their own right, not just as a means to achieve an end. The abuse of women's rights is a pressing and prevalent problem with women disproportionately represented among the poorest and most marginalised in the world.

**Figure 1: Why does gender matter?**



## **1.2 Women are still disproportionately represented among the world's poorest**

*'Across the developing world, girls and women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty.'* UK Department for International Development<sup>5</sup>

The majority of the world's poorest people are women and girls. This, in itself, demonstrates the urgent need for a specific focus on women and girls in any new framework. It is estimated that women account for two thirds of the 1.4 billion people currently living in extreme poverty<sup>6</sup> and make up 60 percent of the 572 million working poor in the world.<sup>7</sup> Research in Sub-Saharan Africa has revealed that women are more

likely to live in poverty than men in 22 out of the 25 countries for which data is available.<sup>8</sup>

At the household level, in many countries from both developed and developing regions, women living in one person households are more likely to be poor than men.<sup>9</sup> For example, analysis by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has demonstrated that women in Latin America are more likely than men to live in a poor household, particularly women who are of working age and living in rural areas.<sup>10</sup>

Importantly, statistics which reveal the proportion of women living in poverty are likely to be an under-estimation as calculations typically do not take into account the unequal distribution of income and control over resources between women and men *within* households. There are therefore likely to be a significant number of women living in poverty within households that are officially categorised as non-poor.<sup>11</sup>

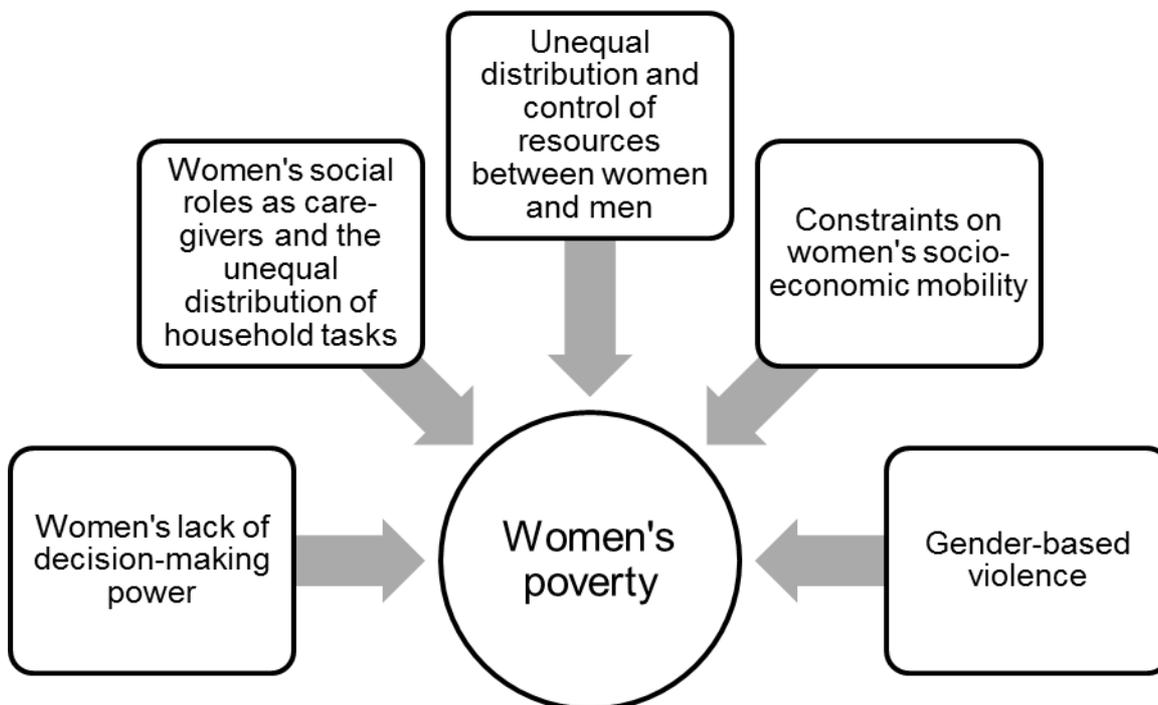
The high proportion of women living in poverty highlights the importance of a focus on women's empowerment in its own right. It also illustrates, as discussed through this report, that the current development framework is failing to address the root causes of women's poverty.

### **1.3 It's no coincidence that women are disproportionately poor and marginalised**

*'Gender equality has long been recognized both as a human right and a core development goal. In addition, discrimination against women and girls impairs progress in all other areas of development...'*<sup>12</sup> UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

Women's poverty is, in part, caused by gender inequality. The unequal distribution of income and control over resources (including property, assets and financial capital) between women and men, women's lack of decision-making power, the unequal distribution of household tasks, the caregiving role assigned to women and girls, gender-based violence, and the constraints imposed on women's socio-economic mobility due to legal, cultural and labour market barriers, all act as contributory factors which cause and compound women's poverty.<sup>13</sup>

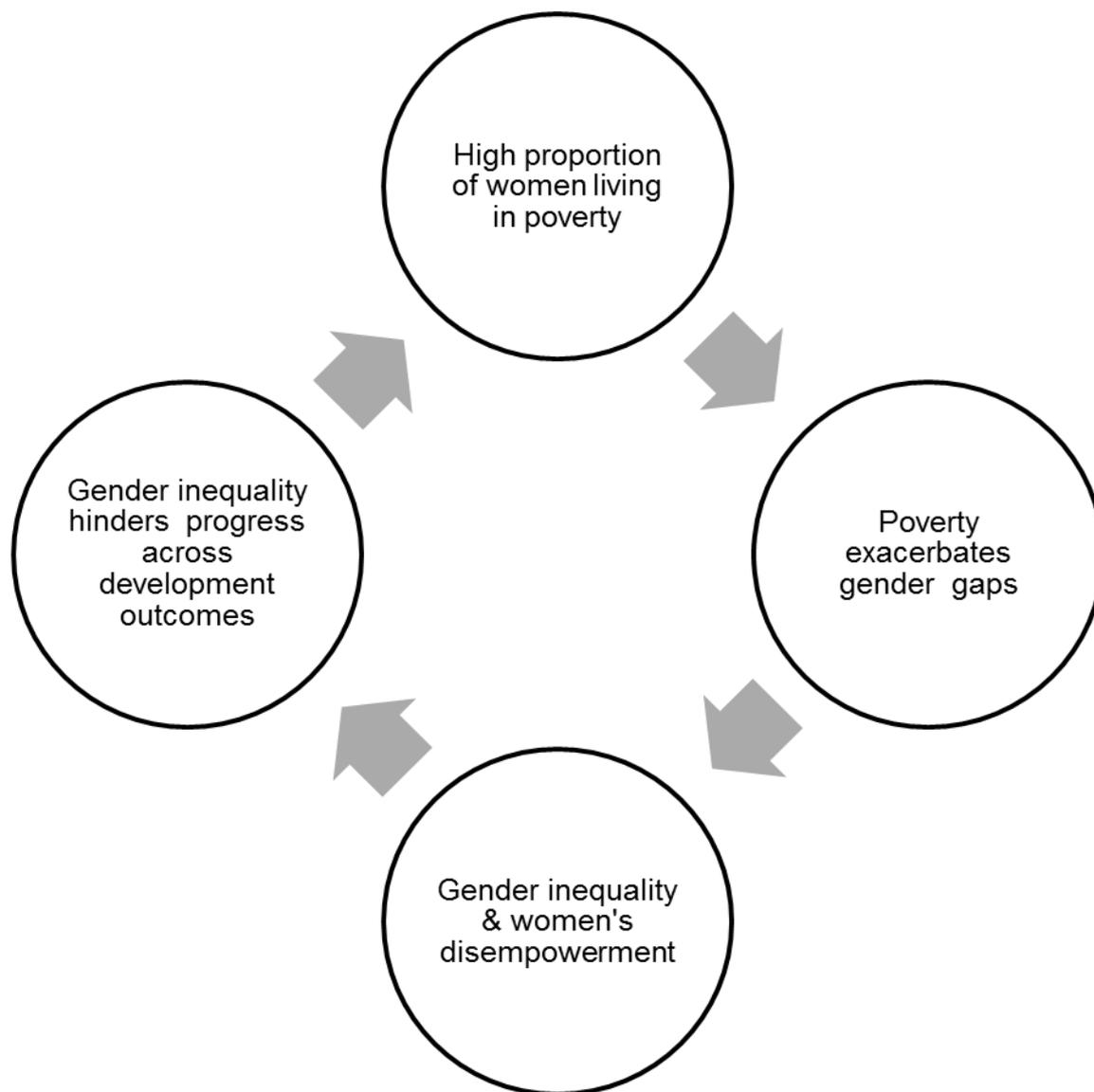
**Figure 2: Gender inequality causes and compounds women's poverty**



For example, due to the gender roles assigned to women in the household and the unequal distribution of household tasks, women in developing countries spend up to 25 percent of their time carrying firewood and other fuel over long distances.<sup>14</sup> According to a combined analysis of 25 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, women spend at least 16 million hours per day collecting water compared to 6 million hours spent by men.<sup>15</sup> This domestic burden on women reduces the time they have for other activities such as education or income generating activities. Walking or travelling long distances also exposes women to increased risk of gender-based violence and other risks to their safety.

Women also remain more vulnerable to external shocks such as environmental disasters or rising food and fuel prices with fewer assets such as financial resources, education and social networks to support them.<sup>16</sup> Economic crises tend to have a highly gendered impact. Women dominate sectors such as garments, agriculture and electronics and are therefore more likely to lose employment than men when there is a decline in consumption.<sup>17</sup> It is estimated that the global financial crisis resulted in 16 million more unemployed women between 2007 and 2009 and that women were pushed into informal and unsafe jobs at a faster rate than men.<sup>18</sup> Cuts in social spending hit women both as service users and as workers. There is also growing recognition that in times of economic crisis violence against women tends to increase.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 3: The vicious cycle of gender inequality and poverty**



Poverty and marginalisation then further exacerbate gender inequality, creating a vicious circle (see Figure 3 above).<sup>20</sup> Early marriage has a major impact on gender inequality and is a good example of how the cycle of poverty and inequality works (see Box 2). UNICEF has found that girls are more likely to be married before they are 18 if they are living in poverty or have lower levels of education.<sup>21</sup>

## Box 2: Early Marriage

The harmful practice of early marriage illustrates how violations of women's rights will impact progress across other development goals as well as how poverty can compound gender inequality.

In 2009, worldwide more than 60 million women (aged 20 to 24) were married before they turned 18 years old. If this trend continues, more than 100 million girls will probably be married as children over the next decade.<sup>22</sup> In a UNICEF global study of child marriage, in all the countries analysed, child marriage was most common among the poorest 20 percent of the population.<sup>23</sup> The causes and consequences of early marriage are intrinsically linked and include low levels of education, health and autonomy for girls; poverty; and low socio-economic status.

Large numbers of girls who leave school do so because of early marriage. This robs girls of the opportunity for education, skills, and social networks that could empower them for a healthier life and improve outcomes for their children.<sup>24</sup> On average, net enrolment in primary school is lower in countries with high incidences of early marriage.<sup>25</sup> Girls who enter into marriage early also face serious health risks. They are more vulnerable than their unmarried peers to adverse pregnancy outcomes, HIV infection and violence, and have less control over their reproductive health and sexual rights. Girls below the age of 15 who give birth are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their twenties are.<sup>26</sup>

### 1.4 Gender inequality is a barrier to tackling poverty among men, women, girls and boys

*"...Achieving the MDGs depends so much on women's empowerment and equal access by women to education, work, health care and decision-making."*<sup>27</sup>

UN Secretary-General, 2012

It is now widely recognised that gender inequality holds back progress on other development outcomes. For instance, the importance of achieving gender equality as a prerequisite to progress on the other MDGs has been recognised by an increasing number of development actors including OECD,<sup>28</sup> UNESCO,<sup>29</sup> UNDP,<sup>30</sup> the World Bank<sup>31</sup> and ODI.<sup>32</sup> A 2006 International Monetary Fund survey concluded that *"societies that increase women's access to education, health care, employment, and credit, and that narrow differences between women and men in economic opportunities, increase the pace of economic development and reduce poverty."*<sup>33</sup>

Research is also continuing to demonstrate the relationship between gender inequality and other development outcomes. For example, the causes of child mortality remain

interlinked with women's rights. Children of mothers without formal education are more likely to suffer from malnutrition or die before the age of five than children born to mothers who completed schooling.<sup>34</sup> Research by the OECD's Development Centre has also shown that in countries where women lack any right to own land there is, on average, 60 percent more malnourished children and where women have no access to credit, the number of malnourished children is 85 percent above average.<sup>35</sup> It's therefore no surprise that gender inequality poses a central barrier to meeting both the most off-track MDG goal (on maternal health) and the most off-track MDG target (on sanitation).

Gender inequality also impacts on whether women can benefit from development interventions. A number of reviews of the MDGs over the past five years have noted that women are less likely to benefit from progress on the MDGs than men in some regions.<sup>36</sup> For example, women may lack the resources, time or freedom of movement to travel long distances to access health, legal or social services due to the gendered nature of roles within the household or because they are intentionally restricted by their partners, families or society. Significantly, 64 percent of the MDGs for service-related goals are off track.<sup>37</sup> New employment opportunities may also have little impact for women, as their caring and household responsibilities often limit them to part-time, low-paid and insecure work.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, travel requirements and long working hours may restrict women's involvement in politics, as can violence. In fact, violence against women and girls has been shown to act as a particular barrier to tackling poverty and achieving development goals.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, women's participation in decision-making and paid employment frequently leads to greater investments in the health and well-being of themselves, their families and their communities.<sup>40</sup>

**However, care should be taken to ensure that gender equality is not viewed merely as a means to meet other development outcomes.** Women's empowerment must remain a central focus in order to ensure sustainable and transformative change that benefits all women and girls. Women's rights and gender equality are important per se, not just as a means to an end.

## 1.5 Latest trends – gender still matters

### (a) Trends in achieving women's empowerment and gender equality

Over the past 15 years, there have been hard won gains on gender equality. Women are living longer and have more choices over how many children they have.<sup>41</sup> Gender gaps in girls' enrolment in primary education have closed in almost all countries.<sup>42</sup> There have also been increases in women's participation in the labour market in almost every region of the world.<sup>43</sup> Women also continue to gain representation in parliaments<sup>44</sup> and maternal mortality has more than halved since 1990.<sup>45</sup> However, despite these developments, and as the statistics in Box 3 show, progress is slow and

uneven.<sup>46</sup> Women continue to face discrimination across economic, social and political spheres and entrenched gender disparities remain a major driver of poverty.<sup>47</sup>

### Box 3: Gender Inequality snap shot

- Women account for two thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate adults. This has remained unchanged for the past two decades.<sup>48</sup>
- Women spend at least twice as much time as men on domestic work, and when all work (paid and unpaid) is taken into account, women work longer hours than men do.<sup>49</sup>
- Women make up the majority of HIV-positive adults in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>50</sup>
- In the less developed regions, fewer women than men have cash income and a significant proportion of married women have no say in how their cash earnings are spent.<sup>51</sup>
- Fewer than 20 percent of the world's landholders are women. Women make up less than five percent of all agricultural landholders in North Africa and West Asia, while in sub-Saharan Africa they make up an average of 15 percent.<sup>52</sup>
- It is estimated that the global financial crisis resulted in 16 million more unemployed women between 2007 and 2009 and that women were pushed into informal and unsafe jobs at a faster rate than men were.<sup>53</sup>

#### (b) The external environment – momentum and backlash

As highlighted throughout this report, there is a growing consensus among many on the importance of addressing gender equality. This momentum presents a window of opportunity which must be utilised in order to tackle, fully and systematically, the gender gaps that persist in many areas.

However, at the same time, we are also operating in an environment which is, in some ways, more precarious for women's rights than when the MDGs were framed. Gains that have been made are increasingly under attack, particularly with the growing strength of so-called religious fundamentalisms over the past decade. Research by AWID has found that women's rights activists in every region are facing fundamentalist tendencies within the world's major and minor religions with campaigns to control women's bodies and autonomy and to prescribe strictly defined gender roles.<sup>54</sup> There is a risk that ground will be lost, unless governments and the international community continue to champion women's rights. In 2012, for example, the UN Commission on the Status of Women closed without a resolution for the first time in its history due to challenges by conservative forces on internationally established women's rights language. The Rio+20 UN Summit also saw a backlash against women's reproductive rights.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, the economic crisis has seen women's organisations facing cuts to their funding, the world over, which is impacting their advocacy efforts.

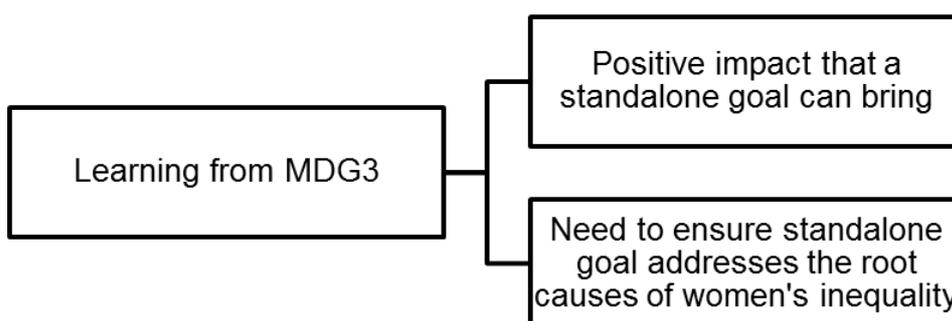
## Part Two: What have we learnt about achieving gender equality? Learning from the MDGs

The MDGs, and specifically MDG3, have done much to influence the international debate on gender equality over the past decade. MDG3, to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, includes one target and three indicators:

<p><b>MDG3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women</b></p>	<p><b>Target:</b> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.</p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</li> <li>• Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds</li> <li>• Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector</li> <li>• Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</li> </ul>
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It is important that any new framework builds on what we have learnt from MDG3 both in relation to the positive impact that a standalone goal can bring and the need to ensure that such a goal is transformative in nature, addressing the root causes of women’s inequality.

**Figure 4: Lessons from MDG3**



Significantly, the inclusion of this goal signalled recognition by member states of the importance of gender equality for achieving other development outcomes, although there has been slow and uneven progress against the indicators. As the most recent MDG report notes, *‘Gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government. Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals.’*<sup>56</sup>

## Box 4: Progress against MDG3 Indicators

### Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

- The female share of children not attending school decreased from 58 percent in 1999 to 53 percent in 2010.<sup>57</sup>
- Although there has been some progress, gender parity remains out of reach in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, West and South Asia and Oceania.<sup>58</sup>
- Girls accounted for 55 percent of out-of-school children in Southern Asia, 65 percent in Western Asia and 79 percent in Northern Africa.<sup>59</sup>
- In sub-Saharan Africa, boys are more likely to complete primary education in 25 out of 43 countries with available data.<sup>60</sup>
- Girls from poor households are less likely to attend school than boys from the same household group.<sup>61</sup>
- Regardless of wealth or location of the household, girls of lower secondary age are more likely to be out of school than boys.<sup>62</sup>
- In developing regions, the progress in reducing the number of out-of-school children slowed considerably after 2004.<sup>63</sup>

### Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

- The share of women in non-agricultural paid employment has increased only marginally from 35 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2010.<sup>64</sup>
- Progress has been particularly slow in North Africa and West Asia.<sup>65</sup>
- In the developed regions and in the Caucasus and Central Asia women are actually approaching parity.<sup>66</sup>
- In 2010, women made up only 20 percent or less of non-agricultural work forces in Western Asia, Northern Africa and Southern Asia.<sup>67</sup>
- In 27 out of 37 countries with available data, women are more likely than men to have insecure, poorly paid jobs in the informal sector.<sup>68</sup>
- Globally, women occupy only 25 percent of senior management positions.<sup>69</sup>

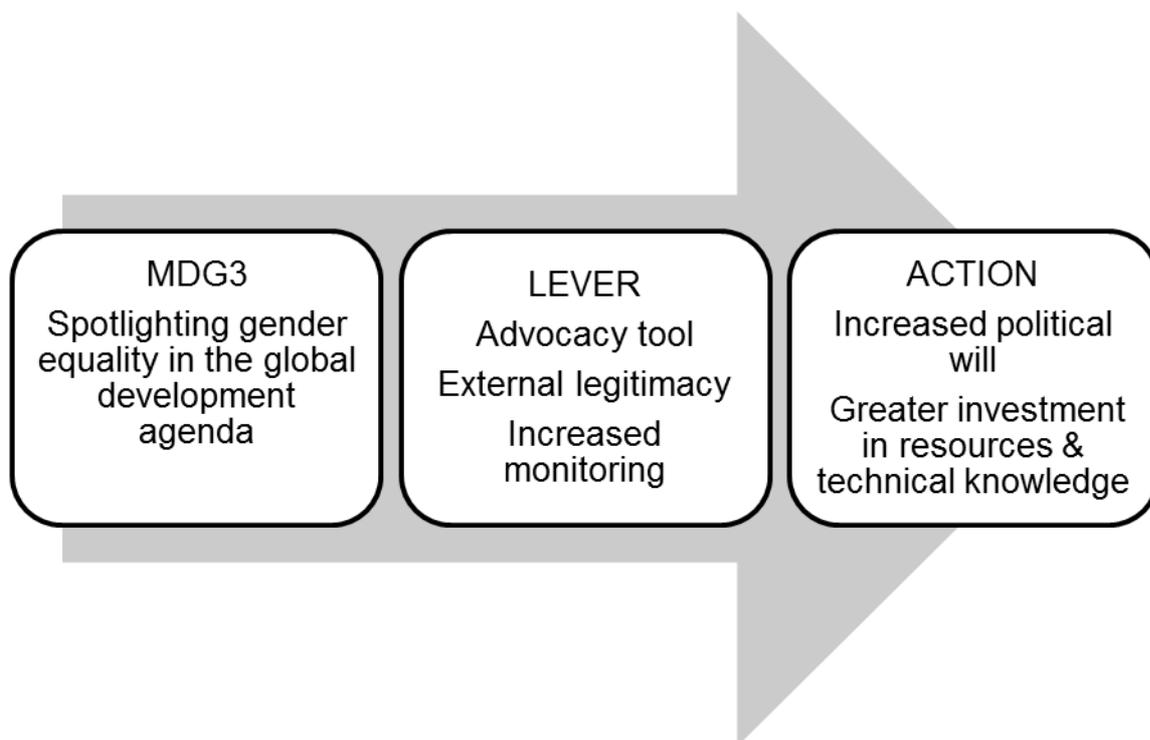
### Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

- The percentage of parliamentary seats held by women increased from 11.6 percent in 1995 to 19.7 percent by January 2012.<sup>70</sup>
- The percentage of women ministers worldwide improved slightly from 14.2 percent in 2005 to 16.7 percent in 2012.<sup>71</sup>
- Out of the 59 countries that held elections in 2011 for lower or single houses, 26 implemented special measures that favoured women and 17 used electoral quotas.<sup>72</sup>
- Where quotas were used women took 27.4 per of seats compared to only 15.7 percent of seats in countries without any form of quotas.<sup>73</sup>
- Poor women and women from rural areas are typically marginalised from decision-making institutions.<sup>74</sup>

## 2.1 The positive impact of the MDG3 gender goal

Importantly, MDG3 has demonstrated the impact that a dedicated gender goal can have. It has promoted inclusion of gender in the broader development agenda and has increased political will for and attention to the needs and priorities of women and girls. It has also spurred new investment in gender both in relation to resources and also in terms of increased technical knowledge.

**Figure 5: The Impact of the MDG3 gender goal**



### a) Lever for change

The inclusion of gender equality as a standalone goal has created a powerful advocacy tool for women's organisations and other NGOs to hold their governments to account. As an internationally agreed framework, the MDGs have helped to create a new global narrative for international development, which includes gender equality as an essential component. This has opened up space for women's and civil society organisations to call for international development agencies, donors, and their own national governments to pay attention to women and girls as a development priority.

MDG3 has also provided an important tool to demonstrate external legitimacy for the inclusion of gender across the development agenda. For example, research conducted with organisations active in the global Education for All movement indicated that MDG3 has been an important catalyst for work around gender, opening up space for dialogue and providing external legitimacy to develop a focus on gender in education work.<sup>75</sup>

Monitoring of progress against the MDG framework has also meant national governments must consider gender inequality issues within their national contexts. Countries are required to report on gender equality and to track progress against this goal. Some countries have even produced national targets relevant to their local contexts and have gone beyond the official indicator areas to report on other gender equality issues. For example, 22 out of 78 such national reports reviewed in 2005 addressed violence against women as one of the issues under MDG3.<sup>76</sup> Research with representatives from civil society organisations in 36 developing countries revealed that 64 percent thought that the MDGs had contributed to greater gender equality in their countries.<sup>77</sup>

### **b) Impetus for action**

MDG3 has contributed to, and been part of, the increased recognition from influential donors and governments as to the importance of gender equality. For example, the World Bank chose gender equality as the focus of its 2012 development report. The Danish Government based a global call to action on MDG3<sup>78</sup> and a high level conference was also held on MDG3 in March 2008.<sup>79</sup> A survey of 27 agencies by OECD in 2006 points to considerable agency progress in gender equality in development co-operation since the end of 1999, and shows that the MDGs have helped focus attention on gender equality, particularly in agencies that formerly did not make this area a priority.<sup>80</sup>

MDG3 has also spurred new investment in gender, leading to the creation of gender equality-specific funds or budget lines in many donor agencies. The MDG3 fund was created by the Dutch Government as a direct result of MDG3 being identified as one of the most off-track goals.<sup>81</sup> Women's organisations also benefitted; they were awarded 35 out of the 45 MDG3 Fund projects from 2008-11.<sup>82</sup> Other examples of increased funding which may have been influenced by the increased international focus on gender include NORAD's dedicated gender budget line, UN Women's Gender Equality Fund and new funding to Women's Funds by donors like Irish Aid and Danida.<sup>83</sup> Out of an average total of \$82.1 billion in ODA (allocable by sector), \$23.1 billion focused on support for gender equality and women's empowerment in 2008-9.<sup>84</sup>

MDG3 has also been a catalyst for improving the measurement of gender equality and women's empowerment including analysis of what is needed to increase countries' progress towards the goal. For instance, work on metrics has expanded the number of indicators used to assess MDG3 and measure countries' performances.<sup>85</sup>

## **2.2 Areas for improvement**

The experience of the MDGs suggests the need for more dedicated resources, improved data, and more transformative targets mainstreamed across the goals. AWID's analysis of the Findings from the voluntary Gender Equality Module of the 2011 Paris Declaration monitoring survey suggests that countries have made more progress on 'ownership' of gender equality than actual steps to address violations of

women's rights, and that lack of resources and absence of disaggregated data are key factors hindering progress.<sup>86</sup>

In section 5.1, we discuss the importance of framing a new goal and targets in a transformative way, to tackle the causes as well as the symptoms of gender inequality. The experience of MDG3 adds weight to this argument. While the benefits of a standalone goal on gender are clear, the impact of MDG3 has, in part, been limited by the failure to frame the goal in a transformative way. This perhaps reflects its origins; the approach outlined in the draft MDG document paragraph 121 (which was to become MDG3) clearly viewed gender equality primarily as an instrument for achieving the other MDGs: *"...to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable."*<sup>87</sup>

This is also illustrated by the MDG3 target and indicators. For example, eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, the only MDG3 target, puts emphasis on the enrolment of girls in school but fails to consider the many barriers girls may face attending or completing school and the gendered power relations within schools which may impact the quality of education.

The other indicators also fail to fully promote women's strategic interests (see section 5.2). For example, the share of women in non-agricultural wage employment does not measure the quality of jobs or capture the barriers to accessing employment. It also does not address the large numbers of women working in agriculture and in informal employment, particularly in developing countries. Similarly, measuring female representation in parliament does not measure whether women are able to meaningfully participate once elected, or the actual impact women have in decision making. Nor does it measure women's political participation at local or regional levels.<sup>88</sup> Women's wider engagement in public life (in line with article 7 of CEDAW) is also not covered. Perhaps most significantly, these indicators are not matched with a correlative target to provide the political will to spur progress.<sup>89</sup>

Lessons have been learnt over the last decade, which need to inform any new framework. There is now wide recognition that realising gender equality and women's empowerment will require action on a broader range of gender equality issues than those included under MDG3.<sup>90</sup> Gaps in the MDG framework such as the absence of targets on violence against women and women's property ownership have increasingly been recognised.<sup>91</sup> So too has the need for more extensive mainstreaming across the current MDG framework, with gender sensitive indicators and targets needed for the other MDGs.<sup>92</sup> For example, in 2007 a new target was added to MDG1 on full and productive employment and decent work, especially for women and youth, and to MDG5 on universal access to reproductive health.

## Part Three: What next? A twin track approach for the post-2015 framework

### 3.1 General consensus on the centrality of gender in any framework

*'I will personally ensure that the fight for the empowerment of women is at the heart of the international process I am co-chairing to renew the Millennium Development Goals.'*

UK Prime Minister David Cameron, July 2012<sup>93</sup>

In the current debates around the post-2015 framework, there appears to be a growing consensus that gender must be integrated across the any new framework.<sup>94</sup> Broadly, there are two sets of debates: how to frame or organise the post 2015 framework; and what specific issues should be covered. Proposals on framing include the sustainable development goals as outlined in Rio+20,<sup>95</sup> Jeffery Sachs' four big pillars,<sup>96</sup> and proposals to focus more on human rights or equality.<sup>97</sup>

Importantly, there is increasing recognition that gender equality is as important to this debate on how to structure the framework as it is to the identification of themes. For example, in July 2012, the UN Secretary-General recommended to the UN General Assembly that the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women should feature prominently in the post-2015 development framework.<sup>98</sup> This view has also been supported by the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda<sup>99</sup> and the UK Government.<sup>100</sup>

Advocates of a human rights approach also support this importance of women's rights. As a report by ActionAid, advocating a rights-based approach, concludes: *"Women's rights are central. Failure to address women's human rights will undermine efforts to eradicate poverty for both women and men."*<sup>101</sup> The full participation and empowerment of women has also been identified as crucial for the Social Development Goals. A UNDP report on the SDGs stated: *"Across regions and countries, evidence suggests that sustainable development strategies that do not promote gender equality and the full participation and empowerment of women and girls will not succeed."*<sup>102</sup>

### 3.2 How best to make the commitment a reality?

This commitment is encouraging, but it is vital to ensure that this gender focus is included in the most effective way to achieve lasting change for the poorest women and girls. The proposed frameworks will be incomplete if they do not incorporate an understanding of the centrality of gendered power relations to eradicating poverty. However, agreement on how best to do this has yet to be reached.

### **a) The development model**

A post 2015 framework will assume a particular development model. If gender equality and women's empowerment is truly to be achieved, a reframing of the existing development model will be necessary alongside discussion of the specific content of the goals.

More has been written elsewhere and this is the not focus of this report. However, GADN supports the work, for example, of the Association of Women in Development (AWID)<sup>103</sup> and the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)<sup>104</sup> in this area. A framework which was conducive to the promotion of women's empowerment would, for example:

- Be clear on the purpose of development, with economic growth as the servant, not the master, of aims such as well-being and care.
- Use a human rights based approach, recognising rights such as the right to food and the right to live free from violence.
- See people as citizens with rights to whom governments have obligations, and with whom governments should consult.
- Pursue development which is environmentally sustainable.
- Acknowledge the importance of social provision and recognise the value of unpaid care.<sup>105</sup>

### **b) The goals - retain a distinct standalone goal on gender equality**

There has been some discussion as to whether gender should come within a single goal on inequalities, accompanied by concerns that the framework will be overloaded with 'special interests' like baubles on a Christmas tree. We argue that gender equality is better seen as a root system, on which the entire tree depends, rather than as a bauble.

Addressing other inequalities within the post 2015 framework, including income inequality, is seen as vital by GADN. However, this should be achieved by building on the work on gender equality rather than replacing the current focus. While it is vital to recognise the intersection between inequalities and the impact each has on the other, the causes and remedies for each will be different. Merging gender equality under a broader inequality goal will reduce focus and efficacy. Moreover, fitting gender equality and women's empowerment as a target under a broader inequalities goal would be back-tracking on the existing commitment and send a clear but dangerous signal that the issue is no longer accorded as much priority, with a subsequent corresponding lack of resources and political commitment.

There are also proposals to mainstream gender equality across all other areas, without a specific gender goal. Proponents of this approach argue that the inclusion of a

separate goal on gender serves to silo the issue. However, in our experience, and as discussed in this section, gender mainstreaming is essential, but not sufficient in this context. The absence of a standalone goal is likely to result in gender equality being treated as secondary to other development goals. Furthermore, promoting gender equality through mainstreaming alone may result in initiatives which are fragmented and partial, and which fail to address some of the underlying causes of gender inequality that cut across all areas of development. The evidence from the experience of MDG3, outlined in the previous section, further supports this argument for a twin-track approach.

The universal nature of gender inequality adds weight to the argument for a standalone goal. At the Rio+20 Conference, member states agreed that the Sustainable Development Goals should be 'global in nature and universally applicable to all countries.'<sup>106</sup> The United Nations System Task Team has called for post 2015 goals are: universal; sustainable; address inequality; in line with human rights.<sup>107</sup> Gender equality ticks all the boxes. Inequality between men and women is a problem relevant for every nation and therefore conducive to inclusion in a set of goals for which every government is responsible. Gender is a universal structural inequality which affects all peoples in all countries and is not confined to developing countries alone.<sup>108</sup> It cuts across other inequalities such as race, disability, age and sexuality and is always a key defining feature of economic inequality within countries. Each woman and girl experiences discrimination differently, but there are also shared realities and barriers. In no country has gender equality yet been achieved.

### **3.3 The twin-track approach – mainstreaming and standalone**

Our position is that maintaining a strong and explicit focus on gender equality in any new global framework requires a twin track approach with gender equality as a specific goal *and* mainstreamed in targets and indicators across other goals. In our experience, this approach is the most likely to address the structural inequalities which persist for women and girls and to foster the necessary political will, resources and national ownership to create sustainable and effective action on gender equality.

A twin track approach has already been identified by the UN System Task Force as a potential option for addressing inequalities in the post-2015 framework.<sup>109</sup> This mirrors the "twin track" implementation strategy widely used by donors. In 2006, an OECD survey of 27 agencies revealed that most used a "twin track" approach, seeking both to mainstream gender equality across all programmes and to support targeted initiatives for women and girls.<sup>110</sup>

In the light of current political debates, and given the negative consequences if gender equality and women's rights were no longer given prominence within any international framework that follows the MDGs, we have chosen in this report to focus on the arguments for a standalone goal. However, as a network we recognise the importance of mainstreaming, and of doing it well,<sup>111</sup> and we touch on this in the next section. In

section 5.1 we also explore the need for all targets, under any goal, to be transformative.

### **3.4 Gender mainstreaming – recognising the different barriers women and girls face in every development challenge**

#### **a) What is gender mainstreaming?**

*“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”<sup>112</sup> ECOSOC Agreed Definition*

Gender mainstreaming was adopted as a strategy for promoting gender equality at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and was also reinforced as a strategy for achieving the MDGs by the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality of the UN Millennium Project and has been widely adopted by most donors and Governments since that time.<sup>113</sup>

Gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that development organisations take gender equality and women’s rights into consideration in *all* policy and spending decisions, as well as to *listen to and channel more resources towards women and girls*.<sup>114</sup> Mainstreaming involves analysing the ways in which any issue affects women and men differently and/or unequally through sex disaggregated data, qualitative gender analysis and consultation with women and men. On the basis of this information, policy, programme or project gender equality objectives are set, backed up with budgeted action and indicators to address gender gaps and to meet needs specific to women and girls (or men and boys).

#### **b) Gender mainstreaming in the post 2015 framework**

Table 1 sets out examples of gender inequalities across sectoral areas contained in the current MDG framework, and in areas that have been proposed for the new framework.

**Table 1: Examples of gender inequalities across sectoral areas**

Sectors	Examples of gender inequalities
<b>Food Security (MDG1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to land and other productive assets</li> <li>• Unequal division of household labour</li> </ul>
<b>Employment (MDG1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to paid work</li> <li>• Gender difference in the impact of economic downturns</li> <li>• Pay discrimination</li> <li>• Unpaid care burden</li> </ul>
<b>Education (MDG2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to education</li> <li>• Gender difference in the quality of education, and in education outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Child mortality (MDG 4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to healthcare</li> <li>• Mothers' unequal access to paid employment and education</li> </ul>
<b>HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to healthcare</li> <li>• Unequal burden of care for those living with HIV</li> <li>• Unequal negotiating power in relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental sustainability (MDG 7)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to water and energy leading to time poverty</li> <li>• Greater vulnerability to natural disasters</li> <li>• Greater vulnerability to economic risk</li> </ul>
<b>Governance*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited voice in community-level decision-making</li> <li>• Lack of voice in local and national politics</li> <li>• Unequal access to governance institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Urbanisation and Migration*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to formal and secure urban employment</li> <li>• Unequal access to the benefits of city living (including employment, freedom of movement, education, recreation, essential services)</li> </ul>
<b>Peace and Security*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to peace negotiations and post-conflict recovery processes</li> <li>• Increased violence against women and girls</li> <li>• Unequal access to justice</li> </ul>
<b>Investment (foreign and domestic)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal access to economic decision-making processes</li> </ul>

\*Potential new priority areas for the post-2015 framework<sup>115</sup>

Gender mainstreaming across the post MDG international framework will require targets and indicators under each goal that specifically address gender equality and girls' and women's rights. The way that gender is addressed in these targets and indicators will also need to be sufficiently transformative (see section 5.1).

It may also be necessary to prioritise targets that reflect the particular barriers that women face. For example, in the current MDG framework a target was included under MDG1 to ‘achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.’<sup>116</sup> This was important given the specific gendered barriers that women face, such as sexual harassment in the workplace, pay discrimination, the unpaid care burden, constraints on female mobility in the public sphere and gendered barriers to career progression, in accessing decent work.

Additionally, all monitoring data and indicators should be broken down by sex to ensure that gender disparities are visible and not hidden behind averages.

### **c) What is needed to make gender mainstreaming work?**

There is extensive experience of gender mainstreaming in organisations, which can inform the structure and content of the post MDG framework. (See Box 5)

#### **Box 5: GADN research on getting the most from gender mainstreaming<sup>117</sup>**

In research based on nine case studies of gender mainstreaming in the UK-based headquarters of international NGOs, and fifteen years of experience, GADN has concluded that focusing on projects to support girls’ and women’s empowerment *and* organisational gender mainstreaming are essential to the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality. Either without the other is less effective.

One of the clear lessons GADN uncovered is that organisations need an engine to continually drive gender mainstreaming; otherwise, policy commitments to gender equality evaporate. In an organisation, this necessitates strong leadership from management and/or gender staff spearheading and supporting change. Critical factors for the success of gender mainstreaming are:

- Sound leadership and commitment to furthering women and girls’ rights and gender equality goals within organisations and with partners and donors
- Dedicated “gender advocates” spearheading, supporting and holding management to account

Resources and support to:

- Establish effective systems and processes for gender analysis, gender planning, and consultation with women and girls
- Build staff knowledge, skills and confidence to put policy commitments into practice by the implementation of the systems and processes mentioned above
- Monitor change and hold organisations and donors to account

This experience of gender mainstreaming demonstrates that dedicated resources, targets, commitment, leadership, visibility and expertise are required to spearhead, support and sustain gender mainstreaming efforts. Progress has resulted from long

term processes of organisational influencing which have required time, resources, skill and persistence.<sup>118</sup>

Policy commitments to gender equality implemented through mainstreaming have a tendency to “evaporate” in the processes of planning, consultation, budgeting, implementation and monitoring. The causes of this evaporation include: inconsistent senior management support; poor understanding of gender amongst staff as a whole; a lack of systems, procedures and resources; a lack of accountability mechanisms; and work being highly dependent on a few committed individuals. The “enabling environment” of the organisation – expressed through its leadership, organisational culture, capacity, resources and accountability mechanisms – has been found to be critical to the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in the organisation’s policies, programmes and projects.<sup>119</sup>

In the context of an international policy framework, these findings point to the need for political leadership, resources, and technical expertise. Experiences of ‘policy evaporation’ are likely to be replicated unless simultaneous and complementary efforts are made to influence the international, national and local ‘enabling environment’. This means paying attention to political commitment and leadership, to the voice and influence of women and gender equality advocates on political and development decision-making, and to effective accountability mechanisms at all levels.<sup>120</sup> In the context of an international framework these conditions are more likely to be achieved where there is a standalone goal and dedicated targets on gender equality and women’s empowerment (see section 3.5(b)).

### **3.5 Why do we need a standalone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment?**

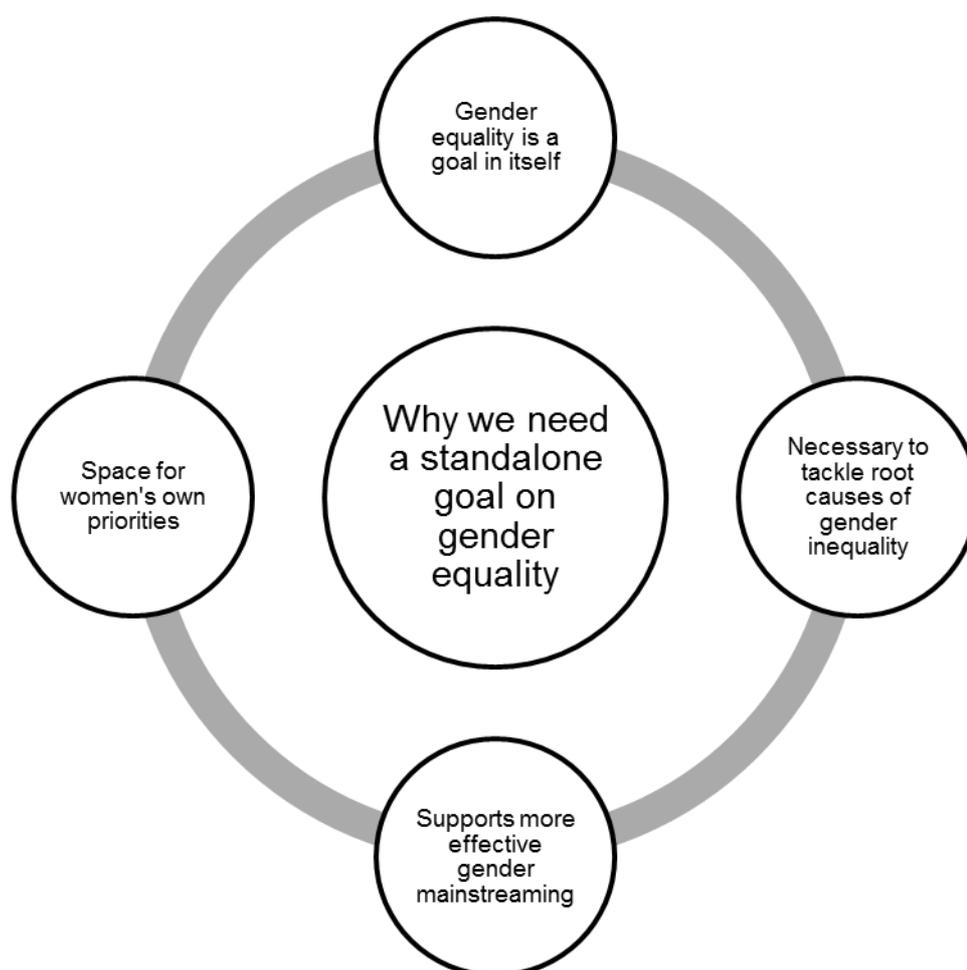
*‘Above all, mainstreaming gender is a necessary but not a sufficient strategy to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Specific measures for women’s empowerment need to be reintroduced, financed and placed centre stage to build ownership of the development process by all stakeholders.’* OECD, 2007<sup>121</sup>

A standalone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the new post 2015 framework is essential to *complement* mainstreaming gender equality in the indicators and targets of all development goals and to provide the leadership and visibility necessary for effective implementation. The sections below examine the four main arguments in support of the inclusion of a goal on gender equality (see Figure 6):

- Gender equality is a goal in itself, requiring specific political commitment and dedicated resources.
- A dedicated goal will allow for targets which tackle the root causes of gender inequality, cutting across all areas of development.

- Mainstreaming efforts to promote gender equality across a framework are far more likely to succeed if complemented by the leadership, resources, commitment and expertise that a standalone goal can bring.
- A gender goal creates space for issues that are specific to women and girls, or of a higher priority for girls and women than for boys and men.

**Figure 6: Why a standalone goal on gender equality is vital**



#### **a) Gender equality and women's empowerment is a goal in its own right**

The inclusion of a gender equality and women's empowerment goal would be a clear statement of the commitment of the international community to women's and girls' human rights and the intrinsic value of gender equality, which could be lost under a mainstreamed approach. As outlined in section 2.1, the inclusion of MDG3 in the current MDG framework was a powerful statement that addressing gender inequality was a core dimension of poverty eradication. A standalone goal also allows for targets and indicators specifically on the achievement of gender equality or empowerment as well as providing space for the tools for achieving gender equality such as disaggregation of all data by sex.

Any new framework that failed to include gender as a distinct goal would be a significant back-track on previous commitments. This would seem particularly unfortunate given that changing discourse, increased analysis and research, and the collection of gender-related data has shed new light on the crucial impact of gender inequality on development since the introduction of the MDGs.<sup>122</sup>

### b) Supporting Gender Mainstreaming

One of the strongest arguments for a specific focus on gender is the degree to which it will support more effective gender mainstreaming (see Box 5). Our argument is, in part, that a standalone goal provides the perfect complement to mainstreaming, bringing with it many of the needed inputs to ensure gender mainstreaming commitments are implemented effectively.

**Figure 7: Why a standalone goal is necessary for effective mainstreaming**



#### Political mandate

Progress towards gender equality and women’s rights is both a technical and a political process which requires a strong legal and political mandate and strong leadership.<sup>123</sup> A standalone goal on gender equality would provide and facilitate this. As discussed earlier in section 2.1, MDG3 has helped to focus attention on gender equality and has led to increased political will and funding. In the OECD survey of DAC members in 2006, the MDGs were seen as a valuable framework for promoting gender equality and making gender mainstreaming easier.<sup>124</sup>

#### Adequate resources

Where gender is viewed only as a cross-cutting issue it typically receives less funding than sector-specific issues.<sup>125</sup> A standalone goal on gender equality ensures that resources for gender are not lost within funding for other sector-specific issues and

also highlights that gender equality should be seen as a core investment in its own right with a distinct budget stream. Section 2.1 details some positive advances in recent years seen, at least in part, to be a result of MDG3, with new budget lines or gender equality-specific funds created in several donor agencies, including the Dutch MDG3 Fund, SIDA's Global Program for Gender Equality and the UNIFEM Fund for Gender Equality supported by the Spanish Government.<sup>126</sup>

### **Clear lines of responsibility**

The authors of the UN Millennium Project task force report clearly state the problem: *'Because cross-cutting issues are supposed to be everyone's business, they tend to become no one's responsibility.'*<sup>127</sup> This can lead to a lack of internal responsibility and resources, an absence of mechanisms for accountability, as well as resistance within organisational culture.<sup>128</sup> Clear lines of responsibility are much easier to identify under a standalone goal.

### **Technical expertise and analysis**

Dedicated space is needed for innovation and the development of new approaches and knowledge, and to refine and consolidate existing work. This will ensure that concepts relating to gender equality and gender relations are given the required attention, and lead to realistic expectations and stable progress.<sup>129</sup>

### **Accountability**

There is a strong danger that governments focus only on the main goals in their accountability frameworks. In 2005, the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy reviewed 78 available MDG national reports. They observed a tendency to report on only the minimum set of indicators; moreover, despite the fact that targets and indicators overlap across goals, the approach to reporting made these cross-linkages invisible.<sup>130</sup> If there is no gender goal post-2015 (and therefore no distinct accountability framework) the focus on gender is likely to evaporate. A standalone goal on gender also provides a key advocacy lever for civil society to hold their national governments to account.

### **c) Tackling root causes of gender equality**

Section 5.1 outlines the need for targets that are transformative. In the context of an international framework with a limited number of targets, a standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment is necessary to provide the space for such targets. Without it there is a real danger that gender-related targets are just an instrument to achieve other goals.

A dedicated goal provides space for targets that create an 'enabling environment.' Opportunities may be created under other goals, such as education, employment or health, but women must be able to make use of these reforms, free from structural barriers. Women's political influence in national and local government decision making is often cited as one example.<sup>131</sup> Others include: *"anti-discrimination and gender-based*

violence legislation, gender-aware justice systems and adequately resourced government machineries mandated to improve gender inequality.”<sup>132</sup>

#### d) Space for women’s and girls’ priorities

A separate gender goal creates important space for issues that may be of particular priority for women and girls, but are not on the mainstream agendas. While it is important not to ghettoise ‘women’s issues’, without a dedicated space in international decision-making women’s priorities are often lost.

The issue of gender based violence provides a good example. The failure to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been widely acknowledged as a gap in the current MDG framework,<sup>133</sup> considered to be due partly to a lack of understanding of the impact of the issue and partly to a perceived lack of data (which is now being addressed). Without a standalone goal, this omission is likely to occur again and yet it is the issue that many women’s organisations and networks prioritise (see Section 4.2).

**Table 2: The impact of violence against women and girls across the development agenda**<sup>134</sup>

Development Agenda	Impact of VAWG
<b>Education</b>	Violence against girls in schools leads directly to lowered enrolment rates, poor performance, absenteeism and high drop-out rates for girls.
<b>Maternal / Child Health</b>	Women and girls forced into pregnancy; targeted for abuse once they become pregnant or for not producing boys; women who experience violence are less likely to access natal care.
<b>Employment</b>	Sexual harassment in the workplace and the informal sector impacts women’s economic empowerment.
<b>HIV and AIDS</b>	VAWG is a key cause of women’s vulnerability to HIV (lack of control over decisions in relation to their own body); VAWG is also a consequence of HIV as women become easy targets.
<b>Peace and Security</b>	VAWG is a deliberate tactic of war; perpetrators act with impunity; VAWG is not seen as a security issue.
<b>Governance</b>	VAWG can increase as women move into public and political life.

As a cross-cutting issue, VAWG has a substantial impact on women’s capacity to engage in economic, social and political life and does not fit neatly into any single sector (see Table 2 above). Yet without a standalone goal it is likely to be a low priority issue under each goal – with no dedicated target.

There have been some suggestions that gender based violence should be put under a peace and security goal or domain.<sup>135</sup> However, this interpretation would fail to recognise the impact that violence against women and girls has across the spectrum of development interventions.

## Part Four: What a gender goal might look like

We have outlined above the need for a goal which aims to promote both gender equality and women's empowerment. We also support the principle that such a goal should be universally applicable to all countries. Our suggestion, however, is that additional resources should clearly be focused on the poorest and most marginalised women and girls.

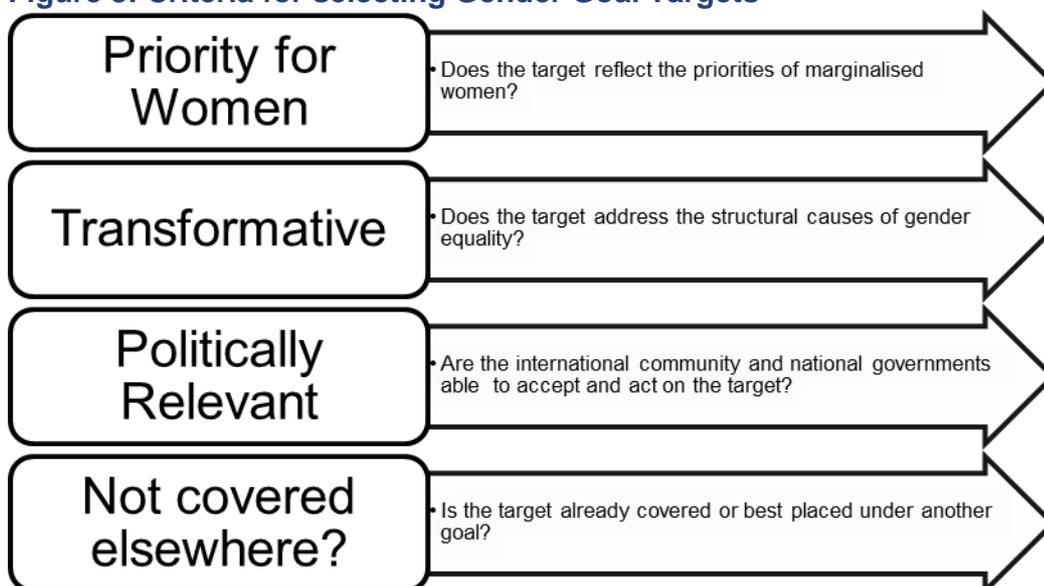
An overall goal of gender equality and women's empowerment is an ambitious one, and needs clear and specific targets if it is to be successful. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has noted that to be effective a goal on gender equality must include a much wider set of indicators and targets than the current MDG3.<sup>136</sup> The need for a broader approach has further been recognised by a wide range of experts.<sup>137</sup>

In this section we consider what the criteria for choosing these targets might be, and explore some options as illustrations of their feasibility. Our aim is to stimulate further discussion and debate and we make no claims to represent views beyond the scope of our network. As we expand in Section 6.1, consultation with organisations working with women and girls in the Global South is crucial and must inform the development of targets and indicators in any new framework.

### 4.1 Possible criteria for selecting targets

As a starting point, we have identified four possible criteria which may assist in the selection of targets and indicators under a gender equality goal (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Criteria for selecting Gender Goal Targets**



### **a) A priority for women?**

Targets and indicators must reflect the priorities of the poorest women and girls. The Millennium Project Taskforce on Education and Gender Equality proposed that the priorities of three groups of women require special attention – poor women in the poorest countries, adolescents, and women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.<sup>138</sup>

Asking all women and girls what their priorities are is clearly not realistic. However, women's organisations are key channels through which the priorities of women are articulated and can provide informed guidance on the issues which will make a difference in the lives of the most marginalised women and girls. There have been a number of useful studies which provide good indicators of global priorities, which we return to in Section 4.2.

For a priority area to be effective there also needs to be absorptive capacity so that newly increased flows of funds can be spent effectively. That issues are already being prioritised by organisations promoting the rights of women and girls at the regional, national and international levels indicates a capacity for organisations to continue to work on these issues should they be included in the new framework.

### **b) Transformative?**

The targets chosen under a gender goal need to reflect a lasting change in the power and choices women have over their own lives, beyond a temporary increase in opportunities. Some interventions are seen by women as key to unlocking other opportunities, such as being free from violence, choosing when and whether to have children, and a reduction in the burden of unpaid labour. These are sometimes referred to as the freedoms from which other freedoms flow. Part 5 considers the importance of transformative changes in more detail.

Targets should be proposed which recognise that:

- Numerical parity (for example in education or paid employment) is not sufficient to achieve gender equality or women's rights, and that temporary special measures favouring women and girls are needed to address centuries of discrimination and oppression.
- The absence of laws explicitly discriminating against women is not enough and policy reforms are needed to actively promote the empowerment of women and girls.
- Equality has to extend to the household as well as the 'public sphere'
- There is an intersection between gender and other forms of disadvantage such as race, class, ethnicity and sexuality.<sup>139</sup>

So, for example, targets around women's empowerment need to go beyond the counting of women in employment to consider the quality of jobs and whether or not

women can control how their income is used. Targets on women's share of seats in parliament or other decision making bodies need to identify whether women actually have an influence on outcomes.<sup>140</sup>

### **c) Politically Relevant?**

It is important that targets on gender equality are ambitious yet politically relevant for the post 2015 structure. They need to be on areas that can work within an international framework, and where governments are able and willing to adapt targets to their national context.

International consensus in many areas already exists and provides an obvious starting point. As UNIFEM points out: "Comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the ways in which gender inequality operates in every dimension of women's lives has already been generated through CEDAW and Beijing, and can be used to inform the development of the post-2015 framework."<sup>141</sup>

International human rights instruments, in particular the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), provide guidance as to existing obligations in relation to gender equality which have been signed up to by member states. Other frameworks such as UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889; Commitments in the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit; the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action and Doha Declaration; and the ILO Conventions on working women's rights also indicate consensus that has been reached at the international level.

An examination of countries' approaches to the current MDG framework also provides guidance on those gender equality issues that countries view as important. For example, although there is no VAW indicator attached to MDG3, some countries have chosen to address this issue in national reports. A 2005 review revealed 22 out of 78 national reports addressed violence against women as one of the issues under MDG3.<sup>142</sup> Cambodia, in adapting the MDGs to the national context, also introduced an additional indicator on VAW to MDG3.<sup>143</sup>

### **d) Not already addressed under other goals?**

It is important that targets under the gender goal are not best placed in other sectoral areas and that overlap is avoided. For example, the current MDG framework has been criticised for the overlap on targets on education between MDG 2 and MDG3. While this may have helped with progress in the area of education parity, it meant other gender targets were not given priority. There is space for only a few targets, and priority should be given to those not replicated elsewhere.

Of course, the way gender is addressed elsewhere needs to be sufficiently transformative, by improving the mainstreamed targets and indicators. For example, reproductive health and rights may be already covered under another goal, but if the

indicators refer only to narrow interventions around maternal health then more may be needed (see section 5.2). There is also an argument for putting broad cross-cutting issues under the gender goal rather than under another goal to ensure that they are dealt with in all their facets.

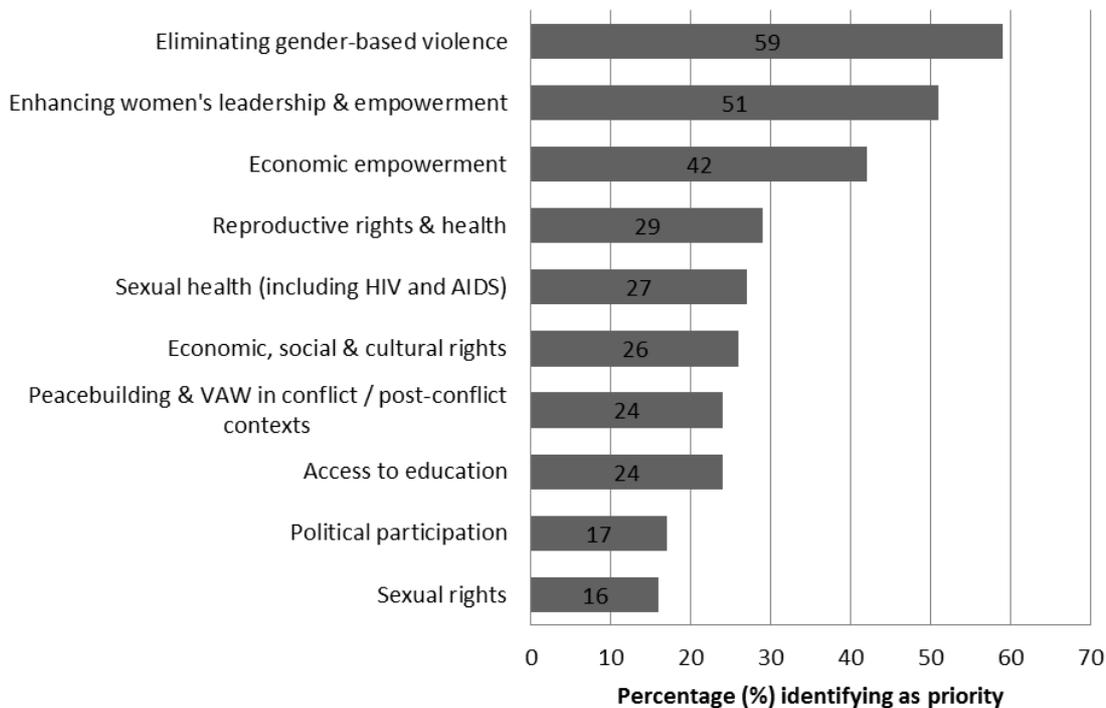
## 4.2 Identifying some priority issues

*'Some issues that we consider essential are indicators that reflect the right of women to live without violence, the advances in sexual and reproductive rights, indicators to measure progress in economic, social and cultural, and environmental rights and the rights of indigenous women such as access to land, water and control over their resources.'* Centre for the Studies of Women in Tegucigalpa, Honduras<sup>144</sup>

Research has already been undertaken by a number of organisations to identify what priority issues might look like. We should note that, in some instances, the priorities will reflect what issues are *not* already being covered elsewhere. It may be that, for example, education is seen as crucial but that donors and mainstream organisations are already providing programme funding on this issue. Education may therefore not be identified as a priority by women's organisations because they are concerned with focusing on the gaps – the gender equality issues which are not receiving adequate attention. In addition, some of the priorities identified below could be covered as targets under other goals.

Probably the most comprehensive research on issues that are prioritised by women's organisations is the 2011 AWID Global Survey, which was completed by 1,119 women's organisations from over 140 countries. The top ten priorities identified by the majority of women's organisations can be seen in Figure 9.<sup>145</sup>

**Figure 9: Priorities identified by women’s organisations in AWID Survey (2011)**



The focus areas selected by UN Women also shed light on issues which have been identified as fundamental to women’s equality with men. To inform the preparation of UN Women’s first Strategic Plan, over 3,700 partners (organisations and individuals) from Government, civil society, academia and the UN system were consulted. As part of these consultations, the potential thematic priorities of UN Women, in light of the priorities of partners, were explored. Support for women’s economic empowerment, women’s role in decision-making, and the elimination of violence against women and girls was expressed in the majority of consultations. In addition, participants indicated UN Women should have a role in addressing the gender dimensions of access to justice, HIV and AIDS, education, the environment and health, including sexual and reproductive health and in particular maternal health.<sup>146</sup>

#### UN Women Thematic Focus Areas

- Ending violence against women
- Women’s leadership and participation
- Women’s economic empowerment
- Peace and security
- National planning and budgets

The MDG Task force on education and gender equality identified seven critical priorities for gender equality as ‘the minimum necessary to empower women and alter the historical legacy of female disadvantage.’<sup>147</sup>

### **MDG Task Force seven strategic priorities**

1. Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while meeting commitments to universal primary education.
2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.
3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens.
4. Guarantee women’s and girls’ property and inheritance rights.
5. Eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women’s reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings, and reducing occupational segregation.
6. Increase women’s share of seats in national parliaments and local government bodies.
7. Combat violence against girls and women.

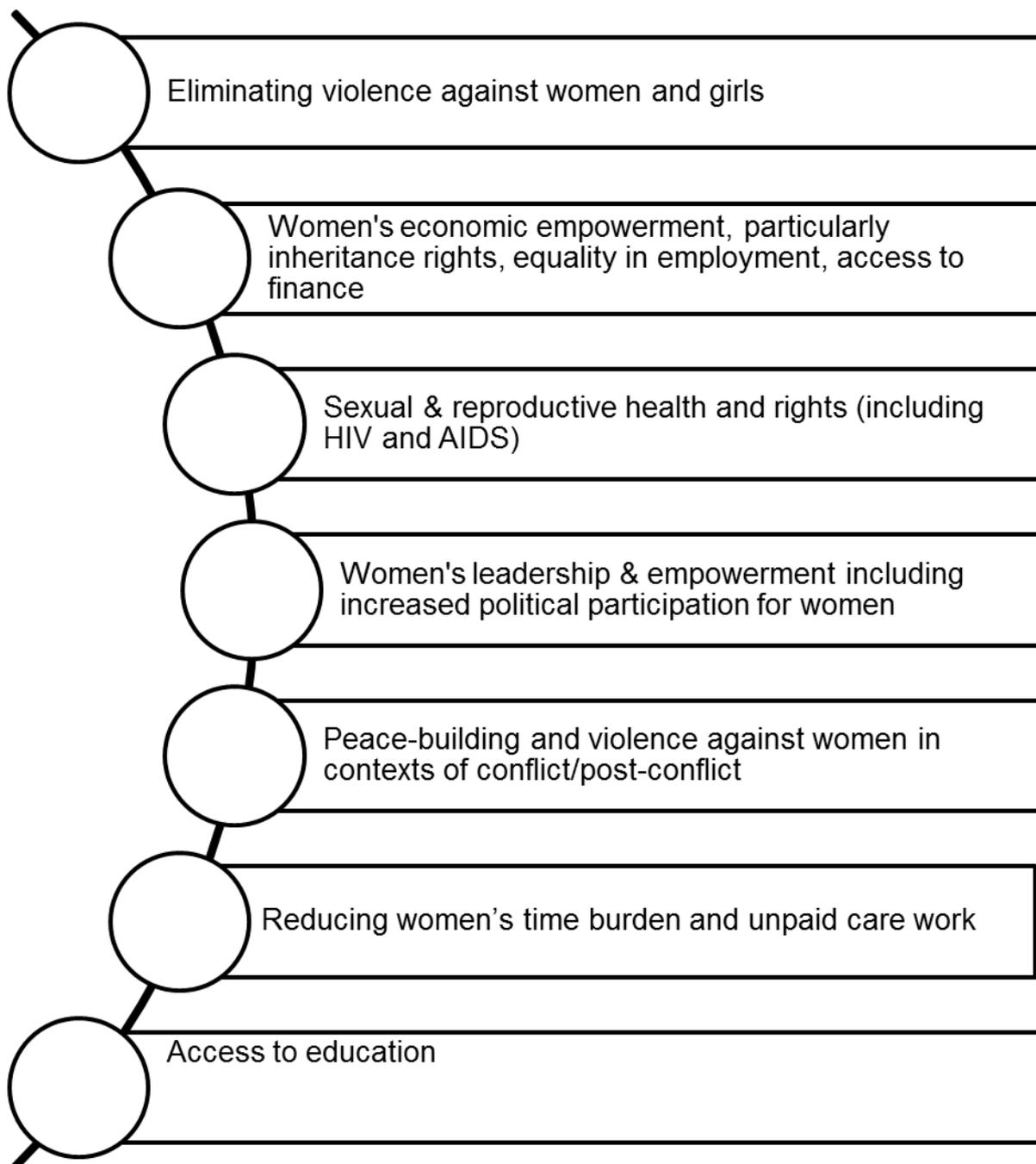
In a UNECA survey of 112 stakeholders from government, civil society organisations, research institutions and academia from 32 African countries, respondents reported that indicators of gender equality must include representation in local government as well as issues of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual division of labour, access to finance and early marriage.<sup>148</sup> The Communiqué from the Africa Women’s Regional Civil Society Consultation on the Post 2015 Development Framework 2012 lists primary education; health and violence, property rights; women’s economic empowerment and peace and security as core priorities.<sup>149</sup> A recent consultation in Bangkok on women’s rights particularly mentions workers’ rights, conflict situations, SRHR and political reforms.<sup>150</sup>

GADN is made up of 40 member organisations, and 30 academics and consultants based in the UK. An analysis of the women’s rights issues which GADN organisations are currently working on provides guidance on what have been identified as priority issues by our members and their partner organisations. The issues are set out below in no particular order.

### **GADN Members Focus Areas**

- Ending violence against women
- Women’s empowerment
- Sexual rights and reproductive health
- Women, peace and security
- Unpaid care work
- Women’s economic empowerment
- Early and Forced marriage
- Access to education
- Female Genital Mutilation/cutting

Taking an overview of the research discussed in this section, some issues stand out (listed below in no particular order). It should be stressed that this list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive but is a snapshot of the priorities of some groups. We stress the need for further consultation (see section 6.1).



Ending violence against women, women's leadership and women's economic empowerment were identified as priority issues by the largest proportion of women's organisations in the AWID survey and have also been selected as thematic priority issues by UN Women. These issues are also given high priority by the MDG Task Force and among GADN members and their partners. However, violence against women is missing from the current MDG framework and economic empowerment is only narrowly defined, with nothing on guaranteeing women's inheritance and property rights. Both these issues have been identified by the UNDP as 'essential to making progress on MDG3, as well as on the other MDGs, and inadequate attention to both continues to cripple overall efforts.'<sup>151</sup>

### **4.3 What might gender goal targets look like**

This section is for illustrative purposes only and is not a concrete proposal. The need for deeper consultation is outlined in section 6.1 below. The following table is intended to demonstrate the use of our suggested criteria. We have included some possible areas for targets to demonstrate the need for and feasibility of a set of gender focused targets within a standalone goal. We have focused on three priorities which our analysis has demonstrated are broad themes that women's organisations currently prioritise: gender based violence, economic empowerment and women's leadership and political participation. The suggestions are by no means comprehensive but provide a snapshot as a starting point for discussion.

**Table 3: Gender goal target areas**

Issue	A priority for women?	Transformative?	Politically Feasible?	Possible areas for targets
<b>Violence against Women</b>	Yes – identified as a priority by surveys of women’s organisations, GADN members and their partners, and by UN Women.	Violence against women is a means of social control which reinforces unequal power relations between women and men and actively denies women control over their lives and equal access to decision making and resources in society.	<i>Existing International obligations:</i> * General CEDAW Committee Recommendations 12 & 1 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) * Beijing Platform for Action (1995) one of the twelve critical areas of concern. * Security Council Resolution 1325, and associated resolutions.	* Reduce prevalence of VAWG * Improve access to services * Change attitudes to VAWG
<b>Women’s economic empowerment</b>	Yes – identified as a priority in surveys of women’s organisations, GADN members and their partners, and by UN Women.	Economic empowerment through increasing women’s access to economic resources and opportunities including decent work is fundamental in enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society.	<i>Existing International obligations:</i> * CEDAW, article 11, specifies equal rights in employment including equal pay and healthy working conditions as well as a right to maternity leave. * CEDAW, article 16, specifies equal rights of both spouses in the ownership and management of property. * Beijing Platform for Action (1995) one of the twelve critical areas of concern.	* Remove wage disparities * Increase access to training * Increase women’s control over their earnings
<b>Women’s leadership and empowerment</b>	Yes – identified as a priority in surveys of women’s organisations, GADN members and their partners, and by UN Women.	Equal decision making power and meaningful participation of women in social, political and economic structures is crucial to ensure the priorities, skills and needs of women are reflected in laws, institutions, service delivery and public attitudes and is essential for transparent and accountable government.	<i>Existing International obligations:</i> * The Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995 set a target of a minimum of 30 percent of women in representative assemblies. * MDG3 Indicator on political participation. * Beijing Platform for Action (one of the twelve critical areas of concern). * CEDAW article 7 (political and public life) and article 8 (participation in international organisations/decision making); General Recommendation No.23 (1997)	* Increase women’s share of seats, and influence of decision making in local and national government and decision making bodies * Increased influence for women over household decisions

# Part Five: Improving targets, indicators and data under all goals

## 5.1 The need for transformative targets on gender across all goals

A number of commentators have pointed to the need for more focus on social transformation in the post-MDG framework, with goals that go beyond the amelioration of poverty to remove its causes.<sup>152</sup> Nowhere is this more needed than in the area of gender equality, which must go hand in hand with the promotion of women's empowerment and rights if changes are to be deep and lasting.

Given the existing discourse among some donors, there remains a danger that targets within a new international framework focus primarily on the impact of gender inequality in achieving other development goals, or that they will deal only with the symptoms of inequality, focusing on its impact rather than addressing its causes. Ensuring that women and girls benefit more equally from opportunities on offer is clearly important. However, to tackle gender inequality at its roots, more is required. There will need to be a shift in the power relations between women and men and an increase in women's and girls' ability make their own choices and control their own destinies.<sup>153</sup>

The authors of the Millennium Project Task Force emphasised the need to transform power relations. They argue that:

*“to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as are provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). And to exercise agency, women must live without the fear of coercion and violence.”<sup>154</sup>*

The need for transformative goals is supported by research carried out by the IDS Pathways to Women's Empowerment programme over five years to explore how positive change happens in women's lives. The overwhelming conclusion from the body of evidence is that addressing the structural constraints that women face is the most effective framework for women's empowerment in the long term.<sup>155</sup>

## 5.2 What might transformative targets look like?

Section 4.3 gives examples of possible areas for transformative targets under a gender goal. Below we look at what characteristics might be present in such targets across the framework. The changes that will have the most lasting impact are those that empower women and address the causes of inequality.

### **a) Providing voice and agency for marginalised women**

Part of the solution will be for women and girls to be supported to define for themselves what will transform their lives in the long term, and be given space to articulate this:

*“Promoting the ability of women to articulate their views in a meaningful way (voice) and to become the agents of their own empowerment (agency) is vital to overcome engrained sociocultural conditioning and the gendered division of labour in private and public spheres, whereby women and women’s interests are typically relegated an inferior and largely invisible status.” Jones et al 2010<sup>156</sup>*

### **b) Addressing root causes**

Transformative targets must reflect the changes needed to achieve gender equality and girls’ and women’s empowerment. So, for example, this could include measures to change laws so that women could own property, rather than just helping women to rent land. It could include more state responsibility for care of children or the elderly or a shift in responsibility from women to men, rather than just helping women carry out those duties. A general target on reduced maternal mortality is important, but providing women with the access to safe, effective and affordable contraception and abortion and skills in negotiating, for example, if and when to have children with their husbands may do more to get to the root of the problem.

One way of helping to identify which targets will be most transformative is the concept of women’s practical and strategic needs.<sup>157</sup> Practical gender interests are what women perceive to be their immediate needs such as access to food, water, shelter, and child care. Strategic gender interests are the longer-term changes needed to transform women’s status in society and end the existing unequal relationships between women and men. These are context specific, so women themselves should define what is strategic for them. UNESCO sees strategic gender interests as long-term, usually not material, and often related to structural changes in society regarding women’s status and equity. They include legislation for equal rights, reproductive choice, and increased participation in decision-making.<sup>158</sup>

Changes which meet women’s practical needs are vital, but may not be sufficient to achieve the required change in social relations and power that underpin gender inequality unless accompanied by a focus on strategic needs.<sup>159</sup> Access to land for agricultural production provides a good example. Women in the Global South do not currently have equal access to, control over, or ownership of land, compared to men, because of legal frameworks and customary practices that discriminate against them. Women’s lack of land is a practical problem, reducing their ability to feed themselves. It also has strategic consequences for their lives because land represents power and increases access to other rights such as political participation and freedom from violence.

### **c) The importance of social norms**

In setting targets it should be recognised that the barriers to women accessing their rights are not just legal or economic. Laws may have been reformed allowing women access to justice after rape, but social norms and values will have to be challenged so that the community will not shun a woman for reporting the crime, her family will support her, and that she, herself, will believe it is not her fault.<sup>160</sup> Women's traditional roles as carers also have a profound impact on all other areas of their lives, but are very difficult to legislate against.<sup>161</sup> The challenge, then, in these and other areas, may be to identify targets around changes in attitudes and behaviours and work out how to measure them.

Social and cultural practices can also act as barriers to women's empowerment, for example, the tradition of Female Genital Mutilation, which is practiced in many countries in Africa and the Middle East. Community and religious leaders and faith based organisations can play a key role in challenging the social norms that reinforce structural barriers to inequality. For example, COC Bless, the Coptic Orthodox Church's development arm in Egypt, has worked to successfully reduce the occurrence of female genital mutilation and child marriage in both Christian and Muslim communities in the country.<sup>162</sup> Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa has successfully involved men as well as women in its campaign against domestic violence.<sup>163</sup> INERELA+ is an international, interfaith network of over 7,000 faith leaders who have worked to reduce stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS and stimulate open and effective community based action on HIV prevention, care and treatment for those most vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. They consider that for prevention and treatment to be effective, it must be accompanied by women's empowerment.<sup>164</sup>

### **d) Addressing power relations within the household**

Transformative gender targets will need to take into account gender relations within the family and recognise that there may be conflicts within a household. For example, a target which focuses on women's ownership of land does not mean that women actually have control over this land or the income generated. In fact, power imbalances in the household and the community may mean that, despite owning the land on paper, the decision-making power over the land and its produce remains with the woman's husband or father. For example, in Mozambique, as in many other African countries, women may be forcibly removed from their land after a divorce or if their husbands die.<sup>165</sup>

In this way, if power imbalances are not identified and addressed, the positive impact on women and across development outcomes will be lost.

### 5.3 What might effective gender sensitive indicators look like?

As with targets, indicators under a standalone gender goal and integrated across the new framework must be developed in consultation with women’s organisations and could reflect the criteria outlined in Section 4.1 above. The experience of the MDGs has suggested that indicators alone are less likely to lead to action than those attached to a specific target on gender equality or women’s empowerment. For example, it is contended that of the four indicators for women’s empowerment, significant progress has been achieved only in the area of education, which is the only target for MDG3.<sup>166</sup>

Work has been undertaken to begin to develop gender sensitive indicators which build on the current MDGs framework and there are also existing obligations under international frameworks such as CEDAW and the BfPA which can provide guidance. Table 4 sets out some examples of potential indicators for illustrative purposes.

**Table 4: Examples of indicators across sectorial areas**

Sector	Example Indicators
<b>Child Mortality</b>	Under-five mortality rate for girls and boys. <sup>167</sup>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel. <sup>168</sup>  Hours per day (or year) women and men caring for children or the elderly.
<b>Property rights and assets</b>	Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held. <sup>169</sup> Percentage of women and men who hold a bank account with a financial institution.
<b>Employment</b>	Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type. <sup>170</sup>  Percentage of contributing family workers, by sex <sup>171</sup>  Ratio of female to male hourly earnings in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. <sup>172</sup>
<b>Governance and Decision-making</b>	Proportion of women’s organisations out of total participants in formal peace negotiations.  Proportion of women who participate in household decisions.
<b>Violence against women</b>	Share of women and men who believe a woman can refuse sex to her husband. <sup>173</sup>  Share of women and men who believe wife beating is acceptable. <sup>174</sup>
<b>Education</b>	The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. <sup>175</sup>
<b>Health</b>	Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied. <sup>176</sup>

It is important to remember when it comes to indicators that gender parity is not a sufficient measure of gender equality. Rather, indicators must map the quality of change. For example, women may hold the same number of jobs as men in the workplace but this does not mean they are paid the same nor does it mean that they have the same opportunities for promotion as men. It also does not measure the security of those jobs, which is particularly important given that women's paid employment is often more vulnerable than men's during an economic downturn.<sup>177</sup> Achieving women's empowerment will also require the development and use of indicators that can measure changes in social norms. This will be important, for example, in relation to traditional attitudes towards women's control over land, or entrenched gender roles around unpaid care. The OECD has done some work on this under the Social Institutions Gender Index.<sup>178</sup>

## 5.4 Data collection

The collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data must be central to the new framework. A lack of data limits the ability to accurately and fully measure progress and to make informed decisions about what works for women and girls in each national context. Importantly, under international human rights obligations such as CEDAW and the associated reporting requirements, states should already be systematically collecting data disaggregated on the basis of sex and on specific women's rights violations.<sup>179</sup> The post-2015 framework should reinforce these existing obligations.

Indicators must reflect women's priorities and not the availability of existing data. While targets and indicators must be measurable, it is important not to conflate data availability with measurability. If limited or no attempts have been made to collect data or to develop data collection methods, this should not rule out an indicator as immeasurable. Capacity for data collection may be weak because issues have not been prioritised. Power imbalances between men and women within households, communities and state institutions will shape data collection priorities and can lead to inequalities which cause women and their priorities to be systematically excluded from data collection.<sup>180</sup>

Data collection has also typically focused on the household level which overlooks the inequalities within the household unit such as control over resources and income and the distribution of household tasks. This has meant that intra-household data collection and analysis has received less prioritisation and investment and has therefore developed at a slower rate. There has also been a tendency for sex disaggregated data collection to be limited to specific sectors. For example, there has been limited collection of data relating to gender inequalities in the economic sphere. It is crucial that the post-2015 framework includes indicators that measure inequality at all levels – within the household, the economy and markets, and in society.

## Box 6: Best Practice from UNIFEM: Sex disaggregated data<sup>181</sup>

**Gender sensitive data collection methods:** Data must be collected in a way which is sensitive to the different roles, priorities and situations of men and women, including those from disadvantaged groups. Privacy, the gender of the enumerator, the time of day information is collected, and work and caring responsibilities of interviewees are all factors which may impact data collection.

**Using sex disaggregated data:** even when collected by sex, data is often not reported separately for males and females. It is important not only to collect but also to use the data, particularly for monitoring purposes.

**Sex-disaggregated data at more detailed levels:** The breakdown of data by sex must extend beyond totals and must include detailed levels of analysis across equality strands and at multiple levels (such as within the household unit). For example, it is not enough to collect information on the total numbers of men and women in the police force. Sex disaggregated analysis should also consider grade classifications, retention and promotion rates and other inequalities such as women and men in minority groups.

**Sex disaggregated data benefits everyone:** Disaggregating data by sex may also reveal the specific needs of men and boys. For example, sex disaggregated data on education outcomes revealed lower attendance rates among boys in some countries such as Mongolia, the Philippines and Lesotho.

It is also important to recognise that since the introduction of the MDGs, research has developed and there is now increased expertise and methodologies for collecting data on women's rights issues. These advances mean that data or data collection methodologies may now be available (or emerging) for issues previously considered immeasurable. For example, there has been reluctance to include violence against women as a target due to data limitations. However, research methods have been developing to enable sensitive and ethically-focused data collection on VAW. In many countries, representative sample surveys have now been carried out on VAW. The methods used by the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence have gained acceptance<sup>182</sup> and research guidelines and ethical standards on collecting data on VAW have been developed.<sup>183</sup> Work on the development of indicators was also undertaken by a UN Expert Group in 2007 and by the UN Statistical Commission.<sup>184</sup>

There are also calls for women's unpaid care work to be measured so that it can be recognised and reduced.<sup>185</sup>

Most recently, the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative launched in March 2012 has demonstrated that data collection can be made more gender aware. EDGE, which is jointly managed by UN Women and the UN Statistics Division in collaboration with OECD and the World Bank, is working to build national capacity to

access and use gender statistics as well as to create standards and guidelines for the collection of data. During the first three year phase of this initiative, the focus will be on women's education, employment and entrepreneurship. A database will be developed for the compilation of data covering health, education and employment indicators and standards and guidelines for entrepreneurship and asset ownership indicators will be produced (see Table 5 below). Pilot data will then be collected in ten participating countries.<sup>186</sup> The results of methodological work will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission in 2015.

**Table 5: EDGE List of indicators<sup>187</sup>**

Domain	Indicators
<b>Health</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Life expectancy at age 60, by sex</li> <li>2. Adolescent fertility rate</li> <li>3. Under-five mortality rate by sex</li> </ol>
<b>Education</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education, by sex</li> <li>5. Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, by sex</li> <li>6. Gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education, by sex</li> <li>7. Share of tertiary education graduates in science, engineering, manufacturing and construction who are women</li> </ol>
<b>Employment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Labour force participation rates for 15-24 and 15+, by sex</li> <li>9. Percentage distribution of the employed population by sector, each sex</li> <li>10. Youth unemployment, by sex</li> <li>11. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</li> </ol>
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Percentage of firms owned by women</li> <li>13. Proportion of employed who are employer, by sex</li> <li>14. Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex</li> <li>15. Proportion of population with access to credit by sex</li> <li>16. Proportion of (adult) population who own land, by sex</li> </ol>
<b>Family-friendly policies</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Length of maternity leave (weeks)</li> </ol>

## Part Six: Listening to women's voices – the importance of consultation

*'The Post 2015 Agenda is a critical issue for African citizens and civil society organisations at every level and more so, for African women, youth and other marginalized groups. As a result, it is critical that women organisations across Africa ensure the Post 2015 consultations are driven, influenced and shaped by the voices and experiences of the millions of African citizens who often go unheard.'*<sup>188</sup> FEMNET, 2012

### 6.1 The importance of consulting women and girls

It is crucial that women and girls, and particularly those from the most marginalised and poorest communities, are able to input into the consultation process around the development of the post-2015 framework.

This consultation must occur at every level (local, regional and national) and must ensure that the channels for consultation take into account the specific needs of women to allow them to engage with debates both within their countries and within UN-level processes. The importance of consultation with women living in poverty and other marginalised groups should be formalised. For example, the UN High Level panel has been criticised for the failure of its terms of reference to acknowledge the role of diverse groups of people living in poverty, especially women, as critical stakeholders.<sup>189</sup>

At a very basic level, consultations must look beyond the household level. Households are not homogenous units and 'heads' of households cannot be considered to represent the views of all its members. This is true of any issue, but will be particularly true of issues central to gender equality such as gender based violence, reproductive rights and unpaid care. Some potentially influential consultation processes appear not to recognise the web of power relationships which occur within families and, as a result, have elicited the views of households rather than individuals. This will severely skew results, particularly on issues such as violence against women, and explains why findings may not be in line with the research done by AWID and others.

Women and girls are often excluded from participating in consultations because they do not have the time, resources or space to input in the ways that are required. Participation may be difficult due to childcare or household responsibilities. Women and girls may also be discouraged from participating by family members or their community. It may be deemed inappropriate for them to share their views or it may be assumed they share men's opinions. Particular attention is therefore needed to ensure that women's and girls' voices are heard. Women's organisations are an important channel for reaching the voices of traditionally marginalised groups of women including rural, indigenous, trafficked, and elderly women, women refugees, widows and ethnic minorities as are other organisations working on girls' and women's rights and gender

equality. Organisations working with men, youth, and religious communities and leaders on gender equality issues will also bring important perspectives.

Funding is crucial for women's organisations to give them the space to do advocacy and to articulate the needs and priorities of women and girls. In the current economic climate, many women's organisations are struggling due to increased competition for fewer and fewer grants. They tend to be smaller, with less capacity than larger mainstream organisations to speak the current donor language of results and value for money, and so lose out on funding. However, these organisations are often at the forefront of transformative work and extra efforts must be made to support them in their consultations with the women and girls with whom they work.

Not all women or women's organisations will prioritise inputting into a post-2015 framework given their limited resources but this should not mean their views are lost. Proxy indicators of priority can be found by looking at what these groups prioritise in their daily work, even if they do not directly relate this to the MDGs.

## 6.2 Monitoring and Implementation

Consideration of mechanisms for consultation should not be limited to the development of the post-2015 framework. It must also be considered how women will be involved in implementation of the new framework. What mechanisms or spaces will women and women's organisations be able to access to hold their governments to account, to contribute to reporting processes and to monitor progress? It is important that any formal mechanisms developed to coordinate implementation of the new framework also draw on the experiences of women whose voices are often absent from key decision-making positions within international institutions, donors and national governments. It is equally important that formal avenues for consultation with women and civil society are built into these implementation mechanisms.<sup>190</sup>

One useful tool is gender budgeting, which shows a gender breakdown of where public funds are spent. As the UNDP explains, "*Gender budgets provide increased transparency and accountability on the use of public funds, strengthen citizens' democratic rights and abilities to participate in budgetary processes and increase the power of women both as a group of political stakeholders and as beneficiaries.*"<sup>191</sup>

## 6.3 What are women's organisations doing?

Women's organisations are already collectively organising to bring their voices to the post-2015 debate. The Feminist Task Force is a participant on the Addressing Inequalities Consultation Advisory Group.<sup>192</sup> FEMNET has been working to sign-post consultation opportunities for women's organisations in Africa and to create space for collective input.<sup>193</sup> For example, FEMNET was part of the organisation of a consultation in Liberia from 21 to 22 October with African women's organisations on the Post-2015

Development Framework. There is also a global coalition of organisations promoting women's rights within the new framework.<sup>194</sup>

Key international events such as the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2014, which will focus on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of the MDGs for women and girls, will provide an important space for women in the post-2015 debate. However, it is crucial that consultation begins well before 2014.

## Part Seven: Recommendations

While the priorities and visions of women and girls around the world will differ, one clear message will surely emerge. The post-2015 framework will fail to meet the challenge of social transformation if it does not recognise the central importance of gender equality and girls and women's empowerment and the need for a specific focus to turn this into a reality. The post-2015 framework represents a vital opportunity to build on current momentum and ensure gender equality remains an international priority.

A standalone goal on gender equality, together with more effective mainstreaming of gender across the framework, is the approach most likely to address the structural inequalities which persist for women and girls and to foster the necessary political will, resources and national ownership to create sustainable and effective action on gender equality. As the Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality stated, "*The problem is not a lack of practical ways to address gender inequality but rather a lack of change on a large and deep enough scale to bring about a transformation in the way societies conceive of and organise men's and women's roles, responsibilities, and control over resources.*"<sup>195</sup> A twin track approach to gender equality is the best way to achieve real transformative change for the poorest and most marginalised women and girls.

### 1. A new post-2015 framework should:

- Focus on the most marginalised people in society, recognising that the majority of these people are women and girls.
- Reflect an understanding that women's poverty is, in part, a result of their socially enforced gender roles and relations and that, without specifically addressing the causes of gender inequality, women's poverty will persist.

### 2. Gender equality should be mainstreamed throughout the framework by:

- Agreeing specific targets under each goal that reflect the gender barriers women and girls face and attempt to tackle the structural causes
- Developing gender-sensitive indicators, based primarily on need rather than availability of data
- Providing incentives within targets and indicators to reach the poorest and most marginalised people in society, explicitly including women from socially excluded groups
- Ensuring all indicators are disaggregated by sex
- Substantially increasing the availability of data disaggregated by sex

### **3. There should be a standalone goal or domain on gender equality that:**

- Prioritises the poorest and most marginalised women and girls
- Reflects the priorities of these women themselves
- Meets their long term strategic interests by tackling the roots of gender inequality
- Provides politically feasible targets and indicators that will contribute towards the transformative goal
- Complements the other goals

### **4. Consultation and implementation mechanisms must:**

- Occur at every level (local, regional and national) including within the household.
- Provide dedicated space and resources to enable women's organisation to contribute.
- Draw on the experiences of women whose voices are often absent from key decision-making positions.

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