
**UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
INQUIRY SUBMISSION**

MARCH 2018

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND TRADE**

INTRODUCTION

“We envisage a ... world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.”¹

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015

International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) is the leading Australian agency entirely focussed on women’s rights and gender equality in the Asia Pacific region. We are international, feminist and independent. Our vision is gender equality for all and our purpose is to advance and protect the rights of diverse women and girls.

IWDA commends the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade for initiating this inquiry. It provides an important opportunity to increase public awareness and political will in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to highlight the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment as critical to achieving all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With the Australian Government submitting its voluntary national review (VNR) later this year, this is a crucial moment to reflect on Australia’s progress on the 2030 agenda, and most importantly, for the Australian Government to commit to accelerating action across the SDGs. This requires a national implementation plan to provide coherence and coordination across all levels of Government; dedicated resourcing (both human resources and financial investment), transformative measurement, and clear communication promoting the importance of the SDGs both within Government and with the wider public.

Given IWDA’s work focusses on gender equality and women’s rights; this is where our submission concentrates. It highlights the ways in which the Australian Government could strengthen its approach to the SDGs through a focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment across the SDGs.

This submission is structured as follows:

- 1) Gender equality and women’s empowerment as integral to progress across the SDGs (*responding to Terms of Reference (TOR) b, d, e and f*)
- 2) Understanding and awareness of the SDGs across the Australian government and in the wider Australian community (*responding to TOR a*)
- 3) Government structures and accountability mechanisms (*responding to TOR c & d*)
- 4) Resourcing SDGs implementation (*responding to TOR b & c*)
- 5) Addressing data gaps and measuring change at the individual level (*responding to TOR b & d*)
- 6) Summary of recommendations

Examples of best practice in how other countries are implementing the SDGs are integrated throughout this submission, including reference to the countries in which IWDA works in the Pacific and Asia (*responding to TOR g and h*).

1. GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AS INTEGRAL TO PROGRESS ACROSS THE SDGS

The United Nations SDGs clearly recognise the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment to achieving sustainable development. This is reflected in a standalone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (Goal 5) and in the recognition of gender dimensions in targets across other goals including those related to health, agriculture, education, climate change and economic inequality.

¹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), para 8, available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E

Gender equality is an enabler and accelerator for all the SDGs. The 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) Thematic Review of SDG 5 identified progress on gender equality as critical to delivering on all the SDGs.² Reporting also demonstrates that Goal 5 is a key priority across regions. In 2017, Goal 5 was the only Goal for which each regional forum on sustainable development crafted key messages for the HLPF.³

The Australian Government has shown a clear commitment to SDG 5 and to the importance of gender equality for sustainable development. For example, the 2016 Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy* commits the Australian Government to "support global efforts to give effect to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, particularly championing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 5..."⁴

In implementing this commitment, the Australian Government could strengthen its approach in the following ways:

- a) **Promote gender equality and women's empowerment as integral to progress across all of the SDGs:** A focus on gender equality and women's empowerment provides a key mechanism for moving away from a siloing of the goals towards an approach driven by values and cross-cutting priorities. The SDGs are interconnected and build on each other and focusing on key drivers, such as gender equality, is a means to ensure Australia's approach reflects this. Notably, the interdependence of the goals and the need for this to guide effective implementation was identified as a key priority at the HLPF in 2017.

As the Australian Government implements the SDGs, explicitly connecting targets across goals will provide the basis for effective action. For example, progress on the unpaid care target under Goal 5 is linked to progress across goals such as Goal 6 on universal access to clean water and sanitation and Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. Similarly, efforts towards peace, justice and strong institutions under Goal 16 must go hand-in-hand with the Goal 5 target to ensure women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making. We need to be deliberate about making these links and using the SDGs as an impetus to move away from working in silos.⁵

- b) **Connecting Australia's domestic and internationally focussed actions on gender equality and women's empowerment:** A focus on gender equality and women's empowerment also provides a pathway for connecting Australia's domestic and internationally focussed progress in relation to the SDGs, critical to the achievement of Goal 16. The articulation of three priorities in *DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* (enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building; promoting women's economic empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls) which are also a focus of Australia's gender equality work domestically, provide a mechanism to bridge the divide between a domestic and international focus.
- c) **Promoting the role of diverse women and women's rights organisations as leaders on the 2030 agenda:** The Australian Government has a role to play, domestically and through the Australia aid program, in promoting the role of diverse women and the importance of women's rights organisations and machineries for gender equality as agents for change. Consultation and cooperation with civil society has been identified as integral to implementing the SDGs, and this engagement must prioritise the voices and needs of diverse women and girls.⁶

However, not only must diverse women and women's rights organisations be consulted and engaged in the implementation of the SDGs; beyond this, they must be recognised and promoted as leaders on the 2030 agenda. Australia should also continue to invest in long-term programs to

² High Level Political Forum (HLPF) (2017) *Thematic review of SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14383SDG5format-revOD.pdf>, p.4 - 5

³ <http://sdq.iisd.org/commentary/policy-briefs/what-are-regional-priorities-for-hlpf-2017/>

⁴ DFAT (2016), *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, p.16, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/documents/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-strategy.pdf>

⁵ See recent report from UN Women (2018). *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* details the relevance for gender equality across all of the SDGs.

⁶ Report of the Secretary General (2015), *Women's Empowerment and the links to sustainable development*, E/CN.6/2016/3, 31 December 2015, para: 23, available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/3

address the under-representation of women in leadership and the barriers to women's full and effective participation, such as the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program.

- d) **Recognising the importance of investing in women's rights organisations and movements to accelerate progress on the SDGs:** Research shows clearly that strong, autonomous women's movements are essential to realising women's rights. For example, the World Bank's Voice and Agency research concluded that women's movements are crucial to build the necessary consensus for progressive policy and legal reform.⁷ The Australian Government also recognises that autonomous women's organisations and movements are a critical factor in changing discriminatory policy and legislation and progressing gender equality,⁸ and enabling approaches that are firmly rooted in local communities, contexts, needs and experiences.⁹

IWDA's work with partners across the Asia and Pacific region provides direct evidence of the importance of coalition building for change in contexts where women remain significantly under-represented in formal decision-making roles. In the Solomon Islands, networks of women were instrumental in seeing the Family Protection Bill passed in 2014 and implementation of this is a focus of the Solomon Islands Women's Forum established in 2016. In Fiji, the Fiji Young Women's Forum was a driving force behind youth policies being included in candidate platforms in the 2014 election. In Timor-Leste, networks of women were successful in seeing the Law against Human Trafficking passed in February 2017, a process which commenced in 2012 and required the engagement of a coalition of civil society actors.

One way to promote partnership with women's rights organisations would be to make working with such organisations a condition of funding. For example, international NGOs and private contractors implementing DFAT-funded programs related to gender equality and women's empowerment should be working with local women's organisations as part of building sustainable change. This expectation could be included in contract conditions and the level of engagement with, and support for, local women's rights organisations included in selection and monitoring processes.

Recommendation 1: The Australian Government continues commitment to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and championing of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Recommendation 2: The Australian Government promotes gender equality and women's empowerment as an enabler and accelerator across all of the SDGs, and adopts an approach to implementation driven by values and cross-cutting priorities.

Recommendation 3: The Australian Government's focus on gender equality and women's empowerment provides a pathway for connecting Australia's domestic and internationally focussed progress in relation to the SDGs.

Recommendation 4: The Australian Government has a role to play, domestically and through the Australia aid program, in promoting the role of diverse women and the importance of women's rights organisations and machineries for gender equality as agents for change.

Recommendation 5: The Australian Government should champion the importance of investing in women's rights organisations and movements to accelerate progress across the SDGs.

Recommendation 6: International NGOs and private contractors implementing DFAT-funded programs related to gender equality and women's empowerment should be working with local women's organisations and this should be incorporated into DFAT's contract conditions and selection and monitoring processes.

⁷ World Bank (2014) *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*, p.169

⁸ Australian Government *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*. See also World Bank Group. 2014. *Voice and Agency: empowering women and girls for shared prosperity. Chapter 6: Amplifying voices*

⁹ IWDA. 2018. *Global Goals: Women's Rights Organisations and Movements*, policy brief, available at: <https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/Supporting-Womens-rights-Organisations-and-Movements-March-2018.pdf>

2. THE UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE SDGS ACROSS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND IN THE WIDER AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

The success of the SDGs depends on collaboration and partnership across issues and against targets, with a shared vision for people, planet and prosperity. This must involve raising the public's awareness of and engagement with, the critical importance of SDG implementation as well as fostering new partnerships between government, private sector actors, academia and civil society both at home and through our international development and humanitarian program. Goal 17 provides a picture of the types of partnerships required to deliver the goals. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be at the heart of all of these efforts.

The core message of the SDGs aligns with established values of the Australian community such as cooperation, a fair go, and being a good neighbour. Gender equality was also identified as an Australian value in the Government's Foreign Policy White Paper in 2017.¹⁰ Communication of the SDGs to the Australian public should be aligned with these values and must be informed by human security narratives.

A public awareness campaign on the SDGs should form part of Australian state and federal government implementation to increase public engagement and commitment to the SDGs. Other countries have engaged in innovative ways to promote the SDGs including: specific SDGs websites (see, for example, Netherlands and Belgium)¹¹; a weekly radio program broadcast in Hindi on national radio in India that informs citizens about the SDGs and national SDGs media campaigns (such as that launched in Sudan in 2016).¹² Other innovative examples include the appointment of SDG Ambassadors such as Belgium's SDGs voices program¹³ and a SDGs train touring the country in Belarus to promote the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴

It is also important to communicate the SDGs within the Australian Government as an agenda which requires both domestic implementation as well as prioritisation as part of the Australian aid program. A clear reflection of this connection in Australia's voluntary national review reporting and a multi-stakeholder approach to how the VNR is delivered would reinforce this message.

Recommendation 7: Initiate a public awareness campaign on the SDGs as part of Australian state and federal government implementation in order to increase public engagement and commitment to the SDGs.

Recommendation 8: Communication of the SDGs should align with established values of the Australian community including gender equality and be informed by human security narratives.

Recommendation 9: The Government should support new partnerships between government, private sector actors, academia and civil society both at home and through our international development and humanitarian program.

Recommendation 10: The SDGs should be communicated within the Australian Government as an agenda, which requires both domestic implementation as well as prioritisation as part of the Australian aid program.

3. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

A whole-of-government approach and coordination across local, state and national jurisdictions is key to ensuring Australia meets both its national and international obligations under the SDGs. This approach must include a mechanism for coordination as well as resourcing to support this coordination function. The Australian Government could strengthen its coordination and policy coherence in the following ways.

- a) **National implementation plan:** We support the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID's) proposal for a national implementation plan.¹⁵ A national action plan should include shorter-term targets as stepping stones to enable consistent progress towards the

¹⁰ Australian Government (2017), *Foreign Policy White Paper*, p.2.

¹¹ <http://www.sdgnederland.nl/>; <https://www.sdgs.be/fr>

¹² <http://www.sd.ndp.org/content/sudan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/08/20/sudan-launches-national-sdgs-media-campaign.html>

¹³ <https://www.sdgs.be/nl/sdg-voices>

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/10/express-for-sdgs-train-departs-on-tour-through-belarus/>

¹⁵ See ACFID submission to this Inquiry.

2030 deadline, supported by specific financial commitments. Concrete plans for implementation are key to translating policy commitments into action and ensuring the Government will have progress to report. A national plan should also include concrete strategies to support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in design, delivery and reporting on services and programs.

Other countries have seen the value in introducing a national plan. For example, in Germany, the 2016 revision of the government-wide "German National Sustainable Development Strategy", adopted in January 2017, sets out concrete implementation measures for the 17 SDGs. The strategy contains indicators for continuous monitoring and every two years the federal statistical office will publish an indicator report. The strategy itself is updated every four years.¹⁶ Denmark has developed an action plan for follow-up on the SDGs with 37 targets across five areas – prosperity, people, planet, peace and partnerships.¹⁷

b) Engagement with civil society expertise: Engagement with civil society is also integral to implementing the SDGs, and the Australian Government must clearly articulate and formalise a mechanism for this engagement. In this respect, IWDA supports ACFID's call for a **multi-sectoral reference group** to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee comprised of members from civil society, academia and the private sector. This group should have both a domestic and an international program focus, to enable ongoing consultation and shared expertise. Given the cross-cutting and integral nature of gender equality to achieving the SDGs, the terms of reference for this group should require the following:

- Gender balance in membership
- Gender expertise reflected among members
- A co-chair model which reflects gender balance
- Crosscutting issues, including gender equality and women's empowerment, as a standing agenda item.

As an alternative to the multi-sectoral reference group, IWDA has previously proposed an SDGs **Women's Rights and Gender Equality Advisory Group**. The objective of this Advisory Group would be to inform Australia's thinking and policies on gender equality and women's empowerment as integral to the 2030 Agenda and to provide expert opinion and advice to the Interdepartmental Committee. Based on analysis of similar advisory groups which have been established to provide information and external advice on policy and practice, IWDA recommends the Advisory group consists of approximately ten gender equality experts drawn from across the private sector, academia, and civil society representatives with both a domestic and an international program focus. This Advisory Group could be coordinated by the Secretariat (see below).¹⁸

c) Multi-sectoral secretariat to coordinate action on the SDGs: It is important that cross-government coordination is resourced, both in terms of human and financial resources. To this end, we recommend that the Government continues to fund a multi-sectoral secretariat to coordinate action on the SDGs and input into government processes beyond the Voluntary National Review (VNR). This secretariat will enable coordination of the SDGs across federal, state and local governments as well as providing a hub for facilitating engagement with civil society organisations, business and academia. It would also provide a mechanism for coordinating with other cross-government mechanisms such as the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) on Women, Peace and Security. This approach could maximise collaboration, reduce transaction costs and position Australia as a leader in resourcing SDGs coordination. A secretariat should be gender-balanced in its composition and facilitate regular engagement with women's organisations and networks (with a domestic and an international focus) and gender experts as part of its mandate. The Secretariat could coordinate the multi-sectoral reference group and/or the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Advisory Group (see above).

¹⁶ *German National Sustainable Development Strategy*, adopted in January 2017.

¹⁷ Danish Government (2017), "Denmark's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" *Report for the Voluntary National Review*, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16013Denmark.pdf>

¹⁸ For example, [The Foreign Secretary's Advisory Group on Human Rights \(UK\)](#), [Advisory Group on Business and Human Rights \(reporting to DFAT\)](#), [LGBTI Taskforce \(Victorian Government\)](#).

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- d) Integration with existing cross-government plans, coordination mechanisms and commitments:** Efforts to achieve progress across the Global Goals should be integrated with existing cross-government coordination mechanisms and action plans. For example, action to achieve Goal 16 on peace and justice should be integrated with existing efforts to implement the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018) and the next iteration of the NAP due in 2019 (see discussion below). Mechanisms to drive a cross-government approach on women, peace and security, such as the Inter-Departmental Working Group on women, peace and security, can also be utilised to pursue action on Goal 16. Similarly, Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 can provide a mechanism for coordination, consultation and cooperation spanning Australia's efforts to reduce violence against women both domestically and through the Australian aid program. Integration of, and coordination with, inter-governmental gender-focused mechanisms, such as the OECD DAC GenderNet, is also important.

Australia's approach to cross-government implementation of the SDGs must be informed by existing international commitments and language on women's rights and gender equality such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security¹⁹, the Cairo Programme of Action as well as various human rights treaties.²⁰ International mechanisms for policy development and exchange on the SDGs, such as the OECD Policy Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment, should also inform Australia's approach.

- e) Accountability within the aid program to the SDGs and gender equality:** The SDGs must be affirmed within the purpose of the Australia Aid program and integrated across its thematic and geographic policies, programs, reporting and performance benchmarks. Reporting on the aid program's approach to SDG implementation and achievements, as recommended by ACFID, should be included in the aid program's annual reporting to Parliament and the public.

To strengthen the accountability of the aid program in relation to gender equality, the Australian Government should maintain the commitment to ensuring that "more than 80% of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation." However, a target should be set to increase the proportion of investments that are subject to this gender equality accountability (for example, resourcing peer-review of Aid Quality Checks of investments between \$3-10M and exploring options to apply Aid Quality Checks to investments of \$1-3M). Reporting on gender equality by DFAT posts, and within country/region and by sector should also be strengthened.

- f) Strengthen the approach to Women, Peace and Security:** Australia's approach to the SDGs should promote stability in the region, which focusses on conflict prevention and the human dimensions of security. The Australian Government can be a leader in ensuring that the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda is at the centre of efforts to support SDG 16 and that connections are made between Goal 5 and Goal 16.²¹ The next iteration of Australia's National Action Plan on WPS in 2019 (NAP) presents an opportunity for Australia to clearly articulate the connection between Goal 5 and Goal 16 and to expand its focus from protection to prevention, prioritising the full and effective participation of women. However, this requires resourcing for the development of a Second NAP on WPS (2019) including civil society engagement and resourcing for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to support the functioning of a whole-of-government secretariat to coordinate Australia's actions on WPS.

- g) Integrate gender analysis into all Aid for Trade activities** Taking account of gender perspectives in macro-economic policy, including trade policy, is essential for pursuing inclusive and sustainable development and achieving fairer and beneficial outcomes for all.²² The mixed effects of trade liberalisation and globalisation on women so far demonstrate both the potential and the risks. In many cases, trade liberalisation has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and worsened women's economic and social status. One of the reasons behind these negative

¹⁹ UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242.

²⁰ Including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

²¹ For more information on the link between the SDGs please see IWDA (2016) The Global Goals: Women, Peace and Security' available at: https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/20160119-WPS-and-Goal-16-policy-brief_EK2.pdf

²² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2016.

effects is that trade policies are often designed and implemented without consideration of gender issues. To ensure that more people benefit from trade and no one is left behind, the Australian Government needs to integrate gender analysis into all Aid for Trade activities, including research and data collection.

Governance and Accountability – Learning from Our Region

IWDA works with partners in six countries in Asia and the Pacific. Together with our partners, we have been tracking the accountability and implementation frameworks developed by these countries.

In May 2017, Timor-Leste introduced a Roadmap for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.²³ It links the goals and priorities of the Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030)²⁴ with the SDGs. SDGs 5, 16 and 17 are identified as cross-cutting. The Government of Timor-Leste has also established a working group on the SDGs to work on the localisation of the SDGs in national development efforts.²⁵ A focal point for the SDGs is identified in every line ministry and Government agency and responsible Government agencies have been identified for each of the SDGs targets.

The Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF) in Myanmar has coordinated efforts to raise awareness on the SDGs among different ministries at the national and sub-national level. In 2016, an SDG Coordination Committee was established, chaired by MoPF²⁶ and, in 2017, the first statistical baseline on the SDGs was prepared together with a discussion paper considering integration of the SDGs into the Myanmar Planning and Budgeting Framework.²⁷

Cambodia has established the National Council for Sustainable Development and also incorporated SDG 12 and 13 into its Climate Change Action Plan (2016-18)²⁸. The PNG Government announced it has developed a SDGs roadmap and there has been work around localising the SDGs into national policies and developing national targets and indicators²⁹. The SDGs have been integrated into the Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016-2035³⁰. Fiji's National Development Plan³¹ is also aligned with the SDGs.

Recommendation 11: Develop a national implementation plan, which includes shorter-term targets as stepping stones to enable consistent progress towards the 2030 deadline, supported by specific financial commitments.

Recommendation 12: Establish a mechanism to facilitate engagement with civil society to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee such as a multi-sectoral reference group or a Women's Rights and Gender Equality Advisory Group. Any civil society engagement mechanism should be comprised of members from civil society, academia and the private sector and have both a domestic and an international program focus. It should also reflect gender balance in membership, gender expertise among members, a co-

²³ Timor-Leste's Roadmap for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, available at: http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/UNDP-Timor-Leste_SDP-Roadmap_doc_v2_English_220717.pdf

²⁴ Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1506Timor-Leste-Strategic-Plan-2011-20301.pdf>

²⁵ Government of Timor-Leste (2016), *Timor-Leste working to achieve SDGs and encourage global implementation*, available at: <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=15114&lang=en>

²⁶ See Myanmar's UNESCAP submission available at: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Myanmar_SDGs_implementation_progress.pdf

²⁷ UNPD (2017), *Measuring Myanmar's Starting Point for the Sustainable Development Goals: SDG Baseline Indicator Report*, available at: http://www.mm.undp.org/content/myanmar/en/home/library/SDGs/Measuring_Myanmar_Starting_Point_for_the_SDGs.html

²⁸ Government of Cambodia (2015), *General Secretariat of the National Council for Sustainable Development*, available at: <http://www.camclimate.org.kh/en/policies/ncsd-structure.html>

²⁹ Independent State of Papua New Guinea Department of national Planning and Monitoring (2015), *Medium Term Development Plan 2016-2017*, available at: <http://www.planning.gov.pg/images/dnprm/pdf/MTDP2.pdf>

³⁰ Solomon Islands Government Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (2016), *National Development Strategy 2016-2035*, available at: <http://www.wamis.org/agm/solomon/NDS2016-35%20FINAL.pdf>

³¹ Republic of Fiji Ministry of Economy (2017), *5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan: Transforming Fiji*, available at: <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year---20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx>

chair model which reflects gender balance, and ensure cross-cutting issues, including gender equality and women's empowerment, are standing agenda items.

Recommendation 13: That the Government continues to fund a multi-sectoral secretariat to coordinate action on the SDGs and input into government processes beyond the Voluntary National Review (VNR). This secretariat will enable coordination of the SDGs across federal, state and local governments as well as providing a hub for facilitating engagement with civil society organisations, business and academia. A secretariat should be gender-balanced in its composition and facilitate regular engagement with women's organisations and networks (with a domestic and an international focus) and gender experts as part of its mandate.

Recommendation 14: Efforts to achieve progress across the Global Goals should be integrated with existing cross-government coordination mechanisms and action plans including the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018)* and the next iteration of the NAP due in 2019 and *Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*.

Recommendation 15: Include reporting on the aid program's approach to SDG implementation and achievements in the aid program's annual reporting to Parliament and the public.

Recommendation 16: The Australian Government should maintain the commitment to ensuring that "more than 80% of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation" and set a target to increase the proportion of investments that are subject to this gender equality accountability.

Recommendation 17: Reporting on gender equality by DFAT posts, within country/region and by sector, should be strengthened and should reference the SDGs.

Recommendation 18: The next National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security should clearly articulate the connection between Goal 5 and Goal 16 and be supported with adequate resourcing for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to support the functioning of a whole-of-government secretariat to coordinate Australia's actions on WPS.

Recommendation 19: The Australian Government must integrate gender analysis into all Aid for Trade activities, including research and data collection to ensure choices are fully informed, effective, sustainable and contribute to outcomes that meet the needs of both women and men.

4. RESOURCING SDGS IMPLEMENTATION

Effective implementation of the SDGs necessitates increased investment to close the gender-financing gap. This must include resourcing to support transformative policy and financing actions for gender equality and women's rights at national, regional and international levels as well as aligning private investment and capital flows to the SDGs.

Other countries have made specific financing commitments to the SDGs or devised innovative approaches to financing the SDGs. For example, the Danish Government will launch an SDG Fund in 2018, which will be a public-private partnership between the Danish government and institutional investors.³² In Pakistan, the Government committed US\$ 15.5 million as co-financing to set up SDG Support Units in collaboration with the UN at the Federal level and in four provinces.³³ In Mexico, the Government has devised a process to estimate the amount of national budget (by budgetary program) that contributes to accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals.³⁴ In Norway, each of the 17 SDGs is allocated a coordinating ministry who must report on the status of these respective goals in its budget proposal. These reports are then incorporated into the national budget white paper.³⁵

³² For more see: *Report for the Voluntary National Review*, Denmark's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Ministry of Finance, p.33, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16013Denmark.pdf>

³³ UNDP (2016), *Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, p. 6, available at: <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UNDG-Mainstreaming-the-2030-Agenda-Reference-Guide-2017.pdf>

³⁴ Investing For Sustainable Development: How Does Mexico Invest in the SDGs, available at:

http://www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/work/models/PTP/Presupuesto/Documentos_anteriores/mexico_sdg.pdf

³⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/norway>

Action by the Australian Government to effectively resource SDGs implementation should include:

- a) **Resourcing coordination and whole-of-government implementation mechanisms:** The follow-up and review of the SDGs requires investment in review and accountability mechanisms at national, regional and international levels. It is important that this includes resourcing for coordination mechanisms as well as a fully-costed and financed implementation plan. Whole of Government coordination mechanisms such as the Inter-Departmental Committee must be resourced with specific funding and staff including gender advisors.
- b) **Rebuild Australia's aid program:** Rebuilding Australia's aid program to reach 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2030, in line with Australia's commitment when signing onto the SDGs, is critical to ensure Australia is well placed to deliver on the SDGs.
- c) **Increasing investment in gender equality and women's empowerment:** Governments that have committed to the SDGs must also meet their financing obligations, including through specifically tracking and increasing the amount of overseas development assistance invested in gender equality. To this end, the Australian Government should increase its expenditure on aid investments, which target gender equality as a principal objective³⁶. We recommend setting a target of 10% by 2025.³⁷ The Australian Government should also meet its commitment made at the 2012 Family Planning Summit and invest at least \$50 million a year in contraceptive information, services and supplies.³⁸

The areas of commitment in the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality developed by UN Women, the OECD and UN member states must also be actioned. These actions focus on domestic and international policy actions and public resources for gender equality and women's empowerment, creating an enabling environment and resourcing partnerships and data to monitor progress.³⁹

- d) **Investing in women's rights organisations and networks:** While women's rights organisations worldwide have increased their calls for funding that matches both the extent of change needed as well as the commitments made by governments and development actors, funding still falls short. Women's rights organisations continue to face financial unsustainability and current funding trends often constrain the ability of these organisations to access funding. Flexible long-term core funding is vital for sustaining the long-term movement building work that underpins progress towards gender equality.

The OECD tracks aid in support of women's equality organisations and institutions through a 'purpose code' used in annual reporting on aid activities by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members. The Australian Government should increase funding support for women's rights organisations and networks, lifting aid coded as supporting 'women's equality organisations and institutions' above current levels. In Australia, support for women's equality organisations and institutions represented only 1.22% (22.379 USD million) of total sector-allocable aid in 2016.⁴⁰

- e) **Strengthening and resourcing machineries for gender equality:** To deliver on the SDGs, it is crucial to strengthen machineries for gender equality at the global, regional and national levels, in terms of both financial resources and technical expertise. High-level political leadership across government is also essential to ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to meeting gender equality-related targets within the SDGs, within government and across the community.

³⁶ As reported against the OECD DAC Gender Equality Marker - An activity can be classified as targeting gender equality as a *principal* objective, a *significant* objective or as not targeting gender equality as a policy objective.

³⁷ See IWDA. 2018. *Global Goals: Women's Rights Organisations and Movements*, policy brief, available at: <https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/Supporting-Womens-rights-Organisations-and-Movements-March-2018.pdf>

³⁸ IWDA support the submission of the International Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Consortium to this Inquiry.

³⁹ *Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8131Action%20Plan%20on%20Transformative%20Financing%20for%20GEWE.pdf>

⁴⁰ As reported to the Creditor Reporting System, purpose code 15170.

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- f) **Investing in leadership and supporting movements:** It is vital that resources to accelerate progress on the SDGs, support leadership development and movement building, as well as programs with specific, quantifiable outcomes.⁴¹ The Pathways of Women's Empowerment programme research found that interventions aimed at supporting women's capacities to act together and creating supportive relationships among women are much more likely to have a transformative effect than interventions aimed at individual women.⁴² The World Bank's Voice and Agency research also concluded that women's movements are crucial to build the necessary consensus for progressive policy and legal reform.⁴³

Recommendation 20: Whole of Government coordination mechanisms such as the Inter-Departmental Committee must be resourced with specific funding and staff including gender advisors.

Recommendation 21: Australia's aid program should be re-built to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2030 through a planned, stepped and predictable trajectory, and make eliminating poverty and achieving the SDGs the primary purpose of the aid program.

Recommendation 22: The Australian Government should set a 2025 deadline for 10% of Australia's aid investments to have gender equality as a principle objective.

Recommendation 23: The Australian Government should increase funding support for women's rights organisations and networks, lifting aid coded as supporting 'women's equality organisations and institutions' above current levels (currently less than 2% of sector allocable aid).

Recommendation 24: The Australian Government should meet its commitment made at the 2012 Family Planning Summit and invest at least \$50 million a year in contraceptive information, services and supplies.⁴⁴

Recommendation 25: The areas of commitment in the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality developed by UN Women, the OECD and UN member states must be actioned.

Recommendation 26: To deliver on the SDGs, it is crucial to strengthen machineries for gender equality at the global, regional and national levels, in terms of both financial resources and technical expertise.

Recommendation 27: Resources to accelerate progress on the SDGs must support leadership development and movement building, as well as programs with specific, quantifiable outcomes.

5. ADDRESSING DATA GAPS AND MEASURING CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The Sustainable Development Agenda embraces the 'Leave No One Behind' principle, calling for the disaggregation of data by age, sex, income and geographic location, among other things. To 'leave no one behind', we need to measure change in a way that makes individuals visible, is gender-sensitive, people-centred and intersectional.

Fifty-three of the 230 indicators in the Global Indicator Framework are gender-related. However, as of 15 December 2017, 75 per cent of these indicators lack either adequate data or accepted international standards of measurement. We urgently need investment in enhancing measurement capabilities. The global indicator framework is subject to further review as new data sources become available, with reviews scheduled for 2020 and 2025.

⁴¹ UN Women (2015), Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 60 Priority Theme: Women's Empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development, UN Women, Glen Cove, New York, 1 – 4 November 2015, available at: <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/csw60%20egm%20report.pdf?v=1&d=201601282130>

⁴² Pathways of Empowerment Research Consortium (2012), *Empowerment a Journey not a Destination*, p.10 available at <http://www.pathwaysofempowerment.org/PathwaysSynthesisReport.pdf>

⁴³ World Bank (2014) *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*, p.169

⁴⁴ IWDA support the submission of the International Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Consortium to this Inquiry.

The IDM is a new, gender-sensitive and multidimensional measure of poverty that has been developed to assess deprivation at the individual level and overcome the limitations of household level measurement. The IDM has the potential to track the extent to which progress towards the SDGs are leading to change for the most marginalised individuals in our region, including women and girls. This work is of global significance, and essential to realising the commitment to leave no one behind.

The IDM could also make a valuable contribution to data collection and availability against some SDGs, particularly in relation to gender and poverty targets that still lack data, and by enabling disaggregation by sex including for some indicators where this is not explicitly specified. The IDM aligns with some 25% of the 53 gender-related SDG indicators. It can also provide disaggregated data for some indicators where this is not specifically required, consistent with the call for disaggregated data wherever possible.

Data collection processes that reveal the impact of intersecting barriers and discriminatory factors are integral to the 'Leave No One Behind' principle. Understanding which groups in society are doubly- or triply- disadvantaged will help to inform where further efforts and resources need to be directed to achieve transformative change for diverse women and girls. The IDM enables accurate disaggregation of data by sex, age and other characteristics. Significantly, the measure can also capture intersectional and cross-cutting linkages, in terms of overall deprivation and deprivation in each IDM dimension (e.g. the unique profile of deprivation for older women living in rural areas, and how this differs from the experience of older men or younger women).

The Australian Government is to be commended for its leadership and investment in addressing gender gaps, including through UN Women's *Making Every Woman and Girl Count* program, and its investment in readying the Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM) for global use by 2020.⁴⁵ At the regional level, the Australian Government can also play a role to support and build the capacity of National Statistics Offices in our region to collect disaggregated and intersectional data and to facilitate sharing of common learnings regionally to enable regional reporting on SDGs, reduce the burden on National Statistics Offices, and identify issues and trends relevant across countries.

There are also innovative examples of how civil society is aligning monitoring and evaluation with the SDG indicators. For example, Our Watch's work, *Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring* provides guidance to policy-makers and researchers on how to track short-, medium- and long-term progress towards the prevention of violence against women at the population-level in Australia. Some of the gender equality and gender-based violence indicators identified in *Counting on Change* align very closely with some SDG indicators. The Australian Government should be drawing on these innovative approaches.

Recommendation 28: The Australian Government maintains its leadership and investment in addressing global gender data gaps, including support for the UN Women's *Making Every Woman and Girl Count* program, and its investment in readying the Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM) for global use by 2020.

Recommendation 29: Prioritise the collection of high quality disaggregated data (by sex, age, income and geographic location) in Australia, and by supporting partner countries through our aid program, in order to identify those being left behind and to target resources accordingly.

Recommendation 30: At the regional level, the Australian Government can also play a role to support and build the capacity of National Statistics Offices in our region to collect disaggregated and intersectional data and to facilitate sharing of common learnings regionally.

⁴⁵ The Australian Government has invested \$9.5 million over 4 years in a program partnership between IWDA and the Australian National University to ready the Individual Deprivation Measure for global use by 2020. www.individualdeprivationmeasure.org

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AS INTEGRAL TO PROGRESS ACROSS THE SDGS

- **Recommendation 1:** The Australian Government continues commitment to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and championing of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5.
- **Recommendation 2:** The Australian Government promotes gender equality and women's empowerment as an enabler and accelerator across all of the SDGs, and adopts an approach to implementation driven by values and cross-cutting priorities.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Australian Government's focus on gender equality and women's empowerment provides a pathway for connecting Australia's domestic and internationally focussed progress in relation to the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 4:** The Australian Government has a role to play, domestically and through the Australia aid program, in promoting the role of diverse women and the importance of women's rights organisations and machineries for gender equality as agents for change.
- **Recommendation 5:** The Australian Government should champion the importance of investing in women's rights organisations and movements to accelerate progress across the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 6:** International NGOs and private contractors implementing DFAT-funded programs related to gender equality and women's empowerment should be working with local women's organisations and this should be incorporated into DFAT's contract conditions and selection and monitoring processes.

2. UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE SDGS ACROSS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND IN THE WIDER AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

- **Recommendation 7:** Initiate a public awareness campaign on the SDGs as part of Australian state and federal government implementation in order to increase public engagement and commitment to the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 8:** Communication of the SDGs should align with established values of the Australian community including gender equality and be informed by human security narratives.
- **Recommendation 9:** The Government should support new partnerships between government, private sector actors, academia and civil society both at home and through our international development and humanitarian program.
- **Recommendation 10:** The SDGs should be communicated within the Australian Government as an agenda, which requires both domestic implementation as well as prioritisation as part of the Australian aid program.

3. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

- **Recommendation 11:** Develop a national implementation plan, which includes shorter-term targets as stepping stones to enable consistent progress towards the 2030 deadline, supported by specific financial commitments.
- **Recommendation 12:** Establish a mechanism to facilitate engagement with civil society to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the Inter-Departmental Committee such as a multi-sectoral reference group or a Women's Rights and Gender Equality Advisory Group. Any civil society engagement mechanism should be comprised of members from civil society, academia and the private sector, and have both a domestic and an international program focus. It should also reflect gender balance in membership, gender expertise among members, a co-chair model which reflects gender balance, and ensure cross-cutting issues, including gender equality and women's empowerment, are standing agenda items.
- **Recommendation 13:** That the Government continues to fund a multi-sectoral secretariat to coordinate action on the SDGs and input into government processes beyond the Voluntary National Review (VNR). This secretariat will enable coordination of the SDGs across federal, state and local governments as well as providing a hub for facilitating engagement with civil society organisations, business and academia. A secretariat should be gender-balanced in its composition and facilitate regular engagement with women's organisations and networks (with a domestic and an international focus) and gender experts as part of its mandate.
- **Recommendation 14:** Efforts to achieve progress across the Global Goals should be integrated with existing cross-government coordination mechanisms and action plans including the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018)* and the next iteration of the NAP due in 2019, and *Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*.
- **Recommendation 15:** Include reporting on the aid program's approach to SDG implementation and achievements in the aid program's annual reporting to Parliament and the public.
- **Recommendation 16:** The Australian Government should maintain the commitment to ensuring that "more than 80% of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation" and set a target to increase the proportion of investments that are subject to this gender equality accountability.
- **Recommendation 17:** Reporting on gender equality by DFAT posts, within country/region and by sector, should be strengthened and should reference the SDGs.
- **Recommendation 18:** The next National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security should clearly articulate the connection between Goal 5 and Goal 16 and be supported with adequate resourcing for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to support the functioning of a whole-of-government secretariat to coordinate Australia's actions on WPS.
- **Recommendation 19:** The Australian Government must integrate gender analysis into all Aid for Trade activities, including research and data collection to ensure choices are fully informed, effective, sustainable and contribute to outcomes that meet the needs of both women and men.

4. RESOURCING SDGS IMPLEMENTATION

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Authorised by Caroline Lambert for the International Women's Development Agency, Level 1, 250 Queen Street, Melbourne

⁴⁶ IWDA support the submission of the International Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Consortium to this Inquiry.

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