

ICW Statement

25 August 2016

High Level Political Forum 2016

ENSURING THAT NO WOMAN OR GIRLS LIVING WITH HIV IS LEFT BEHIND

The first ever High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) took place in New York City July 11–20, 2016. The theme was ‘Ensuring That No One is Left Behind,’ focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals, including implementation, partnerships, technology, and poverty (see the program <http://bit.ly/2bB8QBI>).

Session 6: *Ensuring that no one is left behind* – Creating peaceful and more inclusive societies and empowering women and girls, aimed to address the needs of women and girls via the 11 SDG goals that contain gender focused indicators. Session 6 can be viewed here <http://bit.ly/2bmWDgr>.

The HLPF included the first global SDG reporting process, called Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), in which countries who volunteered to participate in this year’s review shared SDG experiences and good practices.

The United Nations Secretary General created flexible guidelines for the VNRs, and the review process requires a written report. This year, 22 governments volunteered for national reviews of their progress in implementing the SDGs. Since implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda started only very recently for most countries, they were not expected to report on the review of 2030 Agenda and SDGs, but instead could focus on any activities or implementation at the country level. Country reports can be viewed here <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/inputs>.

In terms of follow-up to the VNRs, some countries feel that there should be no follow-up to the reviews, because they are voluntary. The Secretary-General recommends that in future HLPFs, detailed recommendations for countries that presented a VNR could be included in the outcome document, and “could be used by countries having presented at the HLPF as a source of information, guidance, or support for the mobilization of resources, including for capacity building.”¹

¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/9765Q_and_A_for_HLPF_National_reviews_2016.pdf

Key Points from the SDG Progress Report

The HLPF outcome document; the 2016 SDG Progress Report (<http://bit.ly/29s63sB>), draws conclusions “through examples of disaggregated data that pinpoint where specific population groups are lagging behind.”² However, disaggregated data about women generally, and regarding women living with HIV specifically, does not often exist (<http://bit.ly/2bjLptm>).

- The report broadly acknowledges, “Gender equality remains a persistent challenge for countries worldwide and the lack of such equality is a major obstacle to sustainable development.” **But**,
- The report fails to recognize lack of gender equality as a primary obstacle to sustainable development.
- It briefly mentions sexual violence against women and girls as one barrier to achieving the SDGs: “Survey data from 31 low-and middle-income countries suggest that the proportion of women aged between 18 and 29 who experienced sexual violence for the first time before the age of 18 varies widely, ranging from zero to 16 per cent.” **However**,
- Women and girls living with HIV know from our diverse experiences that these percentages are, in reality, substantially higher.
- The report remarks on inequalities in employment for women and girls as a barrier to sustainable development. **But**,
- It makes no mention of overwhelming structural inequities women and girls face; for example, it mentions nothing about the heavier poverty burden women and girls bear worldwide.

In its most critical oversight, the report does not mention any links between women and girls and HIV, nor does it cite women and girls living with HIV as an important population that must be engaged in order to achieve the SDGs.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS CENTRAL PLATFORM FOR THE FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW OF
THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

² https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND_CCPCJ_joint/2030Agenda/A.70.L.60.pdf

HLPF: A Soft Commitment to Women Living with HIV

Implementation of the SDGs and participation in the HLPF by countries is completely voluntary. In order to encourage countries to voluntarily report on their progress and to improve the value of the HLPF as a monitoring body, we must demand accountability, build political will, and provide technical support. The potential of the HLPF as a monitoring body will only be realized if there are strong monitoring and engagement processes at the country level.

Action Items

Evidence continues to point to the fact that women and girls living with HIV are already being left behind in the SDG and HLPF processes. ICW calls on governments and other stakeholders to:

- Hold national level SDG forums before the global SDG HLPFs, so that country-level implementation and progress can be closely monitored and followed by those that know it best, and development at the country level can be viewed holistically;
- Make the HLPF an accessible, learning space for all stakeholders;
- Undertake the global VNR process at the next SDG HLPF;
- Disaggregate data, highlighting the enormous barriers to sustainable development women and girls living with HIV face globally;
- Implement the SDGs at the national level, ensuring that women living with HIV, who are main stakeholders, have a seat at the table and a substantive role in the process;
- Recognize that gender equality issues must be consistently & concretely addressed in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

For more information about how you or your network can engage with the Sustainable Development Goals, check out ICW's *Guide for Networks of Women Living with HIV* available here (<http://bit.ly/2bmZUMJ>).

Nothing for us, without us!

For more information please visit: www.iamicw.org

The International Community of Women Living with HIV, the first and only global network by and for women and girls living with HIV, has worked for over 20 years to address and support the challenges of, as well as collectively celebrate, all self-identifying women and girls living with HIV throughout the world.



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