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CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUPS (CSAG) STRATEGY



CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY
GROUPS
CSAG STRATEGY



CIVIL SOCIETY SECTION
UN WOMEN

New York, December 2015



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UN Women/Enas Abul Komsan

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CONTEXT

مليونية للمرأة
10 مليون
مساهمة المنظمات النسائية
في تحقيق الأهداف
والمطابقة
لرؤى الأمم المتحدة
للتنمية
الإنسانية
المستدامة
التي تضع
المرأة في
المركز

MILLIARDS
Pick Up
10
Years - culture
The world will
not change
we do
-jim wallis
No one here g

1.

Context

Feminist victories of the 20th century have contributed to enormous gains and advances for women and girls. The establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Security Council resolutions related to the protection of women and girls were, to a large extent, the result of active pressure from civil society, mainly women's organizations and the feminist movement.

The 21st century has also spurred major successes for women's rights. With the creation of UN Women in 2010, in large part due to the effective Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) campaign promoted by the women's movement, civil society finally has a new and powerful mediator to influence the global women's rights agenda.

2015 will be seen as a historic year for women's rights. The new Agenda 2030 marks a giant step in the path towards achieving substantive gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Not since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has there been such a complete and far-reaching call to act on these global and universal imperatives for human progress. The full implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, combined with the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, has the potential to achieve sustainable and irreversible gender equality and change the lives of women and girls forever.

These gains notwithstanding, new challenges have emerged which hold the gender equality agenda hostage. Civil society and citizen action movements are facing repression from increasingly authoritarian political regimes; the current global crises including those of conflict and violent extremism are driving increased securitization and militarization and an intolerance of dissent; the financial crisis is further exacerbating this issue and has severely affected the work of civil society organizations and governments, including those traditionally supportive of civil society are cutting back on funds to civil society organizations. As a result the space for feminist actors and critical civic engagement and mobilization is shrinking in

virtually every part of the world.

Moreover while there appears to be strong focus from policy makers to issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, at the same time, there is an increasing politicization of the women's rights and gender justice agenda that hinders the work of civil society. The success of the negotiations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development -and Goal 5 in particular- demonstrated that multilateral negotiations can achieve big results for the gender equality agenda. But what is equally true is that global commitments are pointless without accompanying ownership of those commitments and action at the national level.

In this context, the importance of alliance building in feminist advocacy and in political engagement, in order to both influence the international agenda and realize women's and girls' rights at the national level, has become evident. New alliances with other social justice movements, such as environmental organizations, faith-based organizations (FBOs), men's movements against patriarchy and trade unions, among others, have also become key to the realizing of women's rights. Furthermore, young women and men, boys and girls, who are also at the core of these fundamental structural changes that are being pursued, need to be deeply engaged and in leadership positions of the gender equality movement. New forms of connection in which youth are strongly involved have emerged from advances in information and communication technologies; these enable alliance-building among networks and facilitate global, national and trans-national activism.



UN Photo/Melina Mulkenrs

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UN WOMEN CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUPS (CSAGs)



2.

UN WOMEN CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUPS (CSAGs)

In light of UN Women's call for Planet 50-50 by 2030 and the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UN Women Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs), established four years ago as advisory and advocacy bodies, will play a key role in strengthened institutional partnership and engagement with civil society. Presently, there are 42 CSAGs set up or in process globally with more than 500 members. The past four years have highlighted various challenges in the UN Women-CSAG partnership in countries, regions and globally, that have prevented this innovative and important forum from delivering effective results. Therefore, in pursuit of achieving accelerated action towards 2030, it is crucial that the CSAG mechanism is strengthened to overcome these challenges. It is equally vital to ensure that the CSAGs function effectively as frontline partners for UN Women. This means that UN Women must call upon the leadership of the CSAGs and create the necessary space for the CSAGs to exercise this leadership.

The UN Women CSAGs offer the opportunity to create a civil society solidarity network that can coordinate efforts with UN Women to accelerate advocacy and action to achieve gender equality by 2030. However, CSAGs are not the gatekeepers of UN Women's work with civil society. UN Women will continue to engage with civil society beyond the CSAGs widely, and in different spaces and constituencies; CSAG members must strengthen their own engagement with the broader civil society and social justice actors and support and facilitate UN Women's outreach, to multiply the impact of common actions.

What is the value of the CSAGs to UN Women?

Through the CSAGs, the expertise and knowledge of the women's movement informs UN Women's strategies and strengthens its capacity to exercise leadership at the global, regional and national levels. UN Women also draws upon civil society's mobilization power to amplify the impact of common messages including reaching out to those most in need.

What is the value of UN Women to the CSAG membership?

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