

**EIGHTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS (OWG8)**

**CO-CHAIR MORNING SESSION: OCEANS AND SEAS**

**3 February 2014, UNHQ, NEW YORK, USA**

**Remarks by NOELENE NABULIVOU**

**Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, Fiji**

**Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)\***

**Distinguished Co-Chairs, friends, all protocols observed.** I'm Noelene Nabulivou, representing Diverse Voices and Action for Equality Fiji, DAWN, and the Women's Major Group.

Today I will highlight ongoing WMG calls for **specificity, coherency, and appropriate scale and depth of response** on gender, sustainable development and oceans and seas. I will conclude with three further observations relating specifically to goals, targets and indicators as requested by Co-Chairs at this stage - arising from the work of over 500 organisations and social networks:

**On specific attention to gender equality, human rights and sustainable development,** we are encouraged to hear many partners, States and the Co-Chairs throughout the eight OWGs affirming the importance of gender equality and human rights to sustainable development. So at this critical juncture in negotiations we now look forward to **gender equality being clearly and strongly represented as a core transformative necessity for the realization of sustainable development, where women are not just viewed as victims or end-users, but as strong, innovative contributors to all households, workplaces, societies, governments, and advocates in multilateral processes.** We reiterate our call for a gender equality goal, with specific targets and indicators across all SDGs. We also point out that the most robust human rights and social justice framework is necessary as drivers of any sustainable development, and environmental rights as central, never as an externality. Without all this, we cannot have healthy oceans.

**On coherence, effectiveness and global governance,** this must be expressed through an ambitious and human rights framed SDG agenda, incorporating lessons learnt from the MDGs for wider and linked targets and indicators; and in full cognisance of Rio+20 Section where UN member states commitment included that SDGs be based on Agenda 21, Rio principles, international law, commitments already made, balanced across all three dimensions of sustainable development and inter-linkages, and coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015, with active involvement of all stakeholders. Also recalling specific focus on SIDs, LDCs, Africa

and other special State circumstances; strongest work on sustainable consumption and production, AND ON OCEANS AND SEAS.

Coherency also necessitates alignment with the SIDs track; across UNFCCC negotiations. Also the upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> year review of progress of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action ; ICPD Beyond 2014; and all other hard-won normative international agreements on human rights and development. As well as coherency across these multilateral agreements, these SDG processes will lead a path in **clarifying and highlighting the scale and urgency of climate change conditions**, and while not duplicating, can certainly **set trends toward ambitious and legally binding climate change mitigation commitments**, essential for health and sustainability of oceans, air and land.

**Thirdly on urgency and scale of response**, calling with other NGO and scientific experts and advocates for specific attention to the so-called 'deadly trio' of **cumulative impacts of global oceanic warming, sea level rise, and increased levels of deoxygenation** caused by coastal nutrient run-off, combining to destroy the protective shield the ocean provides against the worst effects of accelerating climate change and environmental degradation. **The SDGs must measure and monitor both clearly visible and slow-onset issues** -whether it involves king tides affecting drinking water salinity in small island states with attendant effects on SRHR, leading to drought and food insecurity; levels of nuclear radiation and mercury in seafood; bleaching and die-off of coral reefs; rising extinction rates of marine flora and fauna; increase in marine invasive species, loss of mangroves, sand dunes and coastal forests, and much more.

To recognise and address all this, there must be an **biosphere approach to addressing oceans and sustainable development**, clearly recognising the interdependence and interlinkage of marine, atmospheric and terrestrial ecosystems. What happens on air, land and sea is inherently connected, and influencing the planetary systems driving weather, water and food systems, biodiversity, and ultimately determining the extent to which sustainable development is possible. **For many of us from small island states, the existential threat to our islands means this is about right to life, and right to development, as much as any other rights.** That is why attention to oceans and seas is so important, and requiring a stand-alone goal as well as targets and indicators across ALL SDGs.

**The Co-Chairs of the OWG have recently asked development partners to provide inputs specifically on goals, targets and indicators.** We have aimed to thus contribute through various position papers and will continue to do so this week and in the coming months<sup>1</sup>. Many of our proposals have also been included in the UN-NGLS OWG policy brief on Oceans and Seas with

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<sup>1</sup> This intervention is based on the work of the WMG advocates, and found also in the Oceans and Seas position paper found here: [http://www.womenrio20.org/policy\\_statements.php?PHPSESSID=ad6a77436a0e40e78a3877e4310de51c](http://www.womenrio20.org/policy_statements.php?PHPSESSID=ad6a77436a0e40e78a3877e4310de51c)

inputs from major groups, civil society and social movements.<sup>2</sup>

**So to close, the WMG offer 3 short observations toward useful goals, targets and indicators:**

**Calling for specific goals** on gender equality, and on oceans and seas, and cross-linked targets and indicators across all goals;

**Calling for a specific, legally-binding global oceans regime**, to update and strengthen the UN Convention on Law of the Sea UNCLOS and harmonise with specific SDG targets and indicators leading to coordinated monitoring and enforcement for the full range of threats to ocean sustainability and for global biosphere protection (including in territorial waters and areas beyond national jurisdiction);

**Calling for increased attention to gender, fisheries and aquaculture.** This requires transformative changes to global oceans governance, and at regional and national levels. It is not just about mainstreaming gender into fisheries and aquaculture. It means changing the way we recognise, regulate and monitor, and develop fisheries and aquaculture to meaningfully facilitate women's contributions to small scale and artisan fisheries and aquaculture, commercial fisheries, oceans use and care – and including their impact on climate change adaptation and disaster risk response. This must include legal and social recognition of women workers in this sector. In many national laws, for example, women are still not considered artisanal fisheries workers because the definition of this activity usually excludes pre and post-capture activities in which women are actively involved. In other cases, the role of women in small-scale fishing communities is seen as subsistence related. So careful wording of SDG fisheries targets and indicators could assist advancement on gender, women and small scale fisheries, commercial fisheries and aquaculture. Recognition can be made via inclusion in national data collection; specific seats in national and regional fisheries decisionmaking bodies for Women and Fisheries networks; inclusion in climate change and DRR plans; increased accessible credit, adequate and sustainable (non-loan) funding for women-led projects; access to training and capacity opportunities; public education and advocacy campaigns; and other means.

**We recognise that none of this is easy, Co-Chairs and friends.** But our core message is that another social, environmental and economic governance system must be at the heart of sustainable development. That is not just possible, it is essential. It must incorporate **social equity and human**

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<sup>2</sup> UN-NGLS, Policy Brief #8 Recommendations on the Ocean and Seas for the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG on SDGs), 2014: [http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/UN-NGLS\\_Brief\\_for\\_OWG\\_on\\_SDGs-OceanSeas-Feb\\_2014.pdf](http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/UN-NGLS_Brief_for_OWG_on_SDGs-OceanSeas-Feb_2014.pdf)

**rights including gender equality; a new fairer system of production, consumption and distribution; and a new ecological sustainability and reparative plan** recognising planetary boundaries and ecological sustainability. We can **balance transformative shifts and incremental change** toward a sustainable, just and equitable development agenda.<sup>3</sup>

**Those of you in this room and beyond with the evidence and information, know that nothing less will suffice. Thank you for your time Distinguished Chair, fellow speakers, state delegates and Major Group friends. The WMG looks forward to the shared deliberations for the rest of this critical meeting. Thank you.**

**\*Check on delivery.**

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<sup>3</sup> WMG summarised proposals can be found here: [http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Booklet\\_final\\_English\\_WMGS-FES\\_Sep2013.pdf](http://www.womenrio20.org/docs/Booklet_final_English_WMGS-FES_Sep2013.pdf)