GCWA Key Messages on Positioning Gender Equality and HIV for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

I. WHAT IS THE POST-2015 AGENDA?

It is a process which started in 2012 to set out a new framework for economic and social development to be agreed on by United Nations Member States, building on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed 8 MDGs¹ were set for the period 2000-2015; the objective is now to decide upon other goals for post 2015. Thus far the Post-2015 process has included several thematic and national consultations, in which civil society participated to the extent possible including through online forums.

II. KEY PRINCIPLES FRAMING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

In May 2013 the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, who were tasked with advising on the global development framework beyond 2015, issued their report² setting out five transformational shifts that a new framework should be centred around:

- leave no-one behind, end extreme poverty;
- put sustainable development at the core, including tackling climate change;
- transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth, reforming business, taxation and education;
- build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all, encourage good governance; and
- forge a new global partnership, ambitious and innovative ways of working together.

The HLP’s recommendations will serve as a key input to the Secretary-General's report for the Special Event of the President of the General Assembly, to be held on 25 September 2013.

¹ MDG 1 eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2 achieve universal primary education; 3 promote gender equality and empower women; 4 reduce child mortality; 5 improve maternal health; 6 combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7 ensure environmental sustainability; 8 a global partnership for development.
III. WHAT DID THE HLP SAY ABOUT HIV AND RELATED TOPICS?

The HLP report includes an explicit commitment to reducing the burden of HIV; recognition of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights as core to healthy, empowered societies, including for adolescents and young people; and a call for a goal on the empowerment of women and girls and achieving gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender equality across all other goals and targets.

The GCWA welcomes the HLP’s inclusion of a target on HIV but notes that the suggested approach of aiming to reduce the burden of HIV is weaker than the goal to halt and reverse that has driven the response to HIV/AIDS within MDG 6. We also note that HIV is an issue that affects other proposed targets, and as such the GCWA calls for greater recognition of the interconnectedness of addressing the structural drivers of HIV vulnerability, especially gender inequality, and achieving gender equality, ending all forms of gender-based violence, and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. These linkages between HIV and SRHR, gender inequality and gender based violence have all been widely documented and a holistic approach should be mainstreamed within the new development framework.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

There will be further opportunities for civil society to engage in shaping the future framework. National dialogue should continue through August 2013 while Member States prepare their positions in advance of the 68th session of the General Assembly 2013-2014. A global survey is available on http://www.myworld2015.org/and the results will be launched at an event in September. A day of dialogue between civil society and Member States on the Post-2015 Agenda September 22 will precede the opening of the General Assembly on 22 September 2013, A Special Event of the President of the General Assembly, will be held on 25 September, concurrently the first High-level Political Forum (HLPF) will commence and the Open Working Group established by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 will offer their proposal on Sustainable Development Goals for the General Assembly’s consideration. A comprehensive resource for upcoming events is available at http://post2015.iisd.org/events/.

There are still two years remaining to negotiate and more opportunities to engage. Over the next six months the UNAIDS and Lancet Commission to explore HIV and global health in the Post-2015will deliberate on strategies, including social and legal issues such as gender inequality and violence against women, which will ensure that the vision of the AIDS movement, can be realized in the coming decades.
V. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR GCWA MEMBERS TO ENGAGE IN THE POST-2015 PROCESS?

The GCWA urges its members to work in partnership to ensure greater visibility of the linkages between HIV and gender equality in the Post-2015 development agenda. It is essential to ensure engagement in this process and articulate key messages in order to safeguard where HIV requires special action and capture the ambitions of engendering the HIV response globally.

We assert that positioning gender equality and HIV as cornerstones of the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda is essential to the successful outcomes of the overall goals. We aspire to ensure that the response to HIV remains relevant and central to decisions around the next framework that shapes the future of social and economic development.

Women and girls living with and affected by HIV and men who are engaged in efforts to enhance gender equality must be included in ongoing county dialogues on the Post-2015 agenda. The voices of young women, women who use drugs and transgender people are crucial in order to reflect their perspectives on the importance of ensuring access to non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services, harm reduction approaches and overall health system strengthening in the design of the Post-2015 goals.

VI. WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH OUR ENGAGEMENT IN THE POST-2015 PROCESS?

It is essential that all goals, targets and indicators in the new framework are rights-based and engendered, so that they can ensure that women and girls in all of their diversity have equitable access to basic services, including health services, that meet their specific needs. A gender equality goal in the Post-2015 agenda must allow for focus on addressing the needs of key populations affected by HIV including young women, women who use drugs, sex workers and transgender people, in order to mitigate the health risks they face.

VI. THE GCWA’S KEY MESSAGES TO SECURE THE INCLUSION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND HIV IN THE NEW DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:

1. The Post-2015 agenda should support a global goal that ensures “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”\(^3\) and include targets on ‘unfinished health goals’\(^4\), within which HIV as well as TB must be positioned to continue the global response to epidemics which are far from


\(^4\) These refer to HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.
over. Fragile gains must be protected to undertake the strategy for ending AIDS through zero new infections, zero AIDS related deaths and zero discrimination.5

2. Global health articulated in the Post-2015 agenda must allow for an integrated response to sexual and reproductive health and HIV recognising that sexual and reproductive health and rights are crucial to individual, family and community health as well as the well-being, participation and the economic and psychological empowerment of women and girls.

3. Health targets will only be reached by ensuring universal health coverage and access to health comprehensive services, including non discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services. Furthermore, access to health services must be non-discriminatory and target populations in greatest need particularly young women, women who use drugs, sex workers and transgender people.

4. Health services must enable women living with HIV to make un-coerced, informed, autonomous choices about their sexual and reproductive rights including pregnancy and future fertility. This includes their right to receive non-discriminatory health care in order to enable them to safely conceive, carry a pregnancy, and bear a child.

5. The new development framework must leverage increased access to primary and secondary education of young women and men to increase school attendance and ensure the acquisition of life skills, including access to youth friendly comprehensive sexuality education, that engages them in challenging harmful gender norms, helps prevent HIV and address gender based violence, while creating livelihoods opportunities.

6. The relationship between gender based violence as a leading vulnerability to HIV among women and girls must be explicitly acknowledged within a goal addressing global efforts to address violence against women and girls.

7. Political mobilisation, diplomacy and funding to support robust national HIV responses have been essential in changing the course of the HIV epidemic. A shift encouraging countries to address key populations affected by HIV, including women of reproductive age in high burden settings, must be encouraged in the next development framework.

8. There was minimal mention of HIV and AIDS and population dynamics in the HLP report. The Post-2015 agenda must take into considerations the population dynamics rooted in human rights and gender equality. Indeed, AIDS has a significant impact on population dynamics as the leading cause of death among the world’s girls and women aged 15-39 (17%) and the second most common cause of death for boys and men in the same age bracket (12%).

9. The new development framework must include innovative indicators to closely track how the poorest and most marginalized, including women and girls, are being reached in all essential services, including HIV services, and allowed access to property and livelihoods.