



PRESS RELEASE

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New initiative to press for action on global promises of equality for girls and women

(LONDON) – Leading international rights, development, civil society and private sector organisations are launching a new data and research partnership to monitor and drive progress on gender targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals.

The joint initiative, led by groups including Plan International, the International Women’s Health Coalition, KPMG, ONE Campaign and Women Deliver, will ensure decision-makers are held to account on promises to achieve true equality for girls and women during the 15-year implementation of the world’s development goals.

According to child rights organisation Plan International’s Chief Executive Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen:

“In many countries, the data we need on girls and women doesn’t exist yet, is incomplete or is not being compiled effectively. Millions of girls are left invisible so we don’t have the information to persuade governments to take steps to end abuse, child marriage and the early pregnancies that lead to thousands of maternal deaths.”

With broad consensus that achieving gender equality is critical to meeting the Global Goals, the joint initiative will give an independent assessment of the progress being made – or not - for girls and women, and spur action to tackle shortfalls.

Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, says:

“Making sure that women and girls were at the center of the SDG agenda was a big victory for this community. But it’s hard to achieve ambitious goals without concrete plans and actions. Holding stakeholders accountable for their commitments is critical as we work together to make this bold agenda a reality for women and girls around the world.”

Together with global civil society and private sector partners, the initiative will utilise existing and new quantitative and qualitative data, and monitor strategically chosen gender-related SDG indicators to track the progress being made for girls and women across key lifecycle stages - an important step to ensure women’s and girls’ development and rights remain firmly on the agenda.

The initiative will work in close coordination and collaboration with a variety of organisations, including UN agencies and national governments, to avoid duplication of efforts and to use and access relevant data.

“There are no reliable worldwide figures on the number of girls under 15 years of age who become pregnant each year. With clear information we can identify where action needs to be taken so that girls can truly enjoy their rights to survive, learn, lead, decide and thrive,” said Albrectsen.

The partnership is to be launched on Tuesday 17 May at the Women Deliver conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, which will be attended by many of the leading organisations in the girls’ and women’s rights movement.

Madame Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, a leading champion for the rights of girls and women, said:

“The strength of any society depends on the full participation of all its citizens – and that includes women and girls. Good things happen, and societies progress, when women and girls stand together – elevated and decisive and powerful. We’ve seen time and time again that for communities to be prosperous, both economically and socially, men and women must be given equal opportunity to not only participate, but more importantly, to contribute.”

Françoise Girard, President of International Women’s Health Coalition, said:

“Women’s organisations are excited for this opportunity to put the knowledge and data we already collect in the global spotlight, particularly on the critical but often neglected issues of reproductive rights, gender-based violence and young adolescent girls.”

The partnership’s data tool is a successor to Plan International’s annual State of the World’s Girls report, which each year took a thematic look at the issues facing girls around the world. The data tracker will continue to use the power of women’s and girls’ voices through first-hand interviews and the use of innovative perceptions-based data.

“This new tool will ensure decision-makers are doing all they can to achieve equality for women and girls,” said Albrectsen.

The Global Goals, agreed at the United Nations in 2015 by all governments, promise girls and women equal rights and opportunities, including rights to health, to live free from violence and to enjoy economic freedoms.

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About Plan International:

Plan International is an independent child rights organisation committed to enabling vulnerable and marginalised children to be free of poverty. By actively connecting committed people with powerful ideas, we work together to make positive, deep-rooted and lasting changes in children’s and young people’s lives. For over 75 years, we have supported girls and boys and their communities around the world to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to claim their rights, free themselves from poverty and live positive fulfilling lives.

Spokespeople are available. For media interviews, please contact:

Plan International

Davinder Kumar, Media Manager

Email: Davinder.Kumar@plan-international.org

Mobile: + 44 (0)7773 633 835

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