GOALS FOR GIRLS POST-2015

WIN, LOSE OR DRAW?

EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTION FOR GIRLS

EXHIBITION GUIDE
This guide accompanies the photographic exhibition, *Goals for Girls Post-2015: Win, lose or draw?*

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About this guide

This guide accompanies the photographic exhibition *Goals for Girls Post-2015: Win, Lose or Draw?* as part of the European Week of Action for Girls 2015. Each photograph in the exhibition represents the importance of girls’ equal participation in the context of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs are an ambitious, universal framework which address the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, environmental and economic – in an integrated way. They request the world to take the “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path...” and to leave no one behind.

The guide provides a summary of each goal and its targets. It outlines how the goal can transform girls’ and women's lives and why they must be included equally in order for the goal to be achieved, as well as the relevant interlinkages between the goals. The guide concludes with specific recommendations to the European Union (EU) and its Member States.

The Sustainable Development Goals

To reach the goals by 2030, all governments must ensure gender equality, and girls and women must be empowered to play an equal part in the implementation of, and benefit equally from, all goals. This requires cross-governmental cooperation by all sectors. The post-2015 agenda challenges governments to go beyond business as usual to be truly gender transformative. None of the goals can be achieved without progress on other areas in the framework. As this guide demonstrates, they are all interconnected, and it is important that there is no cherry picking by states working on some goals but not others.

In order to ensure the universal achievement of these goals, the EU must take action in the full range of goal areas, in Europe and the wider world.
Eti, who does not know her exact date of birth but is 10 or 11, is a domestic worker, the most common form of child labour in Bangladesh. Credit: Ken Hermann / Save the Children.

Goal 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce the proportion of people living in poverty through targets in several key areas. These include social protection systems, rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership and control of land and other resources, and financial services which are accessible to the poor and vulnerable.

Poverty is multidimensional and goes beyond income poverty. We know that girls bear the brunt of poverty in many societies: they are often the first in a household to drop out of school, or miss out on food if their families are living in poverty. These are some of the most evident, but by no means the only, gendered impacts of poverty on girls’ lives. Therefore all efforts to tackle poverty in Goal 1 and across the goals must take gender into account and ensure girls and women benefit equally. For example, social protection measures must seek to redistribute wealth and the benefits of economic growth more fairly and build gender equality through support for child care and pensions.

This goal is evidently linked to all other aspects of the framework: people – particularly girls and women – living in poverty are less likely to have access to good quality education, health care or food security and are often more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
GOAL 2

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

11 year old school girl Djeneba peeling the corn which her family has harvested. Credit: World Vision.

Goal 2 aims to end hunger and malnutrition, increase the agricultural productivity of small scale food producers, in particular women, and ensure sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that help maintain ecosystems and increase production.

Hunger and malnutrition have a devastating impact on girls’ and women’s health, and in some communities they eat less than men and boys when there are food shortages. Furthermore, women and girls are often excluded from decision-making on access to and the use of land and resources critical to their livelihoods and food security. Work on this goal must ensure that women and girls – who are frequently responsible for their family’s small-holdings – benefit equally from all targets, especially from access to land, productive resources, knowledge and financial services. This, in addition to having ownership and control of land (target 1.4), will help girls and women living in rural areas to increase their levels of sustainable productivity in agriculture and improve their livelihoods and food security.

Without access to enough nutritious food girls and boys will be more vulnerable to ill health and disease. Ensuring multinational companies adopt sustainable business practices, ending practices such as dumping food below market price in developing countries and preventing food price volatility by ending food commodity speculation, among other actions, will help ensure food security for the poorest communities.
A midwife examines a heavily pregnant woman in Myanmar’s Chin State. Credit: Peter Biro / International Rescue Committee.

Goal 3 is focused on improving health and well-being and preventing early deaths globally for all people. It includes a wide range of important focus areas including: reducing maternal mortality, ending preventable deaths of new-borns and children under five, ending and combating diseases such as HIV and malaria, reducing non communicable diseases, improving treatment of substance abuse, reducing deaths and injuries from traffic accidents, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and universal health coverage for all, and reducing deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution.

All girls and women must benefit equally from access to universal health care. For example, SRHR services are important for adolescent girls, as maternal mortality is the primary cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries. SRHR services are key for helping girls and women to plan if and when to have children and to ensure they can access their sexual health and reproductive rights. Having a choice over their sexual and reproductive rights – alongside other interventions to tackle gender discrimination – will allow girls to have the freedom to take part in other areas of the framework, such as participating equally in education, the economy or work to protect ecosystems.

Health is connected to all other areas of sustainable development as the devastating impact of Ebola in West Africa demonstrated recently – the closure of schools and the loss of incomes severely affected whole communities.
Goal 4 recognises the transformative power of inclusive education for girls and boys, men and women and their families and communities. It aims to ensure access to equitable quality early childhood development, primary and secondary education for girls and boys and to technical vocational and tertiary education and relevant skills for sustainable development, including literacy and numeracy, for youth and adults. Critically it seeks to remove gender disparities in education and ensure equal access for vulnerable groups.

We know that in countries where gender inequality is most entrenched, girls are often more likely to be out of school than boys. This can be because their parents cannot afford to pay costs associated with school, or prioritise educating boys, the absence of facilities to manage their periods, child marriage or early pregnancies, or the risks of gender-based violence on their journey to school.

It is critical for all girls to access a quality, gender-sensitive education, learn about global citizenship, and gain the knowledge and skills they need to play an active part in changing their societies. With knowledge of their human rights and the confidence to speak out, girls will be able to take part in local governance processes, and make their voices heard on the decisions that affect their lives. These, together with an enabling environment and changes in social norms, are essential to achieving gender equality and all of the sustainable development goals.
Goal 5 sets out a series of areas for progress to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, with a number of key targets. It aims to end all forms of discrimination, and eliminate all forms of violence and harmful practices against all women and girls everywhere. Reaching this goal will necessitate recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work, ensuring women’s full participation and opportunities for leadership in political, economic and public life, and accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Gender inequality, and the discriminatory social norms and barriers girls and women face to claiming their rights on a daily basis, often mean they are less likely to reach their full potential. They are more likely to experience gender-based violence, such as child marriage, which restricts girls’ opportunities to complete their education and have control over their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Involving men and boys, and their families and communities to understand and challenge gender discrimination and promote equality is key to this work. When they are able to live free from gender discrimination and gender-based violence, with equal access to economic opportunities, girls will be able to fulfil their potential.

Work to achieve gender equality, through this standalone goal and when mainstreamed throughout the whole SDG framework, will empower girls to take up opportunities across the political, economic, social and environmental spheres. For example, ensuring girls have the skills and knowledge required to play an active part in their societies will help their voices to be heard in gender sensitive construction of infrastructure, and in the design of safe cities and settlements.

Girls take a break from training with their football team in Lusaka, Zambia. Credit: Plan International.
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Villagers in Senegal enjoy a sustainable supply of clean drinking water. Credit: 2013 Lux-Development.

Goal 6 aims to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all, especially for vulnerable girls and women. It also aims to improve water quality, water use efficiency, address scarcity, implement integrated water resources management and protect and restore water related ecosystems.

In many societies, girls and women have primary responsibility for the management of household water supply and sanitation. And those who live in the poorest rural areas often have to walk for several kilometres each day to collect water for their families. Because of their dependence on water resources, girls and women have in depth knowledge about water location, quality and storage. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of water resources and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation often overlook the central role of women and girls in water management. Therefore activities under this goal must be gender-sensitive and take into account the needs, knowledge and skills of girls and women to ensure that they can participate equally and benefit equally from all activities. If achieved, this goal will be particularly transformative for the most marginalised girls and women living in poverty in rural areas as they will have more time for education and income-generating activities and will spend less time collecting water.

This goal is linked to many of the other goals in the framework, for example health – drinking unsafe water can lead to diarrhoeal diseases which are an easily preventable cause of infant mortality in developing countries.
A young girl from Niger carries animal dung on her head to sell at a local market. Credit: Plan International.

Goal 7 targets are focused on ensuring access to affordable modern energy services, increasing the share of renewable energy used and doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

In many developing countries, especially in the poorest areas, most energy currently comes from traditional biomass fuels such as wood, charcoal and agricultural wastes. Collecting and managing these fuels is often solely the responsibility of women and girls. This is a physically draining task that can take up to 20 hours per week, sometimes more. Girls are sometimes kept home from school to help gather fuel, perpetuating the cycle of disempowerment. Moreover, when environmental degradation forces them to search further afield for resources, women and girls become more vulnerable to injuries from carrying heavy loads long distances, and face increased risk of sexual harassment and assault.

Burning unclean fuel inside homes increases the risk of respiratory diseases, and collecting them also causes environmental degradation. Energy policies to achieve this goal must be gender-sensitive and provide girls and women with access to clean sources of energy, for example efficient stoves for cooking and solar lights for homes. This will improve girls’ health and ensure they have more time to participate in other activities such as education.

Increasing the share of renewable energy used for economic growth and industrialisation will help achieve many of the other goals in the framework, especially Goal 13 on climate change.
Shukri, an 18 year old seamstress, is now running her own business in Puntland, Somalia after doing vocational training. Credit: Hedinn Halldorsson / Save the Children.

Goal 8 sets out to ensure sustained per capita economic growth, achieve higher levels of economic productivity, promote development-oriented policies, improve global resource efficiency and decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. It aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training, eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and end child labour and the use of child soldiers. It will also protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments, promote sustainable tourism, and expand access to banking insurance and financial services for all.

Policies must be put in place to ensure economic growth benefits all, particularly girls and women who are most likely to be left behind. Decent work is fairly paid productive work carried out under conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Yet, globally, many girls and women are forced to work for low wages in unsafe conditions with limited access to their employment rights. In developing countries, women and girls tend to dominate in low-skill, labour-intensive jobs in textiles and clothing, for example. As such, it is important for their labour rights to be protected in law, and all girls and women must be able to understand and claim these rights. In order to achieve Goal 8, targets must be gender-sensitive, and ensure girls and women have the skills and knowledge to be able to take up opportunities on an equal basis with boys and men.

Ensuring decent work for all in safe and secure working environments will help to achieve the poverty eradication goal, by improving incomes of the poorest people. Inclusive economic growth must also be linked to goals on sustainable patterns of production and consumption in order to prevent further climate change, land degradation and negative environmental impacts.
Goal 9 aims to develop quality sustainable infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, increase the access of enterprises to financial services, ensure industries and infrastructure are sustainable, and enhance scientific research.

Girls and women face unique constraints and have distinctive roles in their families and communities. Infrastructure projects are often gender insensitive because it is assumed that everyone will automatically benefit equally, without recognition of the differences in their respective situations. Gender mainstreaming is a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability of all infrastructure work by ensuring that women and girls do not become worse off both absolutely and in relation to men and boys. For example, if women’s and girls’ needs are taken into account and their voices listened to in road building programmes they will be able to improve their access to markets and thereby their livelihoods. The processes of sustainable industrialisation can promote gender equality in order to improve girls’ and women’s lives.

This goal is linked across the framework to a range of other objectives such as poverty reduction, making cities safe and sustainable, and ensuring modern energy. For example, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation will limit the impacts on the environment by consuming fewer trees and using less water, and therefore help to prevent environmental degradation and conserve oceans and forests.
GOAL 10

Reduce inequality within and among countries

The first regional Training of Trainers Workshop in Western India on delivering “Voices against Violence”, a unique non-formal education curriculum that will teach young people how to stop violence against girls and women. Credit: UN Women / Urjasi Rudra.

Reducing inequality within and among countries includes achieving income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average, and empowering and promoting social economic and political inclusion for all. Goal 10 also relates to ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, adopting policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, to this end. It will improve regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions, enhancing the representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global institutions, and facilitating safe migration.

This goal is especially key for girls, and it demonstrates the intersectionality of inequalities which they face on the grounds of their age and gender, race, ethnicity, income poverty, disability, and as a result of discriminatory social norms. Together with an enabling environment for gender equality, this goal will help to reduce the inequalities which hold girls back. For example, national level policies to ensure gender equality in pay will ensure girls and women get equal rights to remuneration. In turn this goal will contribute to a wide range of other goals, ensuring girls have access to health care and education for example, and that they can be active citizens, which will help achieve Goal 16.

Reducing inequalities benefits everyone. This goal seeks to bring the poorest out of poverty and ensure equal opportunity through social economic and political inclusion for all. It is connected to all other goals, because in order to achieve political, economic and social equality everyone must have equal access to resources, such as water and sanitation, public services, and safe settlements.
GOAL 11

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Young volunteers at the Family Planning Association of Albania gather at their university residence site in Tirana. Credit: Layla Aerts / IPPF.

Goal 11 will ensure access to safe and affordable housing, basic services and transport systems for all, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, and protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage. This goal aims to reduce the impact of disasters, reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities, and provide universal access to safe public spaces, with a focus on the most marginalised groups.

This goal is key for girls and women as many face the risk of gender-based violence in and around the cities and settlements they live in on a daily basis. This threat is exacerbated by disasters, lack of safe public transport and street lighting. For example, in a survey for Plan International, only 3.3 per cent of girls surveyed in Delhi reported always feeling safe when using public transport. Gender equality should be included in the process of designing safe settlements, and girls must participate equally in consultations around settlement design to empower girls and women to travel and work in safety.

When well designed, safe and inclusive cities can help achieve other goals, for example on access to safe water and sanitation, by including basic services such as water treatment systems and safe sewers in city design. Well-designed cities can also contribute to sustainable energy use by installing green energy such as solar panels in all new buildings.
A member of the Nairobi Young and Old cooperative, supported by DSW, stands in front of her fruit and vegetable stall in a local market in Nairobi, Kenya. Credit: Jonathan Torgovnik / Reportage by Getty Images.

Goal 12 aims to achieve sustainable management and use of natural resources, halve food waste at retail and consumer levels, achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes, reduce waste generation, encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices, promote sustainable public procurement practices, and raise awareness of sustainable development and lifestyles.

This goal affects the future of some of the most marginalised girls in the world. These girls are less likely to have an impact on the environment through their patterns of consumption, but suffer from the negative environmental impacts of global production and consumption patterns. Sustainable production means that companies must take responsibility for the production impacts of their whole supply chain. This includes the environmental, societal, safety and health, and worker’s rights dimensions, which can all have a huge impact on girls’ lives. For example, ensuring girls and women who are currently working in low paid roles get adequate remuneration and access to labour rights will help to address poverty.

This goal is intrinsically linked to the whole framework; our production and consumption patterns – especially those of citizens and companies in EU member states – must fundamentally change to protect our planet and the natural resources which we rely on. For example, levels of food waste must be minimised by EU countries in order to reduce the resources used and lessen the environmental impact of the food we eat.
A girl standing where her house used to be. It was washed away due to heavy floods in Chawhara, Bangladesh. Credit: Josh Estey / CARE.

Goal 13 will strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, integrate climate change measures into national policies and improve the education, knowledge and capacity of institutions for climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on the lives of women and girls in the poorest communities where gender inequality is firmly entrenched. Girls often face social, political and economic barriers that limit their capacity to cope with disasters linked to climate change. For example, the impact of droughts and floods can end a girl’s education and in the aftermath of disasters, the risk of gender-based violence is known to increase. Taking a gender-sensitive approach to helping communities prepare for disasters, and ensuring women and girls participate equally as active agents of change in work to mitigate and adapt to climate change, is key to achieving this goal. For example, helping girls and women to mitigate climate change by using more efficient stoves, which require less firewood, means they have more time to earn money, engage in politics or other public activities and continue their education.

We cannot deliver sustainable development without tackling climate change. The impacts of climate change on communities, sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts are devastating. Climate-related disasters – such as droughts and flooding – are on the increase. The social and economic impacts of these disasters on communities such as loss of homes, destruction of schools, loss of livelihoods and food insecurity are significant.
Goal 14 will prevent and reduce marine pollution, manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems, minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification, regulate harvesting and end overfishing, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, end certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing or illegal fishing, and increase the economic benefits to small island states and least developed countries of sustainable use of marine resources.

Reductions in pollution and controls on overfishing will help girls and women living in the poorest small-scale fishing communities. There is often a misconception that women do not fish, yet their livelihoods are often linked to small-scale fishing, through coastal fishing and in fish markets.

The majority of the biodiversity decline globally has a disproportionate impact on poor people in developing countries. Declining fish populations have major implications for artisanal fishers and communities that depend on fish for their livelihoods and food security.
Goal 15 will ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, promote the sustainable management of forests, halt deforestation, combat desertification to ensure a land degradation neutral world, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, reduce the degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and protect endangered species, ensure fair sharing of benefits of utilisation of genetic resources, and end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna. It will prevent and reduce the impact of invasive alien species, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

The sustainable use of ecosystems will benefit girls living in the areas most affected by damaged ecosystems as they are more likely to be affected by droughts and food insecurity caused by the impacts of land degradation. This goal must include girls and women as they are often responsible for collecting firewood for example, which contributes to deforestation. Understanding men and women’s roles in gender-differentiated biodiversity practices and including the full participation and knowledge of girls and women will improve conservation efforts. Ensuring girls and women have the knowledge and information they need to access alternative clean sources of fuel will contribute to the achievement of this goal.

The carbon cycle and the water cycle both depend on biodiversity, and prevention of climate change is also linked to this goal. Protecting future biodiversity is linked to key development challenges, including the provision of clean water, energy services, and food, maintenance of a healthy environment, and conservation of ecological systems.
GOAL 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

A female officer of the Somali Police Force after completing training on human rights, and international humanitarian law and policing. Credit: UNDP Somalia / Noor Khamis.

Goal 16 will significantly reduce all forms of violence and violence-related death rates, end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children, promote the rule of law and ensure access to justice for all. It will reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, combat all forms of organised crime, reduce corruption and bribery and develop effective accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. It will ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

This goal and its targets are key to ensuring all girls can access and realise their rights, and activities under this goal will have a huge impact on girls’ lives. For example, birth registration is key to ensuring girls have access to services such as education and health care, and protecting them from child, early and forced marriage. Girls are often subject to gender-based violence such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, which are powerful barriers to gender equality. Thanks to the inclusion of a target on ending violence against children, this goal should lead to the development of comprehensive gender-sensitive child protection systems in all countries.

Peaceful and inclusive societies are also key to the entire framework. This requires governments to respect all civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and to build effective and accountable and transparent institutions, which are essential to ensure governments provide vital public services.
Goal 17 includes targets on a number of areas which are crucial to realising the other goals and targets. They include finance (domestic resource mobilisation, official development assistance, additional financial resources, debt sustainability, investment promotion regimes); technology (enhancing triangular regional and international cooperation on access to science and technology, sharing technology on favourable terms, and operationalising the technology bank and science technology and innovation capacity building mechanism); capacity building (enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building); trade (promoting universal rules based open trading system under the World Trade Organisation, increase exports of developing countries, realise timely implementation of duty free and quote free market access); and systemic issues (enhance global macroeconomic stability, enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, respect each country's policy space and leadership, enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, and complement with other partnerships to mobilise and share knowledge, encourage effective partnerships). It includes supporting countries to collect data disaggregated by sex, age, income, race, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and geographic location and others in order to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development.

Without strong means of implementation, it will not be possible to achieve any of the other goals and targets set out in the framework. Girls are affected by all the areas of this goal, and all actions within it must be gender-sensitive in order to ensure girls benefit equally from the Goal. In particular, it is key that all data collected across all goals is disaggregated by gender and age, so that governments and policymakers can fully understand the impact of the SDGs on girls’ lives.
Recommendations:
Goals for girls, the role of the EU

The preamble and declaration of ‘Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ set out an important principle – we must leave no one behind. Typically girls are most often left behind. The EU has an important role to play in supporting global efforts to ensure all girls benefit equally from the SDGs. The EU must lead the way with political commitment, progressive transformative policies, and programmes that ensure gender equality is at the heart of the global endeavour to achieve all of the SDGs. The EU must work in partnership with EU Member States, governments around the globe and international institutions to ensure that girls and women participate equally in decision-making and implementation of the goals, and benefit equally from them.

It is evident that each of the goals in the framework has an impact on girls’ and women’s lives. From their income to their health, education and the cities they live in, economic growth, consumption and production, climate change, inclusive societies and more – all goals are interlinked.

The following section puts forward a number of key recommendations to the EU in this regard.

- **Gender equality and the EU Framework for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020)**

The EU recently published its framework ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020)’. This document aims to translate the EU’s policy and political commitments to gender equality into more effective delivery of concrete results for girls and women, while promoting more efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of EU activities in this area. It guides the work of the European Commission’s services and the European External Action Service’s activities in partner countries, especially in developing, enlargement and neighbourhood countries, including in fragile, conflict and emergency situations.

We welcome the publication of the document, which is comprehensive. However, there is still much work required to ensure it is fully transformative and has political support and funding needed to create and support enabling environments for gender equality. The EU must provide the technical advice required to assist governments to carry out systematic gender analysis, collect and utilise sex and age disaggregated data, and establish gender-sensitive benchmarks and indicators for programming. It should also develop practical tools to ensure a more gender-sensitive approach across EU external action.

- **Disaggregated data**

It is currently a challenge to find specific statistics on the areas covered by the SDGs for girls. Whereas there are statistics for children, and for men and women, girls are often not recognised as facing unique needs and challenges which need to be measured. This highlights the need for all indicators and data gathered under the new sustainable development framework to be disaggregated by sex and age at a minimum, and within age for children and young people to capture specific age brackets (e.g. 0-5, 6-10, 11-14, 15-18). Data should also ideally be disaggregated by other factors such as income, race, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and geographic location, which would reflect the intersecting nature of inequalities that girls face. This will require strengthening national capacities for data collection and information management.
Monitoring and accountability

The SDGs must go beyond ‘monitoring and review’ to ensure strong accountability mechanisms and clear, measurable indicators are in place for all goals and targets. Accountability requires the meaningful and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including girls at national and local levels. The EU must lead in this endeavour. It must institutionalise a system of accountability and reporting that is based on clear targets and indicators and make sure that reporting on the achievement of goals takes place at the highest level.

Policy coherence for sustainable development

The EU and its Member States should ensure that they take a ‘whole of government’ approach to their implementation of policy coherence for sustainable development. The EU should set an example, given its considerable experience in this domain, to strengthen its institutional mechanisms – including for providing redress to people who are victims of incoherent policies – and to demonstrate the value of policy coherence for sustainable development. This means every EU policy area and all programmes must align to the SDGs as a minimum, and none must undermine the progress and human rights of girls.

Funding

The EU must continue to lead on and encourage member states to meet the 0.7% target for aid, and contribute to tackling development and humanitarian crises with gender-sensitive budgeting. The EU must make sure that its spending and programming decisions are contributing to gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment, and that these expenditures are tracked through gender-responsive budgeting.

Systems

The EU must support countries to put in place the systems and capacity required for domestic resource mobilisation through tax collection and gender-sensitive budgeting processes. Gross domestic product, as a measure of growth, should be replaced with measures based on human well-being. The EU and its Member States, which have been investing time and resources in investigating alternative measures of progress for over 10 years, should also pilot such mechanisms to encourage a focus on well-being over economic growth.

These recommendations have been developed by the organisers of the European Week of Action for Girls 2015. For further information contact Heather.Saunders@plan-international.org.
The European Week of Action for Girls 2015

The European Week of Action for Girls is an annual week-long event which aims to ensure that girls’ empowerment is promoted and their rights are protected and fulfilled in the EU’s external action, through adequate policies, funding and programmes.

Through a series of policy, advocacy, media, campaigning and youth-focused events, the Week of Action highlights the power and potential of girls as development actors and agents of change, as well as the particular challenges they face in realising their rights and the EU’s role in addressing these.

Now in its fifth year, it is organised by a coalition of civil society organisations working on topics linked to gender equality and/or children’s and youth rights, notably in development and humanitarian settings.

This year’s edition takes place under the patronage of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. It takes place from 11-17 October 2015, to coincide with and celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October).