



Many of you, particularly those in the Northern Hemisphere, are preparing for the end of summer, the beginning of the new academic school year and also the beginning of the new year of your organisation's branches and clubs. Now is a good time to focus on something that may be new to you and which will gain importance in the years leading up to 2015. This is being introduced by our IFUW President and is called...



Marianne Haslegrave
IFUW President

President's Initiative

I am frequently asked when I talk about IFUW to both women and men, "What does IFUW do?" I am sure that you are also asked the same question. It is, however, one to which it is not easy to give a quick and straight answer. While we can say that we are "the leading girls' and women's global organization run by and for women, advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels," we are still not answering the question "What does IFUW do?"

To attract new members; to be recognised as a leading women's organization that should be listened to; to be called on to give our opinion — **what we do**, not **who we are**, is important. Yet, what are we achieving and to what extent are we making a difference on the global agenda? With less than a year to go before I step down as President, I would like to issue a challenge to you, the members of IFUW, to become engaged in a global process that will lead up to 2015.

Post-2015 Development Framework

2015 marks the end of the period for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and while some progress has been made, much more remains to be done. Meanwhile the process has already started for the post-2015 Development Agenda. The UN Secretary-General has produced a report [Realizing the Future We Want for All](#) and has appointed a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom as its Co-Chairs to make recommendations in the lead up to the UN General Assembly High Level Event that will take place in September 2013. In addition the [United Nations Development Group](#) is embarking on country-level consultations to be held in at least 50 developing countries. It is also setting in process nine thematic consultations and a web-portal,

which will allow an open interaction and information exchange.

Meanwhile, the outcome document for the Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development *The Future We Want* not only calls for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also sets up a General Assembly Working Group of 30 countries to work on them. In addition, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development – ICPD Beyond 2014 – is taking place with a [Global Survey](#) in which civil society is currently invited to participate at the country level. And there are discussions going on as to what will happen when the 20 years designated for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action comes to an end also in 2015.

The process is extremely complex with multiple actions taking place simultaneously. It is, however, a process in which IFUW and you the members of the national federations and associations (NFAs) should be involved.

But **are** we involved?

There is a lot of work for us to do...

As the process is currently developing, given the outcomes of the Rio Conference, the development of the SDGs, the make up of the High Level Panel and the current financial problems facing the world, there is a strong emphasis on economic and environmental issues within the context of sustainable development. At the moment the social and other urgent problems that we are concerned about as members of IFUW, including gender, education and human rights, are low priorities and are not being adequately addressed. For example, how will ‘gender’ be included – will there be a gender goal or will gender be mainstreamed? Will education be fully addressed? Will it be quality education at all levels and for girls as well as boys? Or will the emphasis be solely on access to primary education? And will human rights be fully included, or invisible as in the MDGs?

You must be ready to be involved...

IFUW and you as members of the NFAs have to become involved **now** in the process. There is no point in waiting until the decisions are made... and then complaining.

If we want to be considered as a leading women’s organizations at the global and national level, we have no option and we have to seize the opportunity. This is our chance to show what we can **do**. I therefore invite you to join in what I am calling the *President’s Initiative*.

- Our **objective** is to ensure that our main concerns – advancement of women, access to quality education at all levels, and the realization of human rights – are fully included in the post-2015 Development Agenda.
- Our **timeframe** is from **today** to 2015.
- Our **actions** will be to engage at all levels in the process, including as appropriate:
 - Monitor what is happening and making information quickly available with suggestions for action at the global, UN and national levels;

- Contact UNDP Offices and those of other UN bodies in relevant countries and become involved in the country-level consultations, thematic consultations and the web-portal, as they develop;
- Write position papers, articles and letters to the Editor of national newspapers talking about the processes and urging the inclusion of the social issues of concern to us;
- Lobby our Governments and key stakeholders to ensure that our issues are fully included as the processes are developed;
- Engage with other NGOs at the national and international levels to increase support for our main concerns in their work on the post-2015 Development Agenda;
- Become involved in the completion of the relevant sections of the Global Survey for ICPD Beyond 2014 in your own country;
- Participate in the regional meetings that will be held in connection with some of these processes.

I am aware that background work has to be done, including finding out **what** is happening, **which bodies** are involved, and **when** various events will take place.

Key resources

Links to key resources including *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, the Outcome document for the Rio + 20 *The Future We Want* and the Global Survey for ICPD Beyond 2014 will be posted on the IFUW Website, together with other relevant information.

Your commitment

If you and your NFA wish to be involved in the *President's Initiative* please identify a member who will act as your link person and forward her name, the name of your NFA and her email address to Marianne Haslegrave at the following email address: mh@ifuw.org.

Now is the time for us to begin working together to get our issues included in the Beyond 2015 Development Agenda. It is a challenge that we cannot afford to ignore.

Marianne Haslegrave
IFUW President