In Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), which sets out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), governments made strong commitments to protecting human rights, promoting gender equality, and empowering girls and women. Agenda 2030 reaffirms the International Conference on Population and Development’s Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcomes of their follow-up processes. The inclusion of these two UN conferences and their outcomes recognizes that universal access to sexual and reproductive health and the realization of reproductive rights are critical to achieving Agenda 2030. Additionally, Agenda 2030 makes major strides and moves forward from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially on gender equality; the new framework includes both a specific goal on gender equality and recognizes many of the ways that women’s human rights cut across development priorities. Specifically:

- **Goal 3** commits to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, at all ages. It includes a target calling for reduction in maternal mortality to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030, as well as a target on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education.

- **Goal 4** calls for inclusive and equitable quality education, and includes a target on ensuring education on human rights and gender equality.

- **Goal 5** commits to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It includes targets on ending violence and discrimination against women and girls; ending child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work; ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and ensuring women’s access to economic resources and opportunities.

Governments also made strong commitments to reduce poverty, end hunger, increase access to sustainable energy, address climate change, and promote peaceful societies. All of these measures are critical for women and girls to be able to lead fully-empowered, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

**What is needed going forward?**

Here is what’s needed to ensure the commitments to girls and women are realized:

**Monitoring and Accountability:** The SDGs apply to all countries in the world, not just to developing countries. All Governments must embrace Agenda 2030 and ensure national level policies are, at minimum, consistent with the SDGs. Governments must also work globally to promote the fulfillment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the realization of gender equality. Key opportunities for tracking progress of the SDGs include:

- **Ensuring gender equality is embedded in climate discussions:** In December 2015, countries will meet in Paris, France for the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations.
Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21/CMP11). COP21 will seek to achieve a new international agreement on climate, including efforts to reduce global warming.

- **Ensuring we are measuring progress holistically and comprehensively:** The UN Statistical Commission and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG) will continue to work to develop the set of indicators by which progress on Agenda 2030 will be measured. The indicators determine what the global community measures, and how success is defined. They will also strongly impact implementation and country accountability for progress towards achieving the goals. The IAEG will propose a global indicator framework, which will be considered and adopted by the Statistical Commission in March 2016.

- **Ensuring the global community is committed to achieving the SDGs:** The High Level Political Forum (HLPF), established in 2012 at the Rio+20 Conference as the primary UN platform for addressing sustainable development, will be the main body for follow-up and review of Agenda 2030 at the global level. The HLPF meets annually under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council, and once every four years at the Heads of State level under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. Regional forums on sustainable development will also be held, to provide accountability at the regional level and will play a critical role in ensuring the full implementation of the entire Agenda, including the commitments on women and girls.

Most importantly, at all levels of the monitoring and accountability discussions, meaningful participation of civil society organizations, including women’s and feminist organizations, is crucial.

**Resources:** To ensure the success of the SDGs, achieving gender equality must remain a key priority, and donor and national governments must prioritize funding for all aspects of Agenda 2030:

- **Ensure that the agenda is fully financed.** Donor governments, including the United States, must ensure that the strong commitments in Agenda 2030 are backed by equally strong financial commitments. In July 2015, at the third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, governments made a number of financial commitments, including supporting the Global Financing Facility in support of Every Woman Every Child to support efforts to end preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths by 2030; the new Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; and the Addis Tax initiative to help developing countries better mobilize and effectively use their own domestic resources by building national capacity to finance their own development priorities and needs. However, the success of the Agenda will require robust and sustained funding in support of the goals and targets.

- **Prioritize gender sensitive budgeting at the national level.** In order to accelerate progress on achieving the SDGs related to gender equality and empowering all women and girls, governments should integrate a gender perspective into their budgeting processes, tracking how budgets respond to gender equality commitments and targets and analyzing whether sufficient expenditures are being made on women and girls that address their needs and priorities.

**Learn More:** Holding all governments and key national policymakers accountable to Agenda 2030, as well as mobilizing funding for the implementation of the SDGs will be critical in ensuring we are making progress on achieving gender equality in next fifteen years. Learn more at the [www.universalaccessproject.org](http://www.universalaccessproject.org).

**Briefing Cards:** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Sustainable Development