**Special Event of the President of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals**

**25 September, 2013**

Speaking Notes for WEDO (shortened for delivery)

Honorable Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues and Friends:

My name is Eleanor Blomstrom of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization and I also speak as a member of the Women’s Major Group for sustainable development and the Post-2015 Women’s Coalition. I have 5 short points to articulate today, drawn from the expertise of these and other partners working for gender equality, women’s rights and a sustainable future for all.

First: Opportunities of the post-2015 development agenda must be informed by today's reality. Progress on the MDGs has been uneven, with MDG3 and MDG5 lagging far behind. As flawed and narrow as the current goals are, people cannot stand by and wait during the process to design a transformative post-2015 agenda. **Progress on all existing commitments needs to be accelerated, with a central focus on women’s rights and gender justice,** and alongside efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices. This requires keeping the commitment to the outcomes of Beijing, Vienna and Cairo. This action must go hand in hand with efforts to transform power asymmetries and structural inequalities that transcend gender and geography.

Second: **Education, health and peace and security are cornerstones of sustainable development. They require the active and meaningful participation in decision-making by girls and women of all ages.** This will contribute to poverty eradication.Access to education is not enough. Education is a right; and free, quality learning in a safe environment must be a public investment over the life cycle of every person. Comprehensive, integrated, quality sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental to all other rights, and necessary to ensure women and girls are able to fully participate in education, decent work and decision-making. These services can be delivered at little additional cost via existing structures. The Women, Peace and Security agenda should link to post-2015 to address human security at multiple levels.

Third: **Climate change and environmental instability are visible symptoms and symbols of entrenched unsustainable production and consumption patterns and short-term thinking that exacerbates existing inequalities and drives extractivism**. Our planet has limited resources and we have a moral imperative to ensure intergenerational equity in all efforts to end poverty. Tackling climate change will be the backbone of the post-2015 development agenda - integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development - if transformation is truly a shared goal of all stakeholders. And it cannot be done without public sector action and engaging women and men in solutions.

Fourth: **When considering the** **role of the corporate sector and public private partnerships** **to finance sustainable development and poverty eradication**, **we must commit to addressing** **corporate accountability** andthe undue influence of corporations on national decision-making. The current economic model must be transformed to ensure equitable distribution of wealth, and end cycles of violence and poverty. Consider positive practice; such as agro-ecology, food sovereignty, the solidarity economy, re-claiming the commons, and focus on well-being or buen vivir.

Fifth: **Inclusion needs to be genuine.** We ask the UN and Member States to demonstrate inclusivity with dedicated and valued space for diverse voices which will reaffirm and uphold the UN’s commitment to fundamental human rights and the dignity of all persons. **Women’s networks from grassroots to international, are and will be, key partners** in innovation, implementation and monitoring and accountability. **Make the connections with us, facilitate information sharing and enact mechanisms for equitable access to financing.**

To conclude, let’s take this opportunity to implement new systems to solve existing crises, eradicate poverty and commit to post-2015 **sustainable** development that ensures integrated progress for people and planet, for communities and ecosystems –so the gains made today advance human rights, conserve resources and provide opportunities in the future.