

# **IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS DECLARATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

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*The views expressed in this document are those of the authors.*

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## INDEX

0) Executive Summary	3
1) Introduction	5
2) Background	6
3) Analysing the Paris Declaration from a Women's Rights perspective:	8
3.1 General critiques	
3.2 Analysis of the Five Principles of the Paris Declaration	
4. New Aid Modalities in the Framework of the Paris Declaration: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights	16
5. Gender Equality and the Current Paris Declaration Monitoring and Evaluation System	22
6. How to Strengthen the Gender Equality and Women's Rights Perspective in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda:	24
6.1 Recommendations to Strengthen Gender Equality in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda	
6.2 Recommendations to the Third HLF and the Accra Agenda for Action	
7. Bibliography	28
8. Annexes	30

# IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS DECLARATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (PD) aims to reform the delivery and management of aid. The main goal of aid effectiveness is framed as poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The PD is said to be unique in that it establishes overarching principles to redefine the relationship between donor and recipient countries. The practical implication of these commitments is a shift in the mechanisms or 'modalities' that channel aid.

Despite changes in how aid is delivered to partner governments, civil society organisations contend that the Paris Declaration remains an unjust and unequal framework for understanding and implementing the aid effectiveness agenda. Among other concerns, the Paris Declaration is gender blind, and as a result, fundamentally flawed.

An analysis of the five principles of the PD raises the following concerns:

- ❑ Ownership: country ownership of development programmes should not be equated with "government" ownership. Citizens, including women's organisations, should be involved in the formulation and delivery of development policies and programmes.
- ❑ Alignment: as donors "align" aid with national budgets, and with aid mainly being channelled from government to government, if gender equality is not an explicit national priority (and in many cases it is not), will it be entirely excluded from donor agendas as well? There is also a risk that fewer aid resources will be available to support the work of CSOs, and particularly women organisations.
- ❑ Harmonisation: it is easy to see how "harmonising" donor policies could lead to a strengthening of conditionalities, such as the imposition of certain economic and trade policies. There is also a risk that harmonisation will result in too narrow a framework (based on the policies of the least progressive donor) and thus a reduction of the development agenda.
- ❑ Managing for results: human and women's rights principles and the legal obligations of donors and governments should be used to determine the effectiveness of policies and approaches – particularly their impact on vulnerable groups.
- ❑ Mutual Accountability: the principle of mutual accountability, where donor countries, recipient countries and citizens should be able to hold each other to account for their development commitments, can only be truly possible where strong, independent, and well resourced civil society and women's rights organisations exist.

The PD relies on a range of “new” aid modalities, including budget support, sector wide approaches, poverty reduction strategy papers, basket funding and joint assistance strategies. Across the board, these modalities raise concerns in terms of the possibilities for real civil society participation in influencing development plans and funding for development, limited capacities to play an informed role in shaping and monitoring budgets, persistent conditionalities imposed by donors that override national development interests, and fears that “country ownership” in contexts of lukewarm political commitment to gender equality will translate in far-reduced donor support for women’s rights.

Civil society organisations have expressed serious concerns about PD monitoring plans, particularly the reliance on World Bank evaluation mechanisms and the absence of independent ways to measure the implementation of the PD Principles. Women’s organisations are concerned with the fact that no gender equality indicators are included.

A more holistic approach is essential, that is, one that integrates parallel efforts (such as those by several donors to analyse in depth the relationship between aid effectiveness and gender equality) as part of the monitoring of the impact of the Paris Declaration.

The above analysis leads to several recommendations to strengthen a gender equality dimension in the aid effectiveness agenda:

- 1) Donors and governments should deliver on their commitments to gender equality by:
  - Delivering on their commitments to the International Human Rights Frameworks and key agreements on women’s rights and development.
  - Ensuring sufficient financial resources to accomplish their commitments towards gender equality, human rights and development.
  - Ensuring the effective participation of national machineries for gender equality in development planning and implementation.
- 2) Strengthening democratic ownership and women’s participation in the aid effectiveness agenda:
  - Strengthen national public awareness about the PD and the centrality of gender equality.
  - Promote mechanisms for effective civil society, including women’s rights organisations, participation in designing, implementing and monitoring national development plans.
  - Promote better communication and engagement between CSOs, women’s rights groups, and local governments and Parliaments.
  - Promote an autonomous and responsive aid support to civil society actors including women’s organisations, with inclusive new aid mechanisms.
- 3) Include gender equality in the monitoring and evaluation of the PD:
  - Use gender-sensitive instruments.
  - Develop statistics disaggregated by sex.
  - Support the development of qualitative indicators and analysis.

4) Develop guidelines and tools on the contribution of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality:

- ❑ Support the development of guidelines, monitoring tools and indicators on the contributions of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality.
- ❑ Document the experiences of gender advocacy and promotion in the PRSP processes and provide an analysis of women's poverty in direct relationship to national macroeconomic policy.

A Third High Level Forum will take place in Accra in September 2008 to assess progress in implementation of the PD. It is vital that CSO delegations, including an important presence of women's rights organisations, be accredited for participation in the Forum.

With regard to the resulting Accra Agenda for Action and beyond, recommendations include:

- ❑ Promote the centrality of gender equality and women's rights as a development goal for aid effectiveness. A twin-track approach involving both gender mainstreaming and specific women's rights interventions is recommended.
- ❑ Carefully track funding that goes to support women's rights in order to "follow the money" and its impact.
- ❑ Develop adequate guidelines and tools to ensure that the new aid modalities are not marginalising gender equality and women's rights.
- ❑ Promote a review of the monitoring system for the Paris Declaration, and integrate a gender equality perspective into the monitoring and evaluation efforts.

# IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS DECLARATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the most recent donor-partner agreement designed to increase the impact of international aid was adopted in Paris at a High Level Forum organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC). The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (PD) aims to reform the delivery and management of aid, committing donor and recipient countries to a series of principles and targets to achieve aid effectiveness (AE). The main goal of AE is framed as poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The PD has now been endorsed by 25 donor countries, 80 recipient countries and close to 25 multilateral institutions. It will be implemented through 2010.

The Millennium Development Goals aim to cut poverty in half by 2015. We know that poverty is a feminised phenomenon<sup>1</sup>, with poor women bearing the brunt of inequality. Firm political will is required to make gender equality a priority as one of the central goals of development; without that commitment, no aid mechanism can be effective in delivering sustained poverty reduction.

Given the critical importance of debates on aid flows and development effectiveness, women must be included as key stakeholders. However, women's voices and perspectives have been largely excluded at both national and international levels in the development policies and processes funded by aid. Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure inclusion of gender equality concerns so that progress in achieving development goals is real and sustainable.

The debate around the relation of gender equality and the new aid architecture is a relatively new one. There will be much to be learned in the years to come. This paper aims to advance that conversation, putting a women's rights perspective at the centre of the aid effectiveness discourse. The paper draws from and analyses the current literature and shares results of in-depth interviews with women's rights activists from different regions<sup>2</sup>. The analysis includes key critiques of the implementation process and principles of the Paris Declaration (Section 3), concrete examples and implications of the lack of integration of gender equality into the implementation of the new aid modalities (Section 4), a critical look at the PD monitoring and evaluation system (Section 5) and proposals for strengthening the integration of gender equality and women's rights in the aid effectiveness agenda (Section 6).

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<sup>1</sup> According to Valentine Moghadam (2005) the vast majority of people living in poverty are women (around 70%, based on UNDP data) and the three main dimensions of this phenomenon are: the expansion of female-headed households, the persistence of intra household inequalities and bias against women and girls, and the implementation of neoliberal economic policies around the world.

<sup>2</sup> See the list of the interviewees in Annex 2.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Prior to the Paris Declaration, the international community had made several commitments related to aid and development at the United Nations level, and in other donor declarations at the OECD DAC, among other spaces. The PD is said to be unique in that it establishes overarching principles that redefine the relationship between donor and recipient countries. It aims to ensure that developing countries have ownership over their development plans, and commits donor countries to aligning themselves to recipient countries' strategies and procedures. Donor countries are also committed to ensuring that their procedures for aid disbursement are more harmonised, that both donors and recipient countries are mutually accountable for the results of their development work, and that resources and decision-making are managed for results.

The practical implication of these commitments is a shift in the mechanisms that channel aid. In the past, aid was largely allocated to recipient countries by international financial institutions (IFIs) and there was a heavy focus on support for individual projects as the primary aid mechanism. In contrast, since the PD was adopted in 2005, a strong emphasis has been placed on country ownership, in an effort to realign power and leadership with recipient governments.

There are at least five inter-related new 'aid modalities' – though some have been in place for several years prior to 2005 – that have come to replace individual project support:

- ❑ General Budget Support (GBS), sector budget support, MDG contracting;
- ❑ Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs);
- ❑ Multilateral Policy Assessment based financing, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs);
- ❑ Basket Funding; and
- ❑ Joint Assistance Strategies (JAS)

Despite the changes in how aid is delivered and the new commitments by donor and recipient countries to the PD principles, civil society organisations (CSOs) contend that the Paris Declaration remains an unjust and unequal framework for understanding and implementing the aid effectiveness agenda.<sup>3</sup>

Women's rights advocates globally are further concerned that the Paris Declaration is gender blind, and as a result, fundamentally flawed. Development goals are effectively advanced only when gender equality is advanced; that is, development occurs when women's rights are fully respected and guaranteed, when agreements for environmental sustainability are implemented and when human rights are given the opportunity to flourish. The OECD DAC recognises that "there is ample evidence that as long as half of the population is not in a position – due to gender discrimination – to develop and use its capacities and participate in social, economic and political life, both society as a whole and economic development suffer from the resulting inefficiency".<sup>4</sup> But this evidence is not recognised in the PD, which contains no measures to promote women's rights and gender equality standards are neither proposed nor acknowledged.

<sup>3</sup> See "From Paris 2005 to Accra 2006: Will aid be more accountable and effective?", a policy paper prepared by the International CSO Steering Committee accompanying the preparations for the Accra High Level Forum, available for download in English, French and Spanish at [http://www.betteraid.org/downloads/draft\\_cso\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](http://www.betteraid.org/downloads/draft_cso_policy_paper.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> OECD DAC (2007).

The Paris Declaration currently positions gender equality, as well as environmental sustainability and human rights, as cross-cutting issues. In so doing, the PD marginalises these areas as accessory issues to development and consequently, to the aid effectiveness agenda.

**Box 1:**  
**2008: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**  
**OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place **February 25 – March 7, 2008 in New York** around the theme “Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women”. This session will deal with the central paradox currently facing the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment: universal commitments to gender equality by the international community versus the relatively limited progress made over the past years in their implementation at the national level. The key elements that will be highlighted during the session: accelerating implementation of previous commitments at national levels, including the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices; increasing attention to information and data needs; enhancing capacity to mainstream the issue; and identifying key policy initiatives to move implementation forward. Included in these discussions will be an examination of the Financing for Development and aid effectiveness processes from a gender equality/women’s rights perspective.<sup>5</sup>

**XII United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

Another relevant process is the preparation of the UNCTAD XII that will be held in Accra in April 2008. The topic will be Globalisation for Development: Opportunities and Challenges. The preparatory documents include issues like strengthening UNCTAD and enhancing its development role, and the emergence of the “new South”.

**Third High Level Forum (HLF 3)**

In September 2008 donor countries and recipient countries will meet for a High Level Forum (HLF3) in Accra, Ghana to assess progress in the implementation of the PD, and to agree on a new ‘agenda for action’. This will be the first opportunity for donor and recipient countries and civil society organisations, to review the progress on the implementation of the PD.

**Financing for Development (FfD)**

Another critical moment for the international development agenda in 2008 will be the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. This conference will be held in **Doha, November 29 – December 2 2008**.<sup>6</sup> At a High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development held in New York in October 2007, it was stated that the results from the Accra HLF will feed directly into the Doha FfD process.

2008 will be a key year for assessing international cooperation modalities and reforms, within which there must be momentum for advancing gender equality and women’s rights as fundamental development goals. Women’s rights organisations, UNIFEM, GENDERNET and the CSO International Steering Group have put forward proposals to ensure that gender equality will be seriously considered as a development goal for the Accra High Level Forum and related processes.

<sup>5</sup> Further information at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sesspriorityhtm.html>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations A/C.2/62/L.37 General Assembly, 15 November 2007. See also United Nations A/C.2/62/L.59 General Assembly, 6 December 2007.

## 3.0 ANALYSING THE PARIS DECLARATION FROM A WOMEN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

### 3.1. General Critiques

Women's rights activists and others are concerned that the Paris Declaration agenda is a **highly technical process**, focused mainly on procedures for aid management and delivery, with insufficient attention to the actual impact aid is having on achievement of development goals. Cathy Gaynor highlights this technical emphasis in the introduction to her paper, "The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality":

There is now substantial empirical evidence of the functional necessity of gender equality and empowerment of women to these stated aims of the Paris Declaration. However, so far, donor and recipient country efforts have chiefly concentrated on technocratic efficiency dimensions of aid reform (mechanisms and processes or nuts and bolts) rather than address challenging values-based, issues such as gender equality (substance and results).<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps this technocratic approach is not surprising, given that the majority of policy makers leading and managing the aid process are economists, administrators and technocrats or planners. Civil society participation on broad issues of aid effectiveness in the lead up to the Accra High Level Forum has been limited, focused on specific consultations<sup>8</sup>. Those consultations were convened by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, a body created by the OECD DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness with the intention of deepening an understanding of CSOs and development effectiveness. The Advisory Group is a multi-stakeholder body, composed of CSOs – 3 Northern CSOs and 3 Southern CSOs – along with 3 donors and 3 partner governments, chaired by the Canadian International Development Agency. The Advisory Group has an additional mandate to open the preparatory process for the HLF to civil society organisations. While the latter mandate has had modest success<sup>9</sup>, there has not been significant involvement of civil society organisations around the donor/government negotiations of the PD principles and their implementation. This marked absence makes vulnerable the work that is being done to advance key development goals, including gender equality and women's rights.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women, Gaynor, C. (2007), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> To date these consultations have been organized by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness and focus on applicability of the Paris Declaration Principles to CSOs and to their Aid Effectiveness. The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, planning the Accra High Level Forum, is also planning a series of multi-stakeholder consultations in early 2008, but these too will be limited to a mid-term evaluation of the implementation and impact of the PD.

<sup>9</sup> CSOs at the Advisory Group consultations commented on a range of aid effectiveness issues beyond those directed related to CSOs and aid effectiveness. As of December 2007, there has been one formal (and two informal) CSO engagements with members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, with another planned for early April 2008. At its November 2007 meeting, the Working Party agreed that 80 CSOs will be full participants at the High Level Forum in all of its sessions, including the Ministerial meeting. CSO engagement with the Working Party has been coordinated by the CSO International Steering Group, which is also supporting the organization of a parallel CSO Forum in Accra just prior to the HLF. AWID, WIDE and CCIC are members of this International Steering Group.

There is no women's rights organisation among the six CSO members of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, and women's rights groups were not well represented in the regionally organised Advisory Group consultations. In recognition of this gap, AWID, WIDE and UNIFEM<sup>10</sup> with the support of Advisory Group members including CIDA, CCIC and Action Aid International, will organise a consultation of women's organisations.

The **Paris Declaration mentions gender equality in only one out of 50 paragraphs** (see Box 2), with language that at best can be described as weak. This clearly indicates a lack of political commitment from donors and governments to make gender equality a priority as one of the central goals of development.

**BOX 2:  
PARAGRAPHS 40 TO 42 OF THE PARIS DECLARATION:  
PROMOTING A HARMONISED APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS**

40. Donors have achieved considerable progress in harmonisation around environmental impact assessment (EIA) including relevant health and social issues at the project level. This progress needs to be deepened, including on addressing implications of global environmental issues such as climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity.
41. Donors and partner countries jointly commit to:
- Strengthen the application of EIAs and deepen common procedures for projects, including consultations with stakeholders; and develop and apply common approaches for “strategic environmental assessment” at the sector and national levels.
  - Continue to develop the specialised technical and policy capacity necessary for environmental analysis and for enforcement of legislation.
42. Similar harmonisation efforts are also needed on other cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and other thematic issues including those financed by dedicated funds.

Engagement by women's groups in the AE process is critical since, as GENDERNET warns,

If efforts to incorporate gender equality are not accelerated, there is a risk of missing opportunities to channel scaled-up aid to address gender equality and women's empowerment. This could result in new institutions, processes and systems operating without recognition of their gendered nature.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This consultation will take place in Ottawa, January 31 – February 1, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Summary Report of the Joint meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality, “Aid Modalities and the Promotion of Gender Equality”, January 30-31 2006, Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

However, **lack of transparency and information-sharing** at the country level has been an obstacle to the full awareness and involvement of civil society organisations in the aid effectiveness process.

As FEMNET explains,<sup>12</sup> women’s organisations have a close knowledge of the issues, power relations and cultural implications related to social change, and these elements are at the heart of effective development strategies. Consequently, the involvement of women’s rights advocates and women’s machineries is fundamental to overcoming the limitations of the Paris Declaration in terms of gender equality and women’s rights. But participatory processes can only have real impact if women are prepared for this engagement and there is an investment to build the capacity of women to engage in planning and negotiation processes in aid relations.

Women’s rights advocates also suggest that the Paris Declaration does not take seriously some **of the political, social and economic challenges inherent in each country context**. When considering the implementation of the PD, the principles seem desirable and positive, but their implementation is far from simple. In some cases, Southern country governments give little consideration to gender inequality, are subject to political instability and human rights violations, or fail to take into account issues in environmental sustainability. How does “country ownership” prevail in these circumstances? Donor countries are not always aware of local realities and well-intended principles, when put into practice, may not be respectful of the local contexts.

The challenges posed by context are further aggravated by a **lack of clarity in the role donors play in the implementation of the PD principles**. While the PD commits donors in theory to a more balanced relationship with partner countries, this balance is seldom the reality for the poorest countries. Even more problematic is how governance issues surrounding the implementation of the Paris Declaration (mostly related to public financial management and the PRSPs), are largely defined by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank standards. There are still many instances where, for example, economic conditionalities or public procurement by donors are negatively impacting partner countries and those most affected by poverty and inequality – including women.

In its current form, the Paris Declaration gives short shrift to human rights, women’s rights and democratic governance concerns in the overall effort to scale up aid and achieve donor harmonisation and alignment.<sup>13</sup> Effective development actions must question the traditional charitable approach to aid that sees people in general, and women living in poverty in particular, merely as the “beneficiaries” or the “object” of policies and programmes. Women, men and their communities should be duly accorded the status of active “subjects” who fully participate in development. Poverty reduction should be viewed from a human rights perspective, reflecting the inalienability of the right to be free from poverty.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Implementing the Paris Declaration: A Southern Civil Society Experience. An Address by L. Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET, Kenya, a Workshop Sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Ottawa, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> De Renzio, Paolo, *et. al.* (2006).

<sup>14</sup> Social Watch (2006).

It is important to note that some agencies are using explicit human rights frameworks in setting their development policies, and in some cases there are opportunities for greater collaboration between governance efforts, human rights and gender equality work. Many agencies seek to mainstream gender equality and human rights as crosscutting issues in development programming, others implement specific or sector programmes, and some are doing both.<sup>15</sup> According to the outcomes from the 8th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting on Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy (Kampala, June 2007), there is a need for significant scaling up of resources devoted to gender equality, increased accountability and the continuation of a twin-track approach of both gender mainstreaming and specific interventions.<sup>16</sup>

In April 2007, a landmark event in Dublin of the OECD DAC Networks on Environment and Development, Governance, and Gender Equality and the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness looked at connecting the aid effectiveness agenda with gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability. Participants concluded that these linkages:

- ❑ are fundamental cornerstones for achieving good development results;
- ❑ can be advanced through implementing the principles and partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration, and
- ❑ must be harnessed to advance the implementation of the Declaration.<sup>17</sup>

Women's rights advocates and increasingly other CSOs argue that **overarching binding international agreements and mechanisms related to women's rights and the right to development must be the foundation upon which to build more recent commitments** to the MDGs and the PD. Otherwise, there is a substantial risk that the political and formal achievements of women's movements and human rights advocates from past decades, and the responsibility of multilateral institutions to these agreements could be undermined by more limited new agendas and practices that do not take these rights into account.

Encouragingly, several agencies are reviewing their policies and conducting research on aid effectiveness and gender equality in advance of the Accra High Level Forum<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> These outcomes were presented by Ms. Sarojini Ganju Thakur (Commonwealth Secretariat) at the Fifth Meeting of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (Gendernet) 27-29 June 2007, Summary Record.

<sup>17</sup> Workshop on development effectiveness in practice: applying the Paris Declaration to advancing gender equality, environmental sustainability and human rights, Dublin, Ireland, 26-27 April 2007, Summary Report (DCD/DAC(2007)40), this document and the presentations are available at: [www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/inpractice](http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/inpractice).

<sup>18</sup> OECD DAC (2007), DAC Action-oriented policy paper on Human Rights and Development, Paris.

**BOX 3:**  
**EFFORTS IN DEVELOPMENT FROM DONORS TO UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTIONS  
BETWEEN GENDER EQUALITY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS**

**European Commission, UNIFEM and ILO:** “EC/UN Partnership on gender equality for development and peace”. Case studies in: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Honduras, Nicaragua, Suriname, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

**Danish Institute for International Studies:** They are evaluating the implementation of the *Paris Declaration* on behalf of the Evaluation Network. This exercise will complement the monitoring of the 12 indicators and provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis of both partner and donor behaviour. It will include country-level evaluations and donor evaluations at headquarter level, as well as thematic studies. An initial report on the practical lessons learned on implementation will be prepared for the Accra High Level Forum, while later work will address development outcomes.

**Donors to be evaluated:** Netherlands, Denmark, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Australia, Finland, UNDP

**Partner countries to be evaluated (supported by a donor):** Bangladesh (Japan), Bolivia (Spain), Mali (Belgium), Philippines (Japan), Senegal (Canada), South Africa (US), Sri Lanka (UNDP), Uganda (Austria), Viet Nam (Denmark and UK), Zambia (Netherlands and Ireland).

**Irish Aid:** They are funding a desk study to examine how effectively the areas of gender equality, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability and human rights are addressed in Joint Assistance Strategies. The intended outcomes are to improve partner country and harmonised donor efforts to achieve good development results for women and men.

**United Kingdom, in collaboration with Ireland, Denmark and the Netherlands:** “Strengthening the poverty impact of the Paris Declaration – an aid effectiveness evidence gathering project on gender equality, human rights and social exclusion”. In-depth case studies in: Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

**MOPAN:** the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network is a network of nine donor countries that jointly conduct an annual in-house survey of multilateral partnership behaviour in developing countries (partnerships with national governments, civil society and other bilateral and multilateral development agencies).

**Gender Coordination Group in Mozambique** (chaired by UNFPA, composed of bilateral donors, multilaterals, government and civil society).

## 3.2. Analysis of the Five Principles of the Paris Declaration

### 3.2.1 Ownership: Partner countries taking the lead in setting the development agenda.

Country ownership is not clearly defined in the Paris Declaration, but the focus of the PD commitments implies that “country” ownership is equivalent to “government” ownership of development strategies. As a result, CSOs find it difficult to see these development strategies as nationally owned. In the view of civil society, country ownership of development programmes should be understood as democratic ownership that involves citizens, including women’s organisations, in the formulation and delivery of policies and programmes. Democratic ownership requires legitimate governance mechanisms for participatory decision making and accountability in development plans and processes that apply to parliaments and elected representatives as well as civil society watchdog groups.<sup>19</sup>

To date, the primary indicators of country ownership have been the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and related development plans. Yet PRSPs are a debt relief mechanism that gives primacy to the creditors. While the strategy papers are drafted by developing country government officials, with some degree of civil society consultation, they ultimately must be approved by the World Bank and IMF.

It is highly problematic that “country ownership” is being defined only through strategies that conform to the interests of the IFIs or are developed through closed national processes. If we see country ownership as a democratic, multi-stakeholder process, this means that *the people directly affected by foreign-funded projects or programs should have the right to review, accept or reject such projects in their area. Governments, instead of IFIs, should act as gatekeepers of national aid policies*<sup>20</sup>.

At the same time, both donors and governments must live up to their international commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment through mechanisms such as CEDAW<sup>21</sup> and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In contexts where gender concerns are excluded from the national budget process and priorities, governments must be held to account on their commitments, even within a framework of “country ownership”. GENDERNET asks:

Are donors paying adequate attention to how gender issues are treated in partner countries and do they provide incentives to ensure integration in strategies and programs and adequate resources in budgets, for example through feedback on gender equality in Joint PRSPs Reviews, sector review and in Joint Staff Advisory Notes?<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “From Paris 2005 to Accra 2008: Will Aid Be come more Accountable and Effective”, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Overview Report on the Kathmandu CSO and Multi-Stakeholder Consultations for South Asia and West Asia, October 29-November 1, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures progressively to end discrimination against women in all forms.

<sup>22</sup> GENDERNET, *Draft Issue Paper*, “Understanding the Connections between the Paris Declaration and Work on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”, August 2007, page 3.

CSO and OECD DAC actors recognise that the ownership principle implies that aid practices must draw on **existing expertise about women's issues in partner countries**. Strengthening local expertise and developing a strong gender analysis and relevant gender policies is central to democratic ownership of development strategies, and aid effectiveness. Such policies should diagnosis gender issues, establish priorities and implementation strategies and manage for gender equality results.

### **3.2.2 Alignment: Donor countries base their overall support on recipient countries' national development strategies, institutions, and procedures.**

The alignment principle has been translated by donors into alignment with national budgets. As a result, one of the main tools proposed by aid practitioners is various forms of budget support. This means that aid goes directly to national public budgets with a set of conditionalities that are negotiated, but largely imposed, by the donor countries. CSOs have raised several concerns about budget support and experiences are different in each country. The first concern from a women's rights perspective is that gender equality and full realisation of women's rights is seldom among national budget priorities. In most cases, neither is there an adequate participatory process for defining national priorities in a way that fully incorporates women's needs and concerns. In addition, allocation of these monies by national governments may not be transparent, with corruption a major concern.

As international aid is flowing more and more to the broad priorities of governments, less funding from bilateral and multilateral cooperation will be available to support specific gender equality and women's rights programmes. There is a risk that fewer aid resources will be available to support the work of CSOs, and particularly women organisations, for whom this is a particularly important funding source.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, alignment through budget support requires a strong national civil society playing a watchdog role. This role includes engagement in national budgetary processes including establishing priorities for resource allocation, monitoring disbursements and implementing gender budgeting. Women's groups have strong experiences in these arenas and can contribute to democratising national budgets and making these processes accountable. However, the watchdog role of CSOs and women's organisations in this aid framework does not replace their roles in service delivery, community organising, advocacy and more. In fact, it is this diversity of roles among CSOs that gives legitimacy and accountability to their roles in monitoring governments and donors.

The integration of gender dimensions is particularly difficult where budget support is the preferred aid delivery instrument as "both donor and partner systems are generally not well-equipped to track and monitor the resources which are focused on gender equality and need to be adjusted in order to serve this function adequately."<sup>24</sup> In these cases, are gender responsive tools and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) integrated into broader financial management reforms proposed by donors?

<sup>23</sup> AWID's 2007 Second Fundher Report, *Financial Sustainability for Women's Movement's Worldwide*. Available for download at [http://www.awid.org/go.php?pg=fundher\\_2](http://www.awid.org/go.php?pg=fundher_2)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

### **3.2.3 Harmonisation: Donor countries will work so that their actions are more harmonised, transparent, and collectively effective.**

It is important that donors not use the harmonisation principle to continue developing or strengthening their conditionalities, using aid as a tool to impose particular economic and trade policies, among other conditions. This is a very sensitive issue because recipient governments will be negotiating with all of the donors together, which can create opportunities as well as challenges. On one hand, harmonisation reduces multiple accountabilities. On the other hand, it can threaten the independence of Southern governments and reduce their bargaining power. Joint Assistance Strategies will be implemented at the national level, along with reforms underway in the United Nations system (called “One UN”), so that all programmes from bilateral and multilateral institutions will be more and more harmonised.

As one interviewee, a gender expert within a multilateral agency, asked: *To what extent are these harmonisation processes actually leading to a reduction in transactional costs for aid delivery? Moreover, are they being really effective in improving development international cooperation?*

There is a risk that harmonisation will result in too narrow a framework (based on the policies of the least progressive donor) and thus in a reduction of the development agenda. In this context, women’s groups must raise their voices to ensure that gender equality and women’s rights are explicitly taken into account. New spaces for dialogue between women’s organisations and donors are needed to facilitate the inclusion of gender equality considerations in donor practices and their harmonised relationships with developing country partners and to ensure a more coordinated approach to gender equality in development assistance.

### **3.2.4 Managing for Results: All countries will manage resources and improve decision-making for results.**

When managing for results, human rights principles and legal obligations of donors and governments should be used as a measure of the effectiveness of policies and approaches – particularly their impact on vulnerable groups. GENDERNET proposes that existing country-relevant gender equality indicators and processes be the basis to monitor results and progress towards gender equality. Existing mechanisms include MDG targets and indicators, as well as CEDAW reporting requirements and reporting on the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>25</sup>

Sex disaggregated data and gender analysis must therefore be integrated into all monitoring, implementation and evaluation processes (called country assessments). Civil society groups should be involved in these processes and the evaluation methodology must be transparent and agreed upon with the national governments and development actors.<sup>26</sup>

These issues are also relevant to the principle of mutual accountability.

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<sup>25</sup> GENDERNET, August 2007.

<sup>26</sup> See the recommendations developed in Section 6 of this study.

### **3.2.5 Mutual Accountability: Donor and developing countries pledge that they will be mutually accountable for development results.**

The principle of mutual accountability, where donor countries, recipient countries and citizens should be able to hold each other to account for their development commitments, can only be possible where strong, independent, and well resourced civil society and women's rights organisations thrive. According to one interviewee, "it would also be helpful to understand and clarify the accountability roles of donors, women's machinery [in government], different arms of governments, and CSOs, as different actors, as a way to build support and opportunities to facilitate the political power needed to drive and sustain resources for gender equality goals."

Another interviewee notes that women's rights advocates have faced significant challenges at the country level in attaining gender equality accountability from governments. Such accountability proves difficult because the primary focus for aid effectiveness is on institutional procedures of disbursement and accounting, not results or impact on the ground for gender equality goals. Much attention is being placed on the alignment of donors to the PD, but how are donors and governments measuring whether the PD aid modalities are having the desired impact in terms of development results in recipient countries?

CSOs have raised concerns with respect to the practices of the IFIs, as it is not clear how the latter are accountable at the national level. Women's groups, working with CSO campaigns on IFIs, play a key role in monitoring the direct and indirect effects of IFI policies on women's lives. Women's organisations also can, and do, carry out assessments of how donor and recipient countries' policies and plans reflect their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>27</sup>

Meaningful mutual accountability cannot be isolated to the aid relationship. It requires that donor countries' interests and double standards about trade and development be made explicit and part of the dialogue, along with citizen participation from both recipient and donor countries. Women's groups have developed extensive gender analyses of trade policies, as well as the relation between aid practices from developed countries and their links (and contradictions) with policies in trade and investment, which seriously affect prospects of developing countries to tackle poverty and inequality. These concerns are a key component of the civil society agenda around "mutual accountability".

## **4.0 NEW AID MODALITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PARIS DECLARATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

The failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 90's, combined with the weak performance of aid flows led the donor community to search for a more effective framework for international development assistance. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was adopted in 2005 as a result of that search.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See DAC Network on Gender Equality Minutes of the Meeting of the Task Team on New Directions in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Paris, 26-27 June 2007.

<sup>28</sup> The search includes other High-Level processes like the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference (2002), the Rome High-Level Forum on Harmonisation (2003) and the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (2004).

A set of “new” aid modalities emerged to support the PD implementation at the country level, consolidating a new architecture for development financing. These include Budget Support, Sector Wide Approach (SWAp), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), Basket Funding and Joint Assistance Strategies (see Box 4). This new aid architecture comes in a context of scaling up of aid flows, with a re-commitment to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by some of the OECD donor countries<sup>29</sup>.

**BOX 4:**  
**CENTRAL APPROACHES TO PLANNING AND AID DELIVERY IN THE NEW AID ARCHITECTURE**

**Budget Support**

Budget Support covers financial assistance as a contribution to the country’s central budget. Within this category, funds may be nominally accounted for against certain sectors, but there is no formal limitation on where funds may actually be spent.

There are two main types of Budget Support: General Budget Support (GBS) supports the government’s budget as a whole; Sector Budget Support is earmarked for a discrete sector of the government budget (as part of a SWAp).

The key framework that determines the relationship between donors and a government receiving General Budget Support are a) the Memorandum of Understanding – the original contract; and b) the Performance Assessment Framework which is used to monitor the use and allocation of Budget Support.

**Sector Wide Approach (SWAp)**

Sector Wide Approaches involve donor support to the development of an entire sector in a given country, such as health, education or agriculture, rather than specific project support. Such support is generally linked to donor joint support for a government ministry, such as health or education, but can also include other funding relationships linked to a given sector.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)**

PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank and IMF in the late 1990s as a prerequisite for debt reduction by its poorest and most indebted country clients. In recent years, these Strategy Papers have been adopted by almost all official donors as a guide to their country assistance programmes. The PRSP is intended to outline the country’s main problems relating to poverty and its strategy to overcome them. PRSPs are meant to be drafted by the recipient government through a national participatory process in consultation with the World Bank and IMF. The Boards of the IFIs still approve the final version of a country’s PRSP.

**Basket Funding**

Basket Funding is a joint funding modality by several donors towards a programme, sector or budget support. It may entail agreement of donors on harmonised procedures and terms and conditions of these assistance programmes with recipients.

**Joint Assistance Strategies**

Joint Assistance Strategies are intended to make it easier for aid recipient governments to coordinate the activities of individual donors and encourage donor harmonisation. They are often coordinated by the World Bank to provide a framework for dialogue between a government and donors as a collective group.

*Source: UNIFEM (March 2006) and GADN (2007).*

<sup>29</sup> The 0.7% target of GNI is to be reached by 2015 (the target for 2010 is 0.5%). Currently the average level is between 0.20% - 0.25% for all OECD donor countries. Only five countries: Denmark, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have achieved (and exceeded) this target (Williams, M., 2006:7). Most of the international community has been committed to achieving the 0.7% target since the 70s (Resolution 2626 (XXV) UNGA, 24 October 1970), and ratified this commitment in the Monterrey Consensus in 2002.

These new aid modalities are to be grounded in national planning processes and national development plans or strategies (i.e. “local ownership”). In practice, they are supported at the country level by generating national consensus on its PRSP, aligning donor assistance to support the country to achieve the MDGs, and dividing responsibility for technical leadership at the country level through Joint Assistance Strategies (JASs)<sup>30</sup>.

Though focused on increasing the effectiveness of aid, these new modalities also interact with and influence the overall context of economic development and the development trajectories of aid-recipient countries. As specific mechanisms and approaches for disbursing aid, they individually and jointly impact developmental priorities and choices and hence have implications for the long term growth dynamics of developing countries (Williams, M., 2007).

**An impact on gender equality will not be automatic, nor is it likely to be benign. The new aid modalities need to be en-gendered.**

According to Williams, M. (2007), there are at least two specific issues to take into account in the context of new aid modalities and their impact on gender equality. The first is the extent to which new modalities enable the provision of affordable and good quality public services in the form of essential services such as health, education, access to water, energy and sanitation. These issues directly impact on women’s social and economic empowerment. Second, there is the issue of targeted gender equality interventions and the extent to which the new modalities can be used to increase financing of these interventions.

Tan, C. (2005) assessed the impact of new aid modalities on essential public services and concluded by highlighting the contradictory effects of modalities like GBD or SWAps on the delivery of public services to the poor. The policies behind these modalities are pushing the privatisation of services, such as water or health (in theory to increase service quality and delivery). These mechanisms also tend to exclude national strategies for universal access to basic services. The benefits of privatisation of essential services have been widely questioned by women’s rights activists and many others. Affordable access to basic services is key to human development and poverty reduction. Special attention needs to be given to this very sensitive issue.

#### **4.1 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers**

There has been considerable analysis of experiences with PRSP processes. Wide-ranging concerns have emerged around the often flawed consultation processes used to build a PRSP, the disconnects between inputs received in consultations and the content of the final document, as well as the limited impact of recommendations in shaping budget allocations since IFIs have a final deciding role.

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<sup>30</sup> UNIFEM, March 2006: 3.

An analysis of Kenya's PRSP<sup>31</sup> for 2001-2004 finds no detailed analysis of the gender dimensions of proposed policies in the PRSP, or anticipation of gender implications of the outcomes. This could be due to an inadequate gender review of the socio-economic and political situation, or lack of a comprehensive gender disaggregated database. However, in the PRSP consultations, women's high vulnerability to poverty in relation to men is acknowledged, as well as key factors that exacerbate it. Gender imbalance was in fact cited as one of the major factors in propagating poverty. (Maureen, W., *et. al.*)

The analysis concludes that there are gender gaps (poor women are worse off than their male counterparts) in virtually all the core dimensions of poverty—opportunities, capabilities, empowerment and security. Although the PRSP acknowledges some of the gaps, the PRSP sector proposals do not adequately identify key priority areas and policies that could help reduce the gaps. In most cases, women and men are treated homogeneously, without taking into consideration gender-specific impacts.

**Box 5:  
LESSONS FROM KENYA**

*In short, with respect to “local ownership,” there are real problems from the donor side in terms of envisaging what this is intended to mean beyond the PRSP process. Within the PRSP process itself, there are real problems for civil society and government in terms of follow through and implementation.*

Implementing the Paris Declaration: A Southern Civil Society Experience. An Address by L. Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET, Kenya, A Workshop Sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Ottawa, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

**Lessons from Ghana**

*Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) had not considered the development of women, who are the majority of the poor in Ghana, thereby making poverty alleviation difficult to achieve.*

*Prof. Manuh, at the End of the Year Review of the Situation of Women in Ghana, 2004. Published in Akoben, Newsletter of the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Vol. 4, June 2005.*

One interviewee added that even though the PRSP processes are supposed to be inclusive and participatory, when it comes to the final stage, there is no participation. Very little information is disclosed on the negotiations between the World Bank, IMF and the government, which implies a missed opportunity to integrate human rights and gender issues in the plans. And while implementation of PRSPs is expected to occur through the national budgeting process, public capacity is limited for organising and providing budgetary input from citizens or local CSOs, including women's organisations, on an annual basis.

<sup>31</sup> Five core principles shape the development and implementation of PRSPs: these strategies should be country-driven, results-oriented, comprehensive, partnership oriented and based on a long-term perspective for poverty reduction.

**BOX 6:  
LESSONS FROM BURUNDI**

In Burundi, women's participation in the development of the Interim PRSP led to the inclusion of gender as a strategic axis, which was lost in the final IFI approved version of the PRSP where gender is treated as a crosscutting theme. Gender sensitive policy frameworks are not sufficient; commitments to women must be resourced and implemented.

*UNIFEM (2006)*

**Lessons from Africa**

Recent assessments of PRSP plans showed mixed outcomes. Gender issues tend to be concentrated in the 'soft' – and feminised - areas like health and education, and rarely appear in 'hard' areas such as the macroeconomic framework, infrastructure, or governance.

*Anonymous interviewee*

If the World Bank and IMF reject a country's PRSP, that country does not qualify for World Bank or IMF support and it is unlikely to receive bilateral support from a donor government. It is widely known that the World Bank and IMF place considerable more importance on domestic economic policy frameworks and the behaviour of the economy as a whole, than on poverty-oriented results. Governments, aware of these requirements, often end up opting for programmes they think will be accepted, even if they conflict with the priorities identified through the consultative process (Van Reisen, M. et al, 2005). This undermines the principle of country ownership and internal accountability from the recipient government towards its citizens, as well as the inclusion of gender and human rights concerns in the definition of macroeconomic and poverty reduction priorities.

As one interviewee explained:

“Nationally, PRSPs have for the most part been driven by the Executive level of government, namely by Ministries of Finance or the President's Office. In some cases, we have witnessed protests from national parliaments for what they perceived as their exclusion from the process. The sceptical reaction by CSOs has been strengthened due to their actual experience of participation. Even when the process for developing the PRSP has listened to critique from civil society about the impact on poverty of donor policy conditionalities, the resulting PRSP did not reference actual policy conditionalities that were attached to either prior lending agreements or future lending agreements with the Fund and the Bank. So, even where participation was deemed to be successful in terms of the range of groups and stakeholders that did contribute to the PRSPs, the acceptance of their input into strategies for different sectors was limited, and discussions on the macroeconomic framework that affect the viability of these strategies remained off-limits.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Implementing the Paris Declaration: A Southern Civil Society Experience. An Address by L. Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET, Kenya, a Workshop Sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Ottawa, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

## **4.2 General Budget Support**

General Budget Support (GBS) can only be as gender sensitive as the PRSP supporting it. Yet we have already noted that even when gender-specific objectives are present in the PRSP they are frequently not linked to any specific budget allocation (Collinson, H. *et. al.*, 2008). In addition, the dialogue surrounding the use and allocation of GBS is largely confined to private engagement between donors and powerful Ministries of Finance and Planning with no input from CSOs or anyone with gender-related expertise. Even in countries with Women or Gender Ministries or Secretariats, those bodies have little participation or influence in the negotiations with donors around GBS.

An additional challenge is the unpredictability of donor disbursements for budget support, partly because there are still many conditions attached to GBS. If governments do not comply with these conditions, budget support can be suspended. This unpredictability reduces the possibilities for long-term programmes to tackle issues such as gender equality and women's empowerment. Mariama Williams (2007) argues for developing safeguard mechanisms to mitigate the potential negative impact of cases when governments fail to meet conditionalities or when there are conflicts and contradictions among aid modalities, leading to real or threatened changes in government spending on poor communities.

Of further concern is that concentrating ODA through government budgets may reduce donors' interest in funding CSOs and the women's movement. Yet with occasional exceptions, it is unrealistic to channel funds for CSOs through public funds since many CSOs play a counter-balance or advocacy role at the local or national level, and will not easily be funded by their governments.

## **4.3 Sector Wide Approaches**

The OECD-DAC evaluated the promotion of gender equality in the context of SWAps, for the period 2000-2002. The evaluation used country case studies of education SWAps in Ghana, India and Uganda; health SWAps in Bangladesh and Ghana; and agriculture SWAps in Kenya, Zambia and Mozambique. This study identified that in most cases, SWAps were focused on narrowly defined investments in women and girls, rather than addressing the wider underlying social and power relations that created their unequal access to these services. Van Reisen (2005) also identified that gender mainstreaming strategies in sectoral approaches resulted in gender disappearing from the strategy (Collinson, H. *et al*, 2008). Moreover, donor-supported SWAps – and positive experiences of influencing these SWAps with a gender perspective - are largely confined to education, health, and agriculture, areas often traditionally linked to gender equality concerns, and where CSOs have extensive work histories. Gender implications of other sectors equally important for women's rights such as water, urban infrastructure or transport, have not been considered through SWAps (GADN, 2007).

#### **4.4 Donor Basket Funding**

As experiences with donor basket funding expand to a range of countries, the case of the Governance, Justice, and Legal Order Sector (GJLOS) in Kenya can provide useful insights on challenges presented by this particular aid modality – primary around access to decision-making, capacity to provide gender equality expertise to the degree necessary, and monitoring of implementation. According to Jacinta Muteshi, of the Kenyan Human Rights Commission:

“Decision-making was diffused in the multi-tiered management structure of the basket fund regarding priorities to fund and there was low representation of women at the highest levels of decision making within government and the multi-tiered management structure. This was further compounded by having only one women’s CSO represent the entire spectrum of women’s needs within the GJLOS.

There was inadequate capacity in gender expertise to provide for the needs of the diverse and multiple participants relating to the management body. This had an impact on the design of a coherent gender equality agenda, with gender mainstreaming strategies that limited the uptake of gender equality specific goals.

Although the recognition, expectation and demands on Kenya’s National Commission on Gender and Development is high within the management structure, the commission’s inadequate human and financial resources render it unable to provide the level of support, advice and oversight to the numerous participating institutions in this management structure.

Thus, there are no consistent across-the-board built-in indicators to monitor gender equality and neither strong accountability mechanisms to measure progress to gender equality. However, there are exceptions in a few basket sectors that see gender equality as meeting some key aspects of their agenda, for example, the reforms in the Police sector. In this sector, they have addressed their capacity needs for dealing with gender based violence as well as the reforms being undertaken by the Law Reform Commission with regards to revising Kenya’s gender related laws.”

#### **4.5 Gender Equality and a Holistic Approach to National Development**

New aid tools will require clear mechanisms for intervention in order to be gender sensitive and must also draw upon empowering tools for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This will require an evaluation of each of the modalities in relation to its potential impact on social and economic development, gender equality and women’s empowerment, democracy and participation.

*Mariama Williams (2007)*

Gender analysts (Floro, M. *et. al.*, 2004) have highlighted that progress towards human rights, the eradication of poverty and gender equality remains elusive due to the lack of:

- ❑ sufficient resources committed to these objectives;
- ❑ political commitment (beyond lip service) on the part of many governments to these objectives;
- ❑ coherence between macroeconomic policies and other programmes that address these development goals; and
- ❑ an “enabling international environment” that would allow governments to devise coherent and comprehensive policies that would put people at the centre of development processes.

As the Monterrey Consensus declared: “[...] *in the increasingly globalizing interdependent world economy, a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of finance for development – sustainable, gender-sensitive and people-centered- in all parts of the globe is essential*” (UN 2002a, paragraph 8).

Potentially, these new aid mechanisms could have a positive impact on gender equality and women’s rights. However, women will only benefit from the new aid architecture if their unique constraints, opportunities, incentives and needs are considered, and if gender equality is recognised as a key component of poverty reduction and national development (UNIFEM, July 2006). The examples presented in this section show that as this recognition is not taking place, gender equality and women’s rights issues fall off development agendas.

## 5.0 GENDER EQUALITY AND THE CURRENT PARIS DECLARATION MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

The first review to assess implementation of the PD was conducted in 2006 on the basis of donor and government actions in 2005. The resulting Baseline Survey<sup>33</sup> prepared by the OECD DAC, is based on surveys completed by 34 *self-selected countries*<sup>34</sup> in September 2006 and a comprehensive list of donor organisations covering 37% of aid programmed across the world in 2005. The Baseline Survey also includes results from the World Bank’s 2005 Comprehensive Development Framework Progress Report, the country profiles prepared for the World Bank’s Aid Effectiveness Review, and data from the World Bank’s annual Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA).

CSOs expressed general concerns about this monitoring tool, particularly its reliance on World Bank evaluation mechanisms – which define the way results are understood – the lack of clarity regarding the monitoring of donors’ performance, and the absence of independent ways to measure the implementation of the PD Principles.

<sup>33</sup> OECD (2007), *2006 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration: Overview of the Results*, Paris.

<sup>34</sup> To see a list of the countries participating in the surveys, please refer to [http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33721\\_38521876\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_33721_38521876_1_1_1_1,00.html).

Additionally, the DAC survey mechanisms do not explicitly look at whether the process of implementing the PD principles is leading to an increased effectiveness of aid or what this means in terms of development results, such as the MDGs. In particular, regarding gender equality, even if the Paris Declaration is explicit on the need for gender analysis (Paragraph 42)<sup>35</sup> to inform harmonised approaches, GENDERNET highlights that:

*“[...] the likelihood of this happening will depend on how strong the commitment to gender equality is from government and from donors, how much consensus can be reached on this and the efforts taken to make this explicit and measurable in performance assessment frameworks related to program budget support and other monitoring and review mechanisms.”<sup>36</sup>*

**In the framework used for the Baseline Survey, no gender equality indicators are included, and an analysis of the impact on gender equality is absent from the whole process.** In sum, the current set of indicators as defined by the World Bank to monitor implementation of the Paris Declaration is not an effective tool to assess progress and change.

Currently, the mechanisms used by the Joint Venture for Monitoring the Paris Declaration (established by the OECD-DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness) are tied to the 12 indicators of progress defined in the Paris Declaration, and therefore do not consider a gender perspective. Unfortunately, despite critiques of the Baseline Study, a recent DAC document regarding modifications for the second round of monitoring to be held in early 2008 suggested that “no revisions were made to the list of indicators or targets that were agreed in Paris” (OECD DAC, November 2007).

The 2006 Baseline Survey monitored 34 countries in terms of quantitative information. There is a need to add qualitative indicators to the current set of indicators. For the 2008 Survey, the Joint Venture for Monitoring the Paris Declaration is proposing to have a small set of questions to identify challenges to PD implementation and reforms that need to be made in order to reach the proposed targets (OECD DAC, November 2007). Again, there was no reference to including gender equality as one of the issues to be analysed.

There is a risk that in the name of being more effective, the DAC and key donor countries have developed a new set of aid tools that do not fit the real development needs of the recipient countries and vulnerable groups in those countries. There is no reason that such a gap should exist in the monitoring survey. In another recent document, GENDERNET noted:

*“[...] there are many country mechanisms in place for monitoring development strategies and aid effectiveness reform (...) and monitoring commitments through, for example, MDG reports, CEDAW and the National Human Development Report (UNDP).”<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> For more details see Section 3 of this document.

<sup>36</sup> GENDERNET (2007), Gaynor, C., *Understanding the Connections Between the Paris Declaration and Work on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*, Draft version, August, 2007

<sup>37</sup> GENDERNET (2007), GAYNOR, C., *Using the Paris Declaration in work on Gender Equality and Women’s empowerment*, Draft version, August

A more holistic approach is essential, that is, one that integrates parallel efforts as part of the monitoring of the impact of the Paris Declaration. These should include efforts by several donors to analyse the relationship between aid effectiveness and gender equality. In several countries Southern CSOs, including women's groups, are already organised to carry out monitoring processes, which should be drawn into the official DAC process, rather than building new spaces for civil society to monitor the DAC members' efforts in the South. But it is also true that in many of the poorest countries systems for data gathering are weak, and the lack of sex disaggregated data is a problem everywhere.<sup>38</sup>

The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness should recognise and include monitoring efforts that already exist on the ground in the South by CSOs, which should guarantee gender sensitive progress assessments, performance monitoring and gender indicators for aid effectiveness, and tracking aid money being allocated by government and donors for gender equality and women's empowerment.

## 6.0 HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE IN THE AID EFFECTIVENESS AGENDA

### 6.1 Recommendations to Strengthen Gender Equality in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda

#### 1.0 Donors and governments should deliver on their gender equality commitments.

**1.1 Donors and governments should deliver on their commitments** to international human rights frameworks and key agreements on women's rights and development, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the MDGs.

**1.2 Donors and governments should ensure adequate financial resources to accomplish their commitments towards gender equality, human rights and development.** As recommended by the Expert Group on Financing for Gender Equality from the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the share of ODA for women's empowerment and gender equality should be scaled-up to reach 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2015 of all ODA.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> A good example of this is the case of Kenya, as mentioned in the Section 3 of this document (pp. 14-15)

<sup>39</sup> Meeting of the Expert Group on Financing for Gender Equality from the UN Commission on the Status of Women, September 2007.

- 1.3 Donors and governments should ensure effective involvement of national machineries for gender equality (where they exist), in development planning and implementation, and the aid effectiveness agenda.**

**2.0 Strengthening democratic ownership and women's participation in the aid effectiveness agenda.**

- 2.1 Donors and governments should make it a priority to strengthen national public awareness about the PD and the centrality of gender equality.**
- 2.2 Donors and governments should promote mechanisms for effective participation from citizens and CSOs, including women's organisations, in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of development processes.** These mechanisms should include improved through transparency, information sharing and training on the impact of various macroeconomic policies<sup>40</sup>. The necessary funding should be made available to support civil society participation.
- 2.3 Promote better communication and engagement between CSOs, women's rights groups, and local governments and Parliaments** as a way to develop ownership of development decisions. In ensuring mutual accountability through Parliaments, CSOs must be able to influence the Parliament to hold donors accountable for the commitments they make.
- 2.4 Promote autonomous and responsive aid support to civil society development actors including women's organisations, with inclusive new aid mechanisms.** These funding mechanisms need to ensure access to a wide range of CSOs, not only the largest and most politically influential.

**3.0 Include gender equality in the monitoring and evaluation of the Paris Declaration.**

All parties engaged in the design of aid reforms and new modalities should include adequate measures and guidelines to ensure the fulfilment of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments.<sup>41</sup> Specifically:

- 3.1. Utilise gender-based instruments such as gender responsive budgets, gender audits, and others** for monitoring. These instruments would track the extent to which resource allocation and public expenditures address gender inequalities and the situation of women.

<sup>40</sup> Maureen, W., *et. al.*

<sup>41</sup> General recommendation put forward by the Expert Group on Financing for Gender Equality from the UN Commission on the Status of Women, September 2007. The specific recommendations on this issue presented below have been developed by the authors of this paper.

- 3.2. Donors and governments should **develop statistics disaggregated by sex**, as this data is crucial to monitor gender gaps. **Donors should invest in building national capacities to collect, analyse and strategically disseminate that data.**
- 3.3. **Support the development of qualitative indicators and qualitative analysis of the results of the monitoring surveys.**

**4.0 Develop guidelines and tools on the contribution of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality.**

- 4.1. **Support the development of guidelines, monitoring tools and indicators on the contributions of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality.** For example:

- ❑ The **joint assessment processes** (between donor and recipient governments) could provide a window of opportunity for donors and governments to be held mutually accountable for gender equality goals. Such accountability would determine the extent and the impact of gender planning, gender budgeting, gender indicators, gender expertise and monitoring support for gender equality.
- ❑ Support **gender sensitive indicators in SWAps results frameworks** and mechanisms to track expenditure, assess performance and show impact.<sup>42</sup>
- ❑ Promote the integration of **Gender Responsive Budgeting** as tool to combine with General Budget Support. In this sense, donors and CSOs should build capacity within Southern governments on gender-sensitive budgets and empower women's participation in the budgetary process. This capacity has to be central to initiatives for Public Financial Management reforms and capacity development programmes.
- ❑ Include gender equality explicitly as a principle in memoranda of understanding in **General Budget Support and MDG contracting** agreements between donors and Southern governments.<sup>43</sup>

- 4.2. **Document the experiences of gender advocacy and promotion in the PRSP processes and provide an analysis of women's poverty in direct relationship to national macroeconomic policy.**<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> GENDERNET, Cathy Gaynor (2007).

<sup>43</sup> GENDERNET, Cathy Gaynor (2007).

<sup>44</sup> FEMNET for example is already approaching it through their work.

## **6.2 Recommendations to the Third HLF 3 and Accra Agenda for Action**

Civil society organisations committed to a rights approach to development must strongly engage in the lead-up to the Accra HLF and beyond, especially in terms of promoting women's groups as central stakeholders in the aid effectiveness process. CSOs have argued for more democratic global governance, with the institutionalisation of gender-balanced civil society access and participation in economic and financial decision-making and norm-setting, both nationally and internationally. The Third High Level Forum to be held in Accra in September 2008 is one of these key spaces.

Official voices say “the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) needs to keep its number of actions to few and to relatively high policy relevance. Furthermore, AAA must not be a 2<sup>nd</sup> Paris Declaration (...). Nevertheless, it might include some indicators for future monitoring, if they are kept to very few and consistent with existing PD indicators.”<sup>45</sup> So, there is space to propose a small number of new indicators.

But it seems clear that gender equality, human rights and sustainable development will not be priorities in the HLF3 programme. There will not be a specific Roundtable on these so-called “crosscutting issues”. The current proposal is to ensure that they are included in all nine proposed Roundtables (mostly organised around the Paris Declaration principles). If the Roundtables are the base of the AAA, it is likely that once again these key development goals will be missing in the commitments of the Accra Agenda for Action.

### **Main proposals to the Third High Level Forum:**

- ❑ Ensure that the CSO delegations that will be accredited to the HLF3 are able to participate at the Ministerial meeting, with voice (as was the case in Paris in 2005) and to present a statement.**
- ❑ Ensure a significant presence of women's rights organisations during the HLF and fully funded** by the official HLF budget (80 participants are expected, 40 of them with HLF funding).

### **Main proposals to the Accra Agenda for Action and beyond Accra:**

- ❑ Promote the centrality of gender equality and women's rights as a development goal for aid effectiveness. A twin-track approach involving both gender mainstreaming and specific women's rights interventions has been shown as the most effective way to integrate a gender equality perspective into the aid effectiveness agenda.**
- ❑ Donors, partner governments and CSOs need to carefully track the funding that goes to support women's rights.**
- ❑ Develop adequate guidelines and tools to ensure that the new aid modalities are not marginalising gender equality and women's rights.**

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<sup>45</sup> OECD/DCD management meeting, Preparation for the Accra HLF3: proposed structure of the 3 days, October 8, 2007.

- ❑ **Promote a review of the monitoring system for the Paris Declaration**, and integrate a gender equality perspective into monitoring and evaluation efforts. A positive achievement in terms of gender equality within the Accra Agenda for Action could be: **include additional indicators to the PD set indicators** including at least one on gender equality and another related to indicator 1 to qualify country ownership in terms of democratic ownership (measuring whether there is participation by CSOs and Parliaments in defining country development strategies).

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## 8.0 ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Paris Declaration Indicators and Principles for Monitoring and Evaluation

INDICATOR	PRINCIPLE
1. Recipient countries have operational development strategies (number of countries with national development strategies with priorities for middle-term expenditure reflected in annual budgets)	Ownership
2. Reliable country systems (number of countries with procurement and financial management systems that aim for good practices)	Alignment
3. Aid flows are aligned on national priorities (percent of aid flows to public sectors reported on recipients' national budgets)	Alignment
4. Strengthen capacity by coordinated support (percent of donor capacity-development support)	Alignment
5a. Use of country public financial management systems (percent of donors and aid flows that use systems in partner countries which adhere to good practices or have reforms to achieve these)	Alignment
5b. Use of country procurement systems (percent of donor countries and aid flows that use systems in recipient countries which adhere to good practices or have reforms to achieve these)	Alignment
6. Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures (number of parallel project implementation units (PIUs) per country)	Alignment
7. Aid is more predictable (percent of aid disbursements released in the agreed schedules)	Alignment
8. Aid is untied (percent of bilateral aid that is untied)	Alignment
9. Use of common arrangements or procedures (percent of aid provided as programme-based approaches)	Harmonization
10. Encourage shared analysis (percent of field missions and/or country analytic work)	Harmonization
11. Results-oriented frameworks (number of countries with transparent and monitorable frameworks to assess progress against national development strategies and sector programmes)	Managing for results
12. Mutual accountability (mutual assessments) (number of partner countries that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments, including those in the PD)	Mutual accountability

**Annex 2:  
List of Interviewees**

- ❑ Ineke van de Pol – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minbuza), The Netherlands
- ❑ Marina Durano – UNIFEM NY, India
- ❑ Brita Fernández-Schmit, Womankind/Gender and Development Network (GADN) , UK
- ❑ Rutendo Hadebe, Women in Politics Support Unit, Zimbabwe
- ❑ Jacinta Muteshi, National Commission for Gender and Development, Advisor to UNIFEM, Kenya
- ❑ Therese Niyondiko, African Women Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), Kenya
- ❑ Zo Randriamaro – UNIFEM Africa, Mozambique
- ❑ Maria Rosa Renzi – UNDP/UNIFEM – Nicaragua
- ❑ Bernice Sam, Women in Law and Development Africa (WILDAF), Ghana
- ❑ Norma Sanchis, Latin American Chapter, Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), Argentina
- ❑ Annette Tjonsiefat, CI, Suriname
- ❑ Muthoni Wanyeki – Kenyan Human Rights Commission, Kenya
- ❑ Nani Zulminarni - Center for Women's Resources Development (PPSW-CWRD)-Indonesia