



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Gender and Aid Effectiveness

Brief for National Delegates to Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

Foreword

At the end of November 2011, over 2,000 delegates from international donors, governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and academia will gather in Busan, South Korea, to debate making aid more effective at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), the tri-yearly meetings launched by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In addition to reporting on the success of past efforts, HLF4 delegates will consider how to cope with new challenges in making aid more effective.

These challenges include declining funding from the countries that have traditionally provided aid, and the emergence of new donors and investors who have not yet pledged to follow key principles of aid effectiveness (national ownership, donor coordination, transparency, consultation with civil society, and the promotion of human rights and environmental sustainability).

UN Women is amongst those who believe that enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment should be given the highest priority in HLF4.

Research shows that despite decades of effort and trillions of dollars spent on aid, there is still a large gap between men and women in terms of access to the resources and benefits of their societies. This is especially the case in poorer countries.

Gender inequality is not only contrary to human rights and social justice, but results in serious waste of the talents and potential of half the world's population. Research clearly shows that economies do significantly better when the gap between men and women shrinks, and that when funding is targeted at women and girls, the results are often outstanding.

The Gender Gap

When the time men and women spend on family care, food production, and earning income are totaled and compared, studies show that women work several hours longer per day. Women make up over 40% of the global labour force and bear the burden of care. When countries begin to industrialize, their first success is a garment industry, staffed by young women whose earnings support an average of four family members.

Women face systemic discrimination in education, health care, employment, and control of assets. Women account for 70% of the world's poor. Since women have few seats at the tables where development decisions are made, they have few opportunities to influence development policy and budgets.

Although women produce two-thirds of all food in developing countries, they own less than 1% of the land. Sons often inherit all, or a larger share of family property than daughters, and in divorce, the law favours husbands. In countries with low literacy, women's literacy is always lower than men's, and although primary school enrollments are approaching parity, in many countries few girls finish secondary or tertiary education.

In decision-making roles, men far outnumber women. In August 2011, only 20 heads of state or government were women, and men far outnumber women in national assemblies.

Across the world, women and girls face a high risk of sexual violence, domestic violence and being trafficked. Violence against females causes more death and disability than cancer, malaria and war combined.

Gender inequality is most dramatic in countries with more males than females. Now that medical testing makes it possible to determine a child's sex before birth, women can be pressured to abort female fetuses. Research shows as well that when gaps are wide between males and females, more boys survive in infancy and childhood because they receive better care than their sisters.

Closing the gender gap

Closing the gender gap between men and women is imperative for many reasons. First, women and girls must be treated fairly because equal treatment is a fundamental human right. Second, if opportunities for women and girls improve, great untapped potential will be released. Who knows what good decisions could be made, successful businesses launched, and valuable inventions developed if women and men had equal opportunities.

Third, research from around the world shows that national economies prosper when the gap between males and females declines. Fourth, when the gender gap is small, women are the backbone of strong civil society organizations, and when CSOs are strong and vigilant, governments serve the people better and corruption declines. Fifth, studies show that when development initiatives specifically target women and girls, the results are often outstanding. However, when the needs of, and impact on women and girls is not a consideration, development initiatives fall short of their goals and may even widen the gender gap.

The aid effectiveness approach

The aid effectiveness movement under the leadership of OECD began in 2003, with the intention of achieving much better outcomes from international aid. By the second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Paris in 2005, five key principles of aid effectiveness were articulated, and over 100 donor and aid recipient countries committed to the following:

- **Ownership:** countries receiving aid exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies, and they co-ordinate development initiatives
- **Harmonization:** donors' actions are harmonized with each other, transparent and collectively effective
- **Alignment:** donors base their support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures
- **Managing for results:** aid is managed and implemented in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making
- **Mutual accountability:** donors and recipients of aid are both accountable for development results and make transparency a priority in using development resources

The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) which emerged from the Third High Level Forum in 2008, committed to development policies that are consistent with human rights and gender equality standards. The AAA recognized the role of civil society organizations in development and committed to facilitating CSO engagement. In addition, the AAA stressed the need for capacity development for all stakeholders, including CSOs, so they play an active role in policy dialogue, budget allocations, aid management, and monitoring.

Although monitoring surveys show that aid donors and aid recipients have adopted these principles to some extent, countries have complained that the targets and indicators for measuring results are too technically complex and hard to use. Women's advocates have also criticized the Paris Declaration for not adequately addressing the question of how aid contributes to gender equality and development results in general.

Gender equality in aid

A 20-country study conducted by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) shows that 4.5% of official development assistance (ODA) has gender equality as its principle objective, and 66.8% of ODA does not support gender equality at all. The OECD-DAC study also shows that total spending on organizations advocating women's rights was \$421 million worldwide and evaluations fail to measure whether gender projects are high priority, well-designed or have an impact.

In preparation for HLF4, UN Women – the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – has conducted a number of gender monitoring studies and identified the following challenges:

- Weak coherence between economic policy and women's rights
- Government policies are committed to gender equality but not linked to funding
- Aid and development management mechanisms fail to meet gender equality commitments
- Limiting gender-focused aid to sectors such as health and education, with few gender-focused targets and indicators

Key demands of gender advocates for the HLF4 on Aid Effectiveness

Scale up investment in gender equality and broadening the scope of support to women's priorities across sectors

Adopt special policy measures for addressing women's priorities in financing instruments in fragile and post conflict countries, in line with Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 & 1960

Strengthen individual and institutional capacities for mainstreaming gender in national planning and budgeting and in aid management instruments and processes

Improve and institutionalize systems to track resources and monitor results to ensure accountability for financing gender equality

The key components required to make gender equality and women's empowerment a priority in all development initiatives include:

- **Sex-disaggregated statistics** – as other types of qualitative information on gender inequalities provide the essential basis for mainstreaming gender in aid effectiveness from policy advocacy through implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. *If gender inequalities are not identified, they cannot be addressed.*
- **Gender-responsive planning** – requires that gender experts and women's organisations must be at the table with development planners to ensure gender equality concerns, and the sex-disaggregated data be included from the outset of the process.
- **Gender-responsive budgeting** – is required in to ensure that the budget formulation process includes the voices of women and men at all levels, and to ensure that the content of the budget reflects gender equality goals in the way funds are allocated and revenue generated.
- **Gender-responsive monitoring** – requires measuring progress against gender-sensitive indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, to provide management and all stakeholders, including 'beneficiaries' with progress reports on the achievement of objectives on the gendered impact of funds allocated.
- **Gender-responsive evaluation** – means determining, as systematically and objectively as possible, the worth or significance of an activity, policy or programme with regard to the gender equality objectives established. It can also involve the definition of appropriate standards, assessment of performance against those standards, and identification of lessons learned for the next phase.
- **Capacity development** – in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming is needed for government officials and civil society organizations engaged in policy-making and legislation, planning, data-gathering and analysis, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluating of the impact of development programmes to ensure the full integration of gender in the aid effectiveness agenda.

Examples of Best Practice in East and Southeast Asia

Gender and Aid Architecture – Cambodia

Cambodia established a women's Ministry in 1996, a few years after decades of war and isolation ended, and the first Minister was appointed in 1998. The Ministry of Women's Affairs' mandate is to influence and guide the Line Ministries and lower-level administrative units to mainstream gender. The Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) was established in 2001 and brings together Secretaries of State from 12 line Ministries and civil society organizations under the leadership of MoWA to coordinate and consult with government on advancing the status of women and eliminating all forms of discrimination.

MoWA produced its first Five Year Strategic Plan, Neary Rattanak I, in 1999 which laid out how MoWA would complement the work of the other ministries in their projects which impacted women. The Ministry's second Five Year Strategic Plan focused on the development and implementation of legal and policy efforts to reduce domestic violence. Neary Rattanak III, covering 2009-2013, builds on the earlier strategic plans, and among other tasks: ensures gender-responsive national policies, legislation and reform programmes; provides support for the economic empowerment of women, and protection from violence and sexual and labour exploitation; promotes changes in attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against women; and works towards gender mainstreaming in decision-making.

In the past few years, MoWA has provided technical assistance to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into the national reform process and made recommendations for integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) principles into all sectors.

In September 2004, in collaboration with the Cambodian National Council for Women, MoWA established the Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G) – one of 19 TWGs that cover 12 sectors and 7 cross-cutting themes. The TWG-G monitors progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, with inputs from all the TWGs. This information is then fed in to the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum meetings that are held between donors and government about every 18 months.

In 2005, the first Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) began to be established in line ministries, chaired by a Secretary or Under Secretary of State. These provide a mechanism for developing and monitoring gender mainstreaming strategies and plans, and integrating gender responsive action within line ministries and programmes. The GMAGs are responsible for preparing Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs). With donor funding, MoWA has helped several ministries in drafting their GMAP, and by 2010, 26 line ministries had Gender Monitoring Action Groups, and 17 of these had prepared GMAPs.

To ensure implementation of GMAPs, as well as inclusion of recommendations made by MoWA for public management reform processes, Cambodia needs monitoring systems that take account of inputs and their implementation.

A current priority for MoWA is developing a Programme-Based Approach (PBA) to gender equality, which is the government's preferred approach towards achieving coherent use of resources, strengthening national capacities and systems, and delivering on development results.

Multi-donor Gender Facility – China

The China Gender Facility for Research and Advocacy (CGF) achieves an important Paris Declaration principle of coordinating aid from a number of donors. Set up to contribute to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reducing gender inequalities in China, the CGF promotes evidence-based advocacy and facilitating dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The CGF provides funding for innovative and catalytic proposals that incorporate gender considerations into national policies and laws; improves policies and laws to allow women greater access to resources and political participation; equips gender advocates with timely and relevant information and materials; and, increases the gender awareness and capacity of policy makers.

One unique feature of the CGF is its ability to strengthen the civil society organizations that receive grants and connect them with government. Another feature is implementing the CGF under the UN Theme Group on Gender which falls under the United Nations Resident Coordinator, head of the United Nations Country Team. This means the CGF provides a platform for inter-agency policy dialogue and co-ordination on gender and development issues, as well as sharing lessons learned on effective advocacy and gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and the wider community.

Since its inception, the CGF has strongly supported the Chinese government and civil society in addressing gender challenges in China, especially in research and advocacy. In recent years, the CGF has also made much progress in protecting women's rights through joint efforts with government and NGOs.

Among others, the CGF has successfully advocated for: the new China Employment Promotion Law which guarantees *de jure* equal employment rights for women and men for the first time in China; landmark judicial guidelines for judges on how to handle domestic violence cases in Hunan Province, the first ever such guidelines in China; and the replication of the Xuzhou Model, a 'one-stop shop' shelter for victims of domestic violence set up in more than 100 cities in China.

CGF donors include: the International Labour Organisation, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the Australian Agency for International Development, Omega Watches, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Government of Sweden, the Government of France, and the Government of the Netherlands.

Strategy for Gender Equality – Vietnam

Vietnam has taken an important step in mainstreaming gender by developing a National Strategy for Gender Equality 2011-2020 and the first ever National Programme on Gender Equality (2011-2015). To achieve effective results in this period, the activities in the programme focus on: improving state management capacity relating to gender equality, strengthening communication and education activities to increase awareness of gender equality, organizing support activities to promote gender quality, organizing technical assistance to implement gender equality in some sectors and areas where gender gaps are high, developing pilot models on gender equality, establishing a database on gender equality, developing indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, and organizing a review and mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy.

Based on a review of the National Programme on Gender Equality in 2015, activities for the second programme will be analyzed and focused on: reproducing good models and developing new models on gender equality, efficient use of gender equality data for forming policies, sharing information, incorporating lesson learned, and summarizing and evaluating strategy implementation. The specific plan and measures for each province will be tailored to their unique social and economic conditions.

These are a few examples of what national governments and donors in East and Southeast Asia are doing to mainstream gender. But in a situation of declining aid resources, engendering aid effectiveness is more pressing and cannot be achieved without making gender equality and women's rights a priority. Not only is gender equality a moral imperative to be fair to women and girls, but there is ample evidence from around the world that societies do better both economically and socially when the gap between men and women narrows.

ABOUT UN WOMEN

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

The main roles of UN Women are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Meeting the Needs of the World's Women

Over many decades, the UN has made significant progress in advancing gender equality, including through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth.

Yet gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched in every society. Women lack access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. They are too often denied access to basic education and health care. Women in all parts of the world suffer violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

For many years, the UN has faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally, including inadequate funding and no single recognized driver to direct UN activities on gender equality issues.

UN Women was created to address such challenges. It will be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls, providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels.

Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the UN Charter, UN Women, among other issues, works for the:

- elimination of discrimination against women and girls;
- empowerment of women; and
- achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

For more information: <http://www.unwomen.org>