

UN Women recommendations for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in the EC Communication on Aid Effectiveness

- The EU has reiterated its strong commitment to gender equality as a human right, a question of social justice and a core value of the EU development policy, including its Council Conclusions adopted in June 2010. Bearing in mind that gender equality is not only a goal in itself but also central in achieving all MDGs, the Council has adopted the *EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010-2015)*¹ (referred to as EU Plan of Action thereafter) which provides a framework for a strengthened, coordinated EU approach to promoting gender equality in EU development cooperation. Several specific objectives of the Plan of Action are directly relevant to the aid effectiveness agenda. In particular it highlights that the EU is committed to influence positively the outcome of the Summits on Aid Effectiveness with regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (Objective 7 – Action A7.1 – indicator: the EU positions on MDGs and Aid Effectiveness have a strong focus on GEWE). It is important that the *EU Communication on Aid Effectiveness* refers to and builds on the commitments highlighted in the EU Plan of Action.
- The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) to be held in Busan presents an opportunity for bold and concrete action on gender equality that should build on the strong commitments in the Accra Agenda for Action. Noting that the first draft outcome document for the HLF-4 calls for a *new paradigm and new partnerships* in development co-operation, UN Women believes that **gender equality and women's empowerment must be central to the new development paradigm**.
- It should also be noted that **the OECD- DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) has identified a number of key messages² for consideration in the outcome document**. These are

¹**EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010-2015) – Specific Objectives**

1. Strengthen the lead role of the EU in promoting GEWE in development; 2. Ensure adequate human and financial resources for GEWE; 3 Place gender equality issues systematically on the agenda of dialogue with partner countries; 4. Ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in EU funded projects and that general budget support and sector support programmes (SWAPs) use sex disaggregated indicators and include at least one gender equality performance indicator where relevant; 5. Prioritise in country Non State Actors participation and capacity building and advocacy on GEWE; 6. Improve the EU monitoring, accountability and transparency on allocation of funds for GEWE; 7. Strengthen EU support to partner countries in their efforts to achieve MDGs, in particular MDG 3 and MDG 5; 8. Strengthen EU support to partner countries in combating gender-based violence and all forms of discriminations against women and girls; 10 Support partner countries in fully implementing UNSCR 1325 and 1820, 1888 and 1889.

²The key messages were agreed at the GENDERNET meeting of the 14 June 2011 (see annex 1).

based on the findings of the optional module on gender equality of the 2011 Paris Declaration Survey which was completed by 23 partner countries and included three indicators to measure performance on gender equality. These were: 1) Gender equality and women's empowerment are grounded in a systematic manner in national development strategies (ownership) 2) data is disaggregated by sex (managing for gender equality results and 3) Mutual accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment – assessing whether mutual reviews exist and the extent to which they include national women's machinery and civil society organizations. The three indicators also draw on the AAA, in particular paragraph 13c3, 234 and 24.5

- **UN Women fully supports the key messages from the Gendernet and agrees that any post Busan monitoring framework should include gender specific indicators** as those set out in the optional module on gender equality. **These should form part of the main monitoring framework and should be obligatory rather than optional.** UN Women also proposes that indicators quantifying aid allocated to gender equality (by governments and development partners); and an indicator on coordination and harmonization of development partner practice especially in relation to harmonizing support for strengthened gender analysis, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality, is crucial.
- UN Women's key recommendations for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in the *Communication on Aid Effectiveness* are as follows:

1. The importance of democratic ownership, coherence and accountability:

National ownership entails that development priorities are defined through gender analysis based on consultations with multi-stakeholders including civil society and in line with international agreements on gender equality. An important avenue for realizing this is through building a strong understanding of the linkages between gender equality objectives and national planning and budgeting processes.

Proposals:

- New development paradigm should emphasize the centrality of gender equality, democratic ownership and mutual accountability as essential pre-requisites for achieving development results. A post Busan development framework should move beyond the Paris Declaration principles that affirm inclusion, human rights and democratic ownership in line with the 2005 European Consensus on Development.
- Strengthen democratic, inclusive and nationally owned development planning processes in order to ensure coherence of all development policies with national and international commitments on gender equality in partner countries. The EU CSPs need to reflect efforts to facilitate implementation of gender equality development priorities and commitments. The EU has committed to ensure that annual country reviews include an assessment of gender equality and that Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes are gender mainstreamed and include gender equality related specific actions [EU plan of Action A.3.4] and shall encourage all development partners to follow a similar line.
- Development partners must ensure coherent, coordinated and harmonized policy and programmatic action aimed to address gender inequalities. Research continues to show the lack of development cooperation goals that pursue the shortening of the gender gap in recipient countries, the persistent lack of disaggregated data and gender related indicators, as well as the limited capacity and expertise among CSO and gender advocates on aid management processes. Policy processes appear unclear to

non-government stakeholders, and donors are often unsure on how to best engage in gender equality policy dialogue.

- Donors and partner countries need to make use of evidence on high cost of gender blind interventions and investments in peace and security, social protection, economic development, violence against women and governance.

2. Improving the quality of financing for gender equality entails expanding the scope of support to women's priorities across sectors and in strategic areas.

Gender focused aid is mostly restricted to specific types of interventions in limited number of sectors with limited targets. Gender focused aid is often concentrated in social protection sectors at the expense of empowerment related sectors. Despite major progress in performance on gender related MDGs in specific areas of health and education, policy and financing responses fail to address persistent gender inequalities in those sectors (increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst women, sexual violence, girls secondary education is still low) or ensuring women benefit from support in other sectors, such as security, governance, energy, water and sanitation, housing and employment. Improving the impact and quality of aid requires focus on sectors that increase women's economic opportunities and ensure that they benefit from investment in infrastructure, energy, housing, agriculture and employment.

Proposals:

- Funding for GEWE needs to include direct investment for women and gender equality interventions (in addition to financing for national women's machinery and women's organizations), as well as gender mainstreaming in all aspects of development cooperation, as specified in the EU Plan of Action.
- Development partners and national partners should expand their focus on financing to address women's priorities in productive sectors, governance and infrastructure (including: economic opportunity, energy, transport and employment) by defining sector specific gender related performance indicators. Ensuring effective results in sector support requires more systematic integration of gender in the design of policy and programmes, and monitoring systems including direct sector budget support, Sector Wide Approaches and joint coordination and division of labour.
- Donors and partner countries need to improve and expand use of gender related statistics and performance indicators for informing policy making, planning, budgeting and programming. The EU has committed to ensure that general budget support and sector support programmes use sex-disaggregated indicators and include at least one gender equality performance indicator [EU Plan of Action - Objective 4] and that the analysis and integration of gender equality in development programmes remains one of the requirements for project design and implementation [EU plan of Action Action 4.3].
- Gender equitable development results require effective and dynamic accountability mechanisms that go beyond national government and include non-state actors and oversight bodies. The Paris Declaration indicators place emphasis on donor/government performance indicators and reviews with little use of citizen monitoring and parliamentary oversight. Mutual accountability must include citizen-state accountability and parliamentary oversight. National and development partners must support strengthened capacities of women parliamentarians and women's organizations for effective oversight.
- In fragile and conflict affected states, women and girls' needs, priorities and perspectives are still largely absent from planning and financing frameworks in support of early recovery and peace-

building³. Practical coordination mechanisms between international actors together with non-discrimination and ownership around women's rights and gender equality commitments (such as SCRs 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 & 1960) should be an integral part of all financing in conflict and post-conflict settings. Development partners should support capacity to identify, implement and monitor effective strategies to implement gender equitable development results in fragile states.

- Donors, partner countries and multilateral organizations need to improve and expand use of systems for tracking financing (and spending) for gender equality and its alignment with existing gaps and needs.

3. Strengthening systems to support financing for gender equality

Investment in gender equality does not always require additional funding, provided that planning and budgeting systems are improved to ensure that existing resources are used effectively and equitably so that gender gaps are reduced, for women and men and girls and boys. Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is an approach that has been increasingly adopted by national governments to improve their capacity to allocate budgets in a manner that addresses gender inequalities.

Proposals:

- Gender mainstreaming approaches in development planning requires specific measures by development and national partners to guarantee results including: identifying clear gender related performance indicators; inclusion of gender equality stakeholders in key aid coordination and review mechanisms; and investment in capacity to design and implement gender equitable policies and practice. Those measures need to be incorporated in aid management instruments including in variable tranches, and performance assessment indications.
- Joint aid coordination mechanisms (including sector theme groups and budget support groups) should be inclusive of representatives of women's priorities at the technical and political levels.
- Calls on OECD to carry out a review in 2014 on the effectiveness of aid management instruments and mechanisms in positioning gender issues and responding to key challenges facing women and girls.

³ In 2010, UN Women conducted 3 studies that analysed the extent to which women's need and concerns are included in planning and financing frameworks³ of 12 countries. This study is accompanied by 2 cases studies that analyze the extent to which women's security and peace building needs were included in planning frameworks (the Country Assistance Framework-CAF and Country Assistance Strategies-CAS in DRC) and financing mechanisms (the Nepal Peace Trust Fund - NPTF). In **DRC**, overall, the study found a significant absence of planning for women's security and peace building needs in the DRC CAF and across the majority of the top donors' CASs, with the exception of the United Kingdom (DFID). The study recommends the development of comprehensive assessment of, and coordinated donor strategy for, women's security and peace building needs, in close collaboration with the GoDRC. It further recommends strengthening the engagement of women and women's organizations in peace consolidation, donor consultation meetings and aid management – including future PRSP and CAF processes. In **Nepal**, overall, the study found that, since its establishment in 2007, few NPTF projects have addressed or budgeted for women's needs. Where NPTF projects have contained provisions for the inclusion of women's needs or gender considerations there has not been regular tracking of funds provided to meet these specific goals. The study provides a series of recommendations that the GoN and the seven bilateral donors to the NPTF, in collaboration with women's groups and networks, can undertake to strengthen the NPTF in relation to the project selection process, reporting and accountability of gender-related outcomes, strengthening the gender capacity of the overall management of the Fund, enhance the participation of women's groups, and increase donor harmonization and accountability.

- Partner countries must ensure that public finance management systems are gender responsive and have systematic ways of tracking results on achieving gender equality.

4. Gender equitable outcomes require investment in capacity for mainstreaming gender in public finance management systems, national planning and budgeting and in aid management systems.

The Paris Declaration principle of alignment emphasizes the use of national systems of planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation in aid management through expanding the use of direct budget support and sector approaches and increasing the use of joint multi-donor pooled and basket funding mechanisms.

UN Women acknowledges the support of the EU and the governments of Spain and Belgium to support programming on gender responsive budgeting (GRB).⁴ Research conducted in ten countries examined how GRB tools and strategies have been used in the context of general and sector budget support. The assessments also examined lessons learnt from the engagement of GRB initiatives in national planning and budgeting processes and the contribution of these efforts to the promotion of gender equality at country levels. The findings can be summarized as follows:

(a) The integration of gender in national planning, budgeting and M&E systems can inform aid channeled in the form of GBS, and sectoral programmes as those national instruments are identified as the basis for donor country strategies and priorities for funding. Therefore, the more responsive national instruments are to gender equality and women's rights, the more can aid contribute to the implementation of those priorities.

(b) GRB approaches examine government policies, processes, plans, monitoring indicators, and evaluations that determine priorities and shape budget allocations towards women's rights and gender equality. With the emphasis on joint partnership and mutual accountability between donors and partner countries, GRB approaches need to be applied to donor processes for planning, budgeting and M&E and joint coordination mechanisms as well as to national processes in order to span the full range of drivers of aid.

(c) In developing stronger links between budget allocations and expenditures and demands for the achievement of gender equality priorities, GRB efforts have engaged in mainstreaming gender in broader Public Finance Management Systems (PFMS). In fact, GRB approaches have in a number of instances contributed to the soundness of PFMS.

⁴Since 2006, UNIFEM now UN Women has been at the forefront of efforts to integrate gender-responsive budgeting into the aid effectiveness agenda. The "EC/UN Partnership on gender equality for Development and Peace" sought to ensure that gender equality and women's human rights are fully incorporated into national development processes and in cooperation programmes supported by the European Commission. The "GRB and Aid Effectiveness programme" focuses on demonstrating how gender responsive budgeting (GRB) tools and strategies can help ensure that aid provided in the form of General Budget Support (GBS) and Sector Budget Support (SBS) contributes to the achievement of gender equality goals. The programme "Supporting the monitoring of aid effectiveness from a gender perspective" has a component dedicated exclusively to initiate policy/political dialogue on aid effectiveness from gender perspectives. Finally, in the upcoming months, UN Women will be launching a programme aimed at linking gender equality commitments (as expressed in national action plans on gender equality with planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation systems used by donors and national governments at country level

Proposals:

- Donor countries to ensure mainstreaming of gender in technical support provided to public finance management and budget reform processes.
- Strengthen south-south technical cooperation around good practices in integrating gender in Public Finance Management and budget and public sector reform.
- The United Nations Special Unit on S-S cooperation, whose primary mandate is to promote, coordinate and support S-S and triangular cooperation, should focus on good practices in the area of integration of gender in national planning and budgeting.
- Investment in long term support to developing capacity of partner countries to identify; implement and monitor effective strategies to achieve gender equitable development results in national, sector and local plans, budget and monitoring frameworks.

5. Emerging issues/ Proposals: Role of multilateral system/ New development paradigm

- The growth in South-South economic cooperation presents huge opportunities for championing actions in support of gender responsive aid. S-S cooperation can provide entry points for generating more inclusive models and process and for upscaling good practices on gender equality especially in the eras of public finance management reform.
- The UN system needs to strengthen its accountability for GE commitments and monitor implementation of commitments and recommendations. The UN Development Cooperation Forum as a multilateral space accessible to all stakeholders including civil society organisations, would need to be assessed in this regard.
- New emerging donor must invest in their capacities for understanding and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in line with international obligations.