

Annex 12

Financing for Development from a gender perspective

Prepared by Ana Agostino and Rosa Lizarde from the FTF.

The Women's Working Group on Financing for Development (WWG) is a network of women's rights advocates in the Financing for Development (FfD) process, and is coordinated by the core group comprised of the Association for Women's Rights and Development (AWID), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Feminist Task Force-Global Call to Action against Poverty (FTF-GCAP), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Women in Development Europe (WIDE).

The involvement of women's groups in this process aims at placing women's rights organizations' analysis and policy recommendations into the forefront of global economic debates and national implementation strategies. The FTF has been an integral partner and is fully committed to this participation as it believes that it is central for poverty eradication and the well being of women.

In the Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, UN Member States made a number of commitments to mobilize and allocate resources for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Much of the development literature suggests, though, that the promised initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment have not been implemented.

Women have a clear vision on how governments and international organisations -that will meet during the Doha Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development at the end of this year in Qatar- should act to respond to the commitments of the Monterrey Consensus. Part of the challenge now is to insert gender more prominently than before and continue to work with governments in the preparatory process leading up to Doha to ensure governments' commitment to economic policies that are sustainable for women and their communities. A statement was issued to the United Nations General Assembly in October last year where this view was clearly articulated. This view was reiterated and strengthened at the CSW where another statement with key policy issues that need to be addressed was presented. The main proposals highlighted by the WWG and that mobilised other women's organisations are included below.

The WWG will be meeting for a women's consultation in June, prior to the FfD civil society hearings. One of its members will attend these hearings and will present the findings of the women's consultation analyzing the six FfD chapters and recommendations and proposals on gender equality. One of the outcomes of the consultation is to influence the negotiation for the Doha conference.

More information can be found at: www.un.org/esa/ffd Go to civil society - facilitators or directly to: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/civilsociety/WWG_on_FfD-info_sheet.pdf

FfD women's recommendations*:

I. Mobilizing domestic resources

Taxation

Strengthen tax administrations and tax collection systems for gender equality through focusing on progressive direct taxation on wealth and capital assets, rather than value-added tax which “can put a greater burden on poor women because women tend to consume goods and services that benefit family health, education and nutrition” (SG Report pp 8 para 27).

Gender budgets

Adopt Gender Responsive Budgets (GRB) as a framework in national development plans, to ensure that adequate resources, whether from domestic revenue or aid-allocated budget support, are channelled towards fulfilling international and national gender equality and human rights commitments.

Increase funding and strengthen the mandates for national women's machineries to build capacities, undertake GRB initiatives, monitor and evaluate gender equality outcomes, and implement local-level gender equality projects.

Decent work

Implement Temporary Special Measures to support women's income and economic empowerment by removing barriers to market access for women's small-scale production and to full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Statistics to account for unremunerated work

Use methods, such as time-use surveys, assumed by National Statistic Offices, to measure women's un-paid work and its contribution to the national economy, and to make visible women's actual economic contribution and gender-sensitive poverty measures in the National Accounts System. (ECLAC Quito Consensus 2007)

II. Mobilizing international resources

Provide public affirmation for strengthened global and domestic regulatory frameworks to ensure that business practices and private flows, including foreign direct investment, are responsible and accountable to international and national standards on labour rights, gender equality and environmental protection.

Make private flows, including foreign direct investments and remittances, work for the poor by adopting domestic policies and programs that will ensure that the vagaries of the market do not undermine whatever gain is achieved through these channels.

III. International trade

Ensure that trade works for sustainable development by demonstrating, through hard evidence provided by sex aggregated data and gender impact reviews and assessments, that trade policies contribute to both poverty eradication and equitable economic growth in ways that benefit poor women's economic rights and empowerment.

Strengthen UN mechanisms and processes to enable the application of a normative framework for international and bi-lateral trade which ensures policy coherence between trade and international and national commitments on development, human and labor rights and gender equality.

IV. Aid and technical cooperation

Allocate sufficient resources to programmes that empower and facilitate the advancement of women (2007 Summary of the President of the GA of the HLD on FfD, Para 44), starting by scaling-up the share of ODA for women's empowerment and gender equality to reach 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2015 of all ODA (CSW Experts Group Meeting on Financing for Gender Equality, September 2007).

Support the UN to lead in the effort to review the criteria for aid allocation, including those of the IFIs and the OECD, and consider new mechanisms to support poverty eradication and broader development efforts (2007 Report of the Secretary-General on FfD, para 93), and support a stronger role and leadership of the UN in aid effectiveness processes, that promotes genuine partnerships between donor and recipients, which would require that these processes avoid using donor-designed templates and indicators exclusively; and an inclusive perspective of democratic ownership as a key criteria to aid decision-making.

Use baselines as well as input and output performance indicators of gender impacts in budgetary reporting to improve the gender equality component in the current aid monitoring systems, and specify gender targets, inputs and outputs in national budgets and ODA.

Ensure that existing and new ODA management review and performance assessment tools and measures reflect a results-based monitoring and evaluation component with a special focus on how gender equality and women's empowerment targets are being met, in both donor and developing countries, and that the operational development strategies established by developing countries for 2010, related work plans and the monitoring system of the Paris Declaration implementation, fully integrate gender equality targets and indicators.

V. External debt

Affirm 100% debt cancellation as both necessary and overdue, given that current debt-restructuring approaches have not liberated resources for development and in HIPC countries poverty is an epidemic affecting the majority of its people, most acutely women and children.

Initiate a new and genuine policy space on debt to enable countries to overcome debt distress, as current policy space is conditioned by current debt relief mechanisms which do not recognize past failures of HIPC. (2007 Report of the Secretary-General on FfD, paras 97-102).

Ensure the resources resulting from debt cancellation can be diverted to financing for gender equality and women's empowerment, to ensure debt cancellation is beneficial to women. (SG Report pp 13 para 52)

VI. Systemic issues

Support stronger institutional arrangements at the UN to enable governments and the UN system to better achieve their commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights, through the establishment of a consolidated, stronger and fully funded UN entity for women led by an Under Secretary-General that combines normative and operational functions to effectively deliver on the ground, including a strong gender equality presence at country level, as well as promoting more effective gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system and through national policies, and also including meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular women's non-governmental organizations, in all its functions.

* Prepared by WWG as civil society recommendations for the Agreed Conclusion of the 52nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women on the theme "Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment".