

These key demands are a living document open for comments and endorsements*

Key Demands from Women's Rights Organizations and Gender Equality Advocates

To the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Korea, 2011) and the Development Cooperation Forum (2012)

July 2011

As feminists, gender equality and women's rights activists and organizations mobilizing on the road to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), this document reaffirms our vision for transformation and offers concrete recommendations for improving the international development cooperation architecture.

We reaffirm our vision of a world where aid is no longer necessary, where transformed power relations and the democratic redistribution of wealth continually challenge norms and structures of injustice and war and create new forms of relations based on respect, solidarity, equity, inclusion, non-subordination and justice for all.

We believe in development as a right, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and in the UN Declaration on the Right to Development.¹ International solidarity through sustainable international cooperation has a crucial role to play in fulfilling states' responsibility to ensure that all peoples realize their rights, across countries,² thereby contributing towards redistributive justice and the eradication of inequalities at the global level.

We stress that gender equality and women's rights are located at the heart of development. This means that women's empowerment and full and equal participation in all spheres of society, including participation in decision-making processes and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of gender and social justice, substantive democracy and peace for all.

We challenge the instrumentalization of aid and of gender equality embodied in mainstream visions of development cooperation that promote the privatization and militarization of aid and gender equality and that view women solely as catalysts for market expansion, investment and trade.

We challenge mainstream economic development models based on unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, exploitation and

unequal gender and social relations. Development is a state responsibility and women's groups contest the notion that stimulating private sector profit should be a development aim. We call for the recognition of women's and men's right to define how they understand and envision development, based on their own rights, local experiences, needs and responses, in ways that are sustainable for our planet and promote human rights, peace and justice for all free from any kind of violence or imposition.

We aim to shift the traditional development discourse towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm, which recognizes and values reproductive and care work, and promotes the empowerment, autonomy and emancipation of women and girls.

We underscore that women, feminists and women's organizations and movements play a key role in development. This is true from households to communities, and at regional and international levels: they carry out the largest share of unpaid reproductive work (including much of the world's food production), playing key roles in peace-building and in the management, conservation and use of natural resources. As women, we refuse to be seen as passive, solely as consumers or victims in need of protection and rescue. We must be recognized as key development actors in our own right.

We demand the full realization of women's rights as human rights, which are essential to any development cooperation framework. Human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and the implementation of gender equality and women's rights commitments are cornerstones for development.

1 - The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 41/128 on 4 December 1986 and issued the Declaration on the Right to Development; relevant provisions are stated in Articles 1, 3 and 4.
2 - As stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, part II, article 2 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 22.

* Comments and signing on can be done by sending an e-mail to aabelenda@awid.org before 31 July 2011

The current draft of the Busan outcome document is not acceptable for women's rights groups engaged in the HLF4 process. We call on governments and other relevant development actors involved in the HLF4 and 2012 DCF preparation to consider the following imperatives:

- 1** Any new development cooperation framework to be agreed in Busan should be based on human rights, including women's rights.
- 2** A new equitable development cooperation system for gender equality and women's rights under the United Nations is in place.
- 3** Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organizations.
- 4** Promote multiple accountability systems for women's rights and gender equality, improving existing monitoring systems.
- 5** Financing for Development: Gender Equality and Women's Rights Beyond Mainstreaming
- 6** Development cooperation to the countries in situations of fragility and conflict must acknowledge the differential and disproportional impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.

Development cooperation for women's rights, gender equality, and social and environmental justice

Keeping in mind that the Paris Declaration is mainly gender blind, we recall the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) on gender equality (Paragraphs 3, 13c, 21b and 23a) and urge all signatories to translate their words into concrete actions and deepen these commitments on gender equality.

The current (1st) draft outcome document for Busan acknowledges the need for a new paradigm for development cooperation but is gender silent and does not advance a vision or framework where the existing international agreed development goals (IADGs) on gender justice, human rights, decent work and environmental sustainability are at the center.

We are convinced that HLF4 must produce an outcome document that builds the foundation for a new development cooperation architecture that is responsive and sensitive to women's rights and gender equality. This architecture should be situated within the United Nations (UN) with participation from the OECD, ensuring full participation of all actors, including civil society and women's groups. We recognize that the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in the post-Accra era advanced substantially in the inclusion of civil society actors. This has been an experience that should be integrated into broader fora such as the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). **There should be clear and effective mechanisms of ongoing participation for CSOs, including formal representation beyond the existing structures.**

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1 Any new development cooperation framework to be agreed in Busan should be based on human rights, including women's rights.

- **International cooperation, of which aid is a part, should not increase divisions and inequalities in developing countries, but instead provide the basis for women's rights, gender, social and environmental justice.**
- **Moving beyond aid effectiveness towards human rights-based development cooperation is key to a new framework for international solidarity.** A new development cooperation system must build on development and poverty eradication strategies based on international human rights standards, with adequate attention paid to women's rights, the right to development and environmental justice.
- **Development cooperation policies and nationally-owned country strategies must align with international human rights and gender equality standards.** States and other duty-bearers must to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in international human rights legal instruments and related standards, as has been reaffirmed in the AAA. Thus, nationally-owned country strategies must align with international human rights legal instruments and related standards, including gender equality standards, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, among others, including those at regional level. Such standards should be used to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of aid policies and approaches, particularly their impact on highly discriminated and excluded people, especially women and girls in all their diversity.
- **Governments should support the inclusion of non-sexist education for all throughout their lives,** considering the role education plays in the transformation of gender norms and stereotypes. Governments should assume their obligation to comprehensively review and revise the sexist content of curricula in all levels of education and support CSOs specialized in the subject.
- **Human rights legal standards, principles, and the legal obligations of donors and governments should be used to hold all governments accountable** for the impact and outcomes of their ODA and development policies. An example of this is the use of the Inter-American Human Rights System (a regional body) as well as international mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review to hold donor and partner governments accountable for the negative impact of inappropriate aid prioritization, disbursement and/or implementation.

- **Policy coherence for development and gender equality is essential for meaningfully and positively impacting the lives of women and men.** All governments must take a “policy coherence for development” approach to close the gap between economic policies (e.g. trade, migration, energy etc.) and social policies, where this gap results in the growth or perpetuation of social and gender inequalities.

2 A new equitable development cooperation system for gender equality and women's rights under the United Nations is in place.

- **Democratic development cooperation governance must have the UN at its core.** Women's organizations demand that the new development cooperation system ensures the equal participation of all countries, which have been traditionally excluded from decision-making processes at the regional and international levels. Currently the UN is the only legitimate space meeting the minimum equal participation criteria. For this reason, the DCF should be strengthened as the main space for standard-setting on development cooperation and the promotion of systematic coherence among global policies for development. Such policies and standards must respect human rights, gender equality and environmental justice concerns, in particular those linked to climate and energy. At the same time, the DCF should ensure clear, effective and ongoing mechanisms of participation by CSOs, including formal representation.
- **Defining a transparent and clear system for ODA allocation.** A different system for assessing countries' needs and criteria for accessing ODA is urgently needed: this systems must take into account not only economic growth indicators, but also indicators that measure social, economic, gender and environmental inequalities.
- **UN Women should play a key role in advancing gender equality and women's rights as part of the multilateral development cooperation system,** actively preparing for the HLF4 and the DCF by supporting the meaningful participation of women's rights organizations and the integration of their proposals UN Women's high-level political status should be used to champion gender equality and women's rights in development cooperation processes within the DCF, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and other key spaces at international, regional and national levels.
- **Country-level implementation based on country compacts, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contracts or other instruments are vitally important.** However, such instruments as well as Busan outcomes cannot place burden and responsibility solely on recipient countries (as showed by PD evaluations). Country-level implementation is a joint responsibility between recipient countries and development partners, including CSOs, which must address inequalities and build on human rights legal standards and principles.
- **South-South and Triangular cooperation for gender equality and women's rights:** We value the increasing importance of financial flows channeled through South-South and Triangular cooperation and call on governments to include in their technical assistance good practices related to gender equality and women's rights strategies. Recognizing that South-South cooperation initiatives have their own dynamics and practices, we urge all related governments to implement mechanisms to ensure adequate access to information and space for CSOs' participation in cooperation processes. At the same time, the DCF should itself be used to promote further debate, transparency, accountability and civil society involvement in international development cooperation of all kinds, including South-South cooperation.

3 Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organizations.

- **Create spaces and institutional mechanisms to ensure that women's organizations participate in policy dialogues at local, national and international levels.** Governments must support development actors' (including women's and feminist organizations and movements) effective participation at local, national and international levels and at all stages of the development process: in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating as well as in setting and debating priorities and in aligning development and women's human rights commitments.

- **Apply the concept of multiple responsibility, accountability and transparency to donors and developing countries instead of policy conditionalities.** Economic policy conditionalities have a negative impact on people, particularly on women and girls, undermining the principle of ownership and contradicting rights to development and self-determination. Instead, multiple responsibility, accountability and transparency must be applied to donors and developing countries, for example by reinforcing democratic scrutiny of development goals, policies and results.
- **Donors must be accountable for the aid that they deliver by ensuring transparent, open, predictable and participatory opportunities for dialogue on aid processes, priorities, agreements and assessments of progress.** Transparency is key to democratic ownership and accountability and ensures CSOs' meaningful participation in policy and political dialogues. It is therefore crucial that all development partners, including the private sector, adopt policies of automatic, full disclosure of relevant information and submit to the norms and direction-setting of the UN. Existing aid transparency initiatives, e.g. the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), should also strengthen their gender analysis by, for example, integrating an improved Gender Equality Marker into their work.
- **Developing countries should have the opportunity to choose between a range of aid-modalities** based on what is appropriate to their context. Sector budget support should be considered for gender equality, women's rights and health issues in particular, in countries where social sectors are less likely to receive adequate funding.
- **Build on the successes of the Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanisms** to develop a framework that ensures all stakeholders engage in broader health planning, implementation and monitoring processes.
- We value the role that the private sector can play in development while **stressing that human rights-based development is primarily the responsibility of states. We contest the notion that stimulating the private sector in itself has a direct and positive impact on sustainable development.** If this sector is to play a role at Busan, private sector organizations must commit to human rights legal standards, including those relevant for women's rights.
- **Create an enabling environment for CSOs and particularly for women's human rights defenders.** All states have the responsibility to implement and respect all provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The declaration establishes a clear basis of what contributes to an enabling environment for women's human rights defenders as individuals and their CSOs and outlines a series of principles and rights that are based on human rights standards enshrined in international legal instruments.

4 Promote multiple accountability systems for women's rights and gender equality, improving existing monitoring systems.

- **Multiple accountability is stronger than mutual accountability,** where the latter is based on bilateral development relationships that no longer reflect the complex development cooperation system. Shifting to a "multiple accountability" approach recognizes and includes other key development actors such as the private sector, CSOs (including feminist and women's rights organizations), parliamentarians, local governments and others.
- **Accountability must not be based on a new OECD monitoring system and should go beyond the level of merely measuring outputs (aid delivered) toward addressing the level of outcomes.** Aid and development cooperation monitoring systems must improve and build on the existing country or regionally relevant gender equality indicators and accountability mechanisms such as: MDGs targets and indicators, CEDAW reporting requirements, reporting on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, or other international mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review. While the three GENDERNET indicators on gender equality and aid effectiveness that were integrated into the 2011 Paris Declaration monitoring survey are important, these indicators should be made mandatory as part of the follow up of AAA and PD implementation including other indicators, particularly those measuring countries' budget allocations to women's rights and gender equality.
- **Private sector accountability must respect international human rights standards, including women's rights and gender equality legal standards.** Indeed, without strong human rights and other standards in place, poor women rarely benefit from the profits made by private actors. As the subjects of development, governments must be responsible for holding private sector development interventions accountable to poor women and men through regular reporting. Moreover, CSOs must hold their governments accountable in their duty to protect citizens from potential harm caused by private sector actors.

- **All parties and signatories of the Busan outcome document should leave with concrete responsibilities and be held accountable for undertaking their agreed commitments.** We welcome new actors to the Busan HLF4, however, their participation should not “water down” the commitments made.

5 **Financing for Development: Gender Equality and Women's Rights Beyond Mainstreaming**

- **Funding must be diversified to ensure that gender mainstreaming and division of labor approaches do not dilute women's rights commitments** nor exclude other targeted work that is critical for advancing women's rights, gender equality and poverty reduction. Mainstreaming should be accompanied by direct and specific actions aimed at achieving women's rights and gender equality, and include direct support to local women's groups.
- **Adequate investment should be ensured for certain controversial and sensitive women's rights issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights,** which are loaded with debates around access to family planning/contraception, safe abortion and sexual orientation. In situations where government support for sexual and reproductive rights is weak or nonexistent, donors should use a mix of funding mechanisms including general and sectoral budget support, direct support to UN agencies and CSOs (including feminist and women's rights organizations) as well as project-specific funding.
- **Governments should support local women's groups to build awareness and capacities in their societies and communities** and to provide oversight for local, regional and national development policies and projects. All development actors should prioritize and invest in capacity building for women's organizations to ensure participation and local, democratic ownership in development agendas.
- **Governments must ensure increased, substantial, flexible, predictable and multi-year core funding for women's rights organizations** and that effective mechanisms are in place to guarantee that funding reaches these organizations in all their diversity.
- **Countries and donors must ensure that public financial management systems are gender-responsive** and include more rigorous tracking of expenditures for the achievement gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Democratic and innovative financing for development:** All states should agree on a clear process under the UN to establish additional and innovative financing mechanisms for development by 2015. One such mechanism is the Robin Hood Tax which could contribute to creating a more democratic international system to finance development, overcoming disparities inherent to the current development cooperation system.
- **As a key new player in development cooperation, UN Women must be equipped with adequate, immediate, long-term, predictable and multi-year, core funding** comparable to the core commitments made to other UN funds and programs.

6 **Development cooperation to the countries in situations of fragility and conflict must acknowledge the differential and disproportional impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.**

- In Accra, governments committed to work and agree on a set of realistic peace- and state- building objectives to address the root causes of conflict and fragility and help ensure the protection and participation of women. This process was to be informed by international dialogue between partners and donors on these objectives as prerequisites for development. However, there have been no substantial improvements in this area.
- **All governments must work towards the protection and participation of women by ensuring implementation of UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889.** In countries in situations of fragility or that are emerging from conflict, donors must support state and civil society actors (including women's organizations) to develop national action plans to operationalize the UN resolutions on women, peace and security.

- **All governments must acknowledge the differential and disproportionate impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.** This means guaranteeing cooperation to address these issues and to ensure equality, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for women who are victims, as well as effective participation in peace processes and post conflict reconstructions. Donor and developing country governments must commit to support feminist and women's organizations as part of achieving sustainable, peaceful and lasting solutions for women and girls in conflict-affected or fragile states.
- **Governments must not sell arms to countries engaged in armed conflict.**

Core group of supporting organizations:



These key demands were elaborated during the International Women's Organizations Consultation on Development Cooperation, Women's Rights and Gender Equality held in Brussels, Belgium, 9-10 June 2011. The consultation was hosted by WIDE Network and co-organized with the other women's organizations of the BetterAid Coordination Group: the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Coordinadora de la Mujer from Bolivia. The event was supported by

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