

## **Busan Global Women's Forum Political Statement**

To the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4)

Busan, November/December 2011<sup>1</sup>

As women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality advocates we reaffirm our vision- *developed in the Women's Organisations Key Demands<sup>2</sup> for HLF-4 and the 2012 Development Cooperation Forum* - of a world where aid is no longer necessary. Where transformed power relations and the democratic redistribution of wealth counter 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 would like this vision of development to be reflected on Busan Outcome Document (BOD).

We believe in development as a Right and that international solidarity through sustainable international cooperation has a crucial role to play in fulfilling states' responsibility to ensure that all people realise their rights. Development is a right and not a leverage for often unequal, unsustainable growth.

We challenge mainstream economic development models and aim to shift the dominant development discourse towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm.

We underscore that women, feminists, women's organisations and women movements play key roles in development at all levels and stress that the full realisation of women's rights as human rights are essential to any development and to any development cooperation framework.

International Development Cooperation, of which aid is a part, should not increase divisions and inequalities in developing countries, but instead provide the basis for the achievement of human rights, including women's rights and of commitments on gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability.

Development cooperation that works in line with this vision works for development effectiveness. Working for Development effectiveness means promoting a development model that shifts the dominant development scenario towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm that recognises and values reproductive and care work, promotes decent work and promotes the empowerment, autonomy and emancipation of women and girls. Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> The Women's Global Forum was part of the Busan Global Civil Society Forum that took place from 26 to 28, November 2011. It was co-organized by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), WIDE Network, Coordinadora de la Mujer/Bolivia of the BetterAid Coordinating Group.

<sup>2</sup> The common women's organisations key demands are available for example here: <http://awid.org/Library/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>

**Women's groups and gender equality advocates engaged in the HLF-4 process call on all governments and other development actors involved in the HLF-4 to consider the following imperatives:**

- Any new development cooperation framework to be agreed in Busan should be based on human rights, including women's rights.
- A new equitable development cooperation system for gender equality and women's rights under the United Nations is in place.
- Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organizations.
- Promote multiple accountability systems for women's rights and gender equality - considering all forms of discrimination experienced by women based on sexism, racism, xenophobia and others - improving existing monitoring systems.
- Financing for Development: Gender Equality and Women's Rights Beyond Mainstreaming.
- 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.

**Women's recommendations to the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness:** To affirm that there is political will, women's organizations call on donors and developing country governments in Busan to:

#### **Gender in Busan Outcome Document (BOD)**

While the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) on gender equality (paragraphs 3, 13c, 21b and 23a) were important advances beyond the largely gender-blind Paris Declaration (PD), and we welcome the inclusion of gender equality and women empowerment in paragraph 19 in BOD5, we do recall that any **development and development cooperation for development effectiveness should be defined as sustainable and human rights-based development and development cooperation**. It is crucial to move beyond aid effectiveness towards human rights-based development cooperation as a new framework for international solidarity to advance development and poverty eradication in ways that are coherent with international human rights standards and give adequate attention to women's rights, the right to development and environmental justice.

We also call for real gender mainstreaming throughout all the BOD with focus on implementation, in the sections addressing different issues and concerning different actors.

#### **Democratic ownership**

Establish local and **democratic ownership** as the core aid and development effectiveness principle to promote meaningful democratic ownership of development policies, planning and actions through full engagement with, and accountability to, all development stakeholders.

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. They should also foster enabling environments for women to participate in a meaningful and constant way in decision-making processes taking stock of the value of accumulated knowledge to be shared.

Governments should ensure increased, substantial, flexible, predictable and multi-year core funding for women's rights organisations and effective mechanisms in place to guarantee that funding reaches these organisations in all their diversity.

Put into practice the Accra commitment to **use country systems** as the first option by donors in bilateral government-to-government cooperation as well as nationally-owned country strategies must align with international human rights and gender equality standards. All development actors should promote participatory, accountable, and transparent country systems. The use of country systems should fully respect the autonomy and independence of CSOs and should not be used as a justification for restrictions by government on CSO activity.

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, which clearly establishes what contributes to an enabling environment for women's human rights defenders as individuals and their organizations and outlines a series of principles and rights based on human rights standards enshrined in international legal instruments.

### **South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

People and their rights should be at the heart of South-South and triangular Cooperation. It should always lead to the realisation of human rights, poverty eradication and a hunger free world, decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

South-South and triangular cooperation should have a human right's based approach and promote women's rights and gender equality. Internationally agreed development goals and rights standards should be the framework for South-South cooperation working for development effectiveness.

### **Women Empowerment and Gender Action Plan**

We recognise the initiative lead by US and Korea governments on a Global Gender Action Plan: Busan Joint Action Plan on Gender Equality and Development – as an attempt to operationalise the gender equality commitments in the BOD. Yet, it should build on internationally agreed gender equality standards such as Beijing Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880 and 1889, and it should have as its ultimate goal the implementation of these agreements.

Women's rights are essential to a people-centred development. The enjoyment of women's rights should be a central objective of development strategies which should be fully funded, include specific indicators and focus on shifting structural, entrenched power imbalances patriarchal attitudes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities. The increasing focus on economic growth as a focus of development has not resulted in empowerment of women in all their diversity, particularly the most marginalised. A rights-based approach to development is imperative to drive development for women. Women's rights, including women's empowerment are cornerstones for sustainable development and this should be reflected in this interrelation in the outcome document, building blocks and any political initiatives to be agreed in Busan.

The definition of empowerment that experience shows that work for women's rights include the achievement of physical, economical and political autonomy of women as well as promote collective empowerment of women organizations and women movements, and not only individual or economic one. Collective empowerment is strategic for transforming the development dominant paradigm and promoting democratic citizenship, but also needed to make significant impact on the lives of millions of women. Moreover, isolated economic individual empowerment of women through microcredits has proven to just multiply the burden of work that women carries out.

Critical engagement of CSO, concretely Women Rights organisations and gender equality advocates enabled by governments leading and partnering in any initiative about women empowerment, including the one led by US and Korea on the context of the HLF4, is crucial to guarantee ownership and accountability at all stages of the plan and to take stock of the accumulated "value on knowledge" and expertise that women's orgs, women empowerment and gender equality advocates can share to assure impacts, outcomes and processes that really transforms the life of women.

### **For-Profit Private Sector**

States should be held accountable in eliminating practices of private sector that violate human rights, particularly women's human rights. Further increasing privatisation of social services makes basic social services inaccessible, and therefore has the most detrimental impact on those living in poverty, particularly women.

While states increase the role of private sector in development, we note the responsibility of private sector for the loss and degradation of livelihood and displacement and further violations of rights of women, especially those who are most marginalized. All programmes and policies of private sector should be in accordance to international human rights principles and standards, including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

States should be held accountable for their initiative and support to inter-governmental and international agencies that legitimise the role of private sector in 'economic growth centered' development which hinders cohesive and rights-based approach to development.

### **Conflict and fragility**

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 (AAA §21b). This process was to be informed by international dialogue between partners and donors on these objectives as prerequisites for development. However, there have not been substantial improvements in this area.

All governments should work towards implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 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 operationalise the UN resolutions on women, peace and security.

## **Beyond Busan (referring more to the BOD5): Global Partnership on Cooperation for Development Effectiveness**

Move beyond aid effectiveness towards a human rights-based development cooperation framework to advance development and poverty eradication in ways that are coherent with international human rights standards and give adequate attention to women's rights, the right to development and environmental justice.

Post-Busan, there should come out an equitable and inclusive multilateral forum for policy dialogue and standard setting on development cooperation that ensures legitimacy through membership of all development actors, with full representation of all developing country perspectives, based within the United Nations (UN). Discussions and standard setting on development cooperation should move from the OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness to the UN, such as the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and other UN-related instances such as further ones within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Clear effective and on-going mechanisms for CSO participation in international development cooperation of all kinds, including South-South cooperation, need to be ensured.

Donor and developing country governments, as well as relevant multilateral institutions, must apply a policy coherence for development and gender equality approach. Moreover, development cooperation cannot be treated in isolation from other financial flows, and thus, should be understood as part of the Financing for Development process and the implementation of Monterrey and Doha.

Reinforce existing monitoring systems and democratic ownership linked to concrete and time-bound commitments by building on and improving the existing country or regionally relevant indicators and accountability mechanisms, such as: MDG targets and indicators, CEDAW and other international treaties, reporting requirements, reporting on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and other international mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Report (UPR), and building on outcome indicators. Reporting on these rights-based gender equality outcome indicators should become mandatory for all governments.