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Building synergies with the post-2015 development agenda and other issues
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Joint Statement on Gender Equality in the Financing for Development Process

I make these remarks on behalf of Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK and my own country Iceland.

As the element paper already states in its introduction, large financial gaps remain and the commitments related to gender equality have not been realised. Both the Monterrey and Doha outcome documents did not sufficiently address the challenges in financing gender equality. It is critical that the sustainable development goals agenda including its Means of Implementation are universal because none of the countries in the world has closed the gender gap completely.

- One main issue is **domestic public finance and domestic resource mobilisation**: both **budgeting and tax policies** provide important opportunities for reducing inequalities and this is particularly true also for gender inequalities.
  - **Domestic budget processes** do not only often lack transparency and participation, but are generally not gender-responsive. Therefore, the publishing of budget breakdowns according to expenditure allocated to tackling gender inequalities and appropriate and inclusive mechanisms for the participation of women and the inclusion of gender concerns in budgeting and spending policies have to be promoted.
  - On the revenue side, some findings are emerging that indicate that **taxation policy is not gender neutral** and can contain discriminatory biases against women. Making tax systems more pro-poor was also one of the commitments of the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development (2008). Since women are particularly vulnerable to poverty, the methods countries use to increase domestic revenues and how these efforts affect poor women needs particular attention (UNDP Issue Brief April 2010). Hence, the distributional implications and the gendered impact of tax policies need to be analyzed to rule out negative effects on specific groups, i.e. poor women. Many women in developing countries do not pay income tax, but indirect taxes, user fees, service fees, market stall fees, bribe requirements etc. may constitute a heavy and disproportional burden for them.
  - Also, how **fiscal policy affects gender dynamics around unpaid care work** from a gender equality perspective needs careful attention in order to prevent the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and the unequal distribution of unpaid household and care work, often coupled with negative (financial) incentives for women entering the work force. Instead fiscal policies need to promote a more equal distribution of unpaid care work and provide clear incentives for women's participation in the work force.

    - The private sector is an important partner in advancing the gender equality and the women's economic empowerment agenda: Firstly as employers advancing family friendly policies, equal pay and opportunities for promotion and secondly as investors in women, by putting their philanthropic dollars into initiatives and causes that support women's participation and empowerment in the economy and society.

- The element paper proposes the adoption of national social protection floors with a minimum spending package for social services. This is of particular importance for gender equality since 70% of the poor are women and social protection floors constitute an important tool to break the cycle of poverty for the most vulnerable groups.
- The element paper also clearly states that women disproportionately lack access to formal **financial services**. In addition to this fact, there is insufficient access to finance for micro, small and medium enterprises, which again disproportionately affects women, who are more often the owners of small enterprises. They often lack skills, knowledge and information and restricted mobility and discriminatory social and legal norms prevent them from controlling their investments and spending. Women's inaccessibility to financial and banking services thus constitutes a multiple discrimination of poor women.
- As was recommended by the Commission of the Status of Women in its Agreed Conclusions in March 2014, it is important to work towards ensuring that **global trade, financial and investment agreements** are conducive to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and human rights of women and girls, including through reaffirming the critical role of open, equitable, rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and strengthening the effectiveness of the global economic system's support for gender responsive development. The element paper states that concerns on social impacts and in particular on gender equality, have not been taken into account with respect to trade and investment agreements.
- There is insufficient knowledge and analysis of the public and private investment in order to know to what degree it is gender equitable and whether and how much it contributes to reducing gender inequalities. Thus, there is a need for a more systematic **sex-disaggregated tracking and analysis of investment** and a more systematic analysis, monitoring and evaluation of the contributions of investments to the reduction of gender gaps.

If the Post-2015 Agenda shall really be **transformative** as is stressed again and again, the most necessary transformation would be to achieve gender equality.