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## **INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL**

Review theme: Evaluation of progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions of CSW 52 on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women"

Panel 4: Progress in financing for gender equality from the perspective of international organizations and multilateral development partners

## **STRENGTHENING FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

by

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<sup>1</sup>Information and analysis presented in this paper reflect preliminary results from research carried out by AWID in the last year. A final version of this research will be presented at the upcoming 12th International AWID Forum on Women's Rights and Development 'Transforming Economic Power to Advance Women's Rights and Justice', to be held in Istanbul, April 19-22, 2012. You can find more information about the forum at: <http://www.forum.awid.org/forum12/>

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## I. Introduction

In recent years, the need to strengthen commitments and resources for gender equality and women's empowerment has been a rallying point for a broad and diverse set of development actors—including the United Nations (UN), civil society, women's movements, international financial institutions, the private sector, and governments. The need for increased resources has been further bolstered by calls for making gender equality a cornerstone of development, e.g., in the aid and development effectiveness agenda, from Paris to Busan. But has the rhetoric of commitment actually translated into financial support? And, once this gap is acknowledged, what policy measures are critical for sustaining or increasing financing for gender equality in a context of multiple crises? This paper will address those questions and examine the politics of funding women's empowerment, rights, and gender equality work globally, drawing on data and analysis from the 2011 AWID "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?"<sup>3</sup> global survey, which assesses the quality and quantity of funding available to women's organizations.

## II. Context of CSW Commitments to Finance Gender Equality

In 2008 after the Expert Group Meeting (EGM), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) expressed concern about underwhelming levels of political support and commitment, as well as specific budget allocations, to gender equality and women's rights. Low funding and the lack of sector prioritization by governments and donors was shown to affect the integrity and ability of national machineries and women's organizations to fully implement and advocate for women's rights and equality.<sup>4</sup> As such, the Commission's conclusions in 2008 reaffirmed the central place of human and women's rights in development and underscored the importance of implementing key global commitments, ranging from the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The recommendations put forth by the Commission in 2008 were quite broad and far-reaching, focusing on a wide range of financial flows. Specific recommendations reflected the need to significantly increase financing for women's rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment, through overseas development assistance (ODA), national government resources and other types of donor support.

The political will and efforts from member states and the UN (for example the continuation of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the creation of the UN Fund for Gender Equality, both within UN Women) represent positive developments in this area. However, four years after commitments were made, current assessments by the issues paper prepared for this panel<sup>5</sup> and AWID<sup>6</sup> reveal that little actual progress has been made in increasing funding for

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<sup>3</sup>In 2005, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) launched the Where is the Money for Women's Rights? (WITM) initiative. WITM produces research on the funding landscape for women's organizing. The research has been used by diverse actors—from women's organizations to donors—to advocate for increasing overall resources to support women's rights and gender equality work. From 2005 to date, four global surveys have been launched and FundHer reports published in 2006, 2007, and 2008. Reports on the funding context amidst the global economic recession as well as on trends in bilateral and multilateral funding were published in 2010 and are also available. See <http://awid.org/AWID-s-Publications/Funding-for-Women-s-Rights>

<sup>4</sup>United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Expert Group Meeting, "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Report of the Expert Group Meeting," EGM/FFGE/2007/REPORT, 4-7 September 2007, Oslo, Norway, p. 16. Available at: [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/financing\\_gender\\_equality/EGM%20Report%20Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/financing_gender_equality/EGM%20Report%20Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Issues Paper," Commission on the Status of Women, Fifty-sixth session, Review Panel "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women," March 2012, p.2. Available at: [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/panels/issues\\_paper\\_panel-3-4.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/panels/issues_paper_panel-3-4.pdf)

women's organizations and gender equality as a mainstreamed and standalone sector. These findings are concerning and require direct and immediate action by governments and donors to deliver on their commitments. This paper aims to provide some guidance and recommendations on challenges and possible ways forward.

### ***The role and agenda of women's organizations in advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and development***

The issues paper of the 56th session of CSW (2012) underscores AWID's research findings on the need to increase funding to women's organizations as an "essential measure for sustaining a vibrant women's movement."<sup>7</sup> Women's organizing and movements matter because of their capacity to build individual and collective forms of empowerment, to advocate for change and because they create sustained change at multiple levels (grassroots, local, national, regional, transnational) that policy change or limited interventions (e.g., supporting individual women's leadership, maternal health, microcredit, etc.) alone cannot achieve.<sup>8</sup> While diverse in their scope, philosophical underpinnings, and objectives, it can be argued that a common and central claim of women's rights movements is the commitment to a rights-based approach that aims to shift dominant power relations, structures, and discrimination wherever they manifest. Achieving human and women's rights is essential to addressing the root causes of poverty, inequalities, and discrimination. The human rights approach sees women as key development actors in their own right, not as passive victims in need of protection and rescue, nor as consumers or small entrepreneurs to be instrumentalized for economic growth.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond sector-specific contributions, a women's and human rights approach has a role to play in development as a whole, as articulated in the aid and development effectiveness processes pre- and post-Busan, and explored in more detail in the following section. Governments and donors must begin delivering on their stated commitments to finance gender equality and women's organizations and movements, and to support rights-based approaches to development with gender equality at the center.

### **III. Trends in Financing for Women's Organizations since 2008**

The realization of financing commitments for gender equality is embedded within a broader context. On the one hand, a global atmosphere of constrained funding permeates funding decisions due to the global economic recession and associated interlocking crises, affecting resources and commitments at the bilateral and multilateral levels, as well as within other funding sectors (e.g. foundations, women's funds, individual philanthropy). At the same time, over the past few years we have also seen a surge in the "investing in women and girls"

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<sup>6</sup> See also recent work by AWID on bilateral and multilateral funding trends: Alpizar, L. et al. (2010a), "2009-2010 FundHer Research Update Brief 1: Trends In Bilateral And Multilateral Funding" Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Available at: [http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Brief-1-FundHer-Research-Update-Brief-SeriesandAlpizar, et al. \(2010b\), "Context and Trends Influencing the Funding Landscape for Gender Equality and Women's Organizations & Movements," AWID. Available at: http://www.awid.org/About-AWID/AWID-News/Context-and-Trends-Influencing-the-Funding-Landscape-for-Gender-Equality-and-Women-s-Organizations-Movements](http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Brief-1-FundHer-Research-Update-Brief-SeriesandAlpizar, et al. (2010b), )

<sup>7</sup> Alpizar, et al. (2010b), *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Batliwala, S. (2008), "Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements," AWID, p.13. Available at: [Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements](http://www.awid.org/About-AWID/AWID-News/Context-and-Trends-Influencing-the-Funding-Landscape-for-Gender-Equality-and-Women-s-Organizations-Movements)

<sup>9</sup> See "Key Demands From Women's Rights Organizations And Gender Equality Activists To The Fourth High Level Forum On Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Korea, 2011) and the Development Cooperation Forum (2012)," Available at: <http://www.awid.org/Library/Key-Demands-from-Women-s-Rights-Organizations-and-Gender-Equality-Activists-To-the-Fourth-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness-Busan-Korea-2011-and-the-Development-Cooperation-Forum-2012>

discourse from a diverse set of actors. This discourse has been integrated into governments' and donors' agendas in various ways. So although overall funding trends in different funding sectors (such as bilateral agencies and private foundations) have been showing a decrease in overall funding, this does not translate into an automatic decrease in funding for gender equality and women's rights in all cases, and in some cases, new funding for this field is emerging.

## ***A. Global Economic Trends and Interlocking Crises***

### ***The rise of the global economic recession and interlocking crises***

The global financial crisis and economic recession that began in 2008 revealed the deeply interconnected nature of economies across the world. So far, responses have failed to address the root causes of the crisis (e.g., lack of regulation of financial markets and neoliberal ideology). Instead in 2009, we saw states (and therefore taxpayers) financing the rescue and irresponsibility of the financial sector. Yet the financial and economic crises were but one dimension of a broader set of interlocking crises—those of food, energy, environmental and humanitarian dimensions—that continue to evolve and shape current realities. The food crisis that preceded the financial and economic crisis was already significantly impacting women as core agricultural producers and sustainers of their families, especially in the global South. Previous Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports have shown that female-headed households are more affected by rising food prices. At the same time women are overrepresented amongst the poor and in low-wage earning and vulnerable employment positions—such as that in the agricultural sector—all of which is compounded by the gender wage gap.<sup>10</sup> Women are also disproportionately affected by the energy crisis and by the recurrent environmental disasters and humanitarian crises produced by hurricanes, floods, desertification, and rising sea levels linked to climate change (see the report by Women's Environmental Network).<sup>11</sup>

### ***The increasing prominence of backlash against women's rights activists***

Women's advocacy and efforts to secure safe drinking water, to protect water resources from mega-projects like dams and mining, and to promote food sovereignty also increase their risk of violence: between 2004 and 2009, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders recorded 33 cases of violence against women who work on environmental issues.<sup>12</sup> Across different regions, we have also witnessed increases in the repression of social movements and civil society, increased power of the corporate sector, militarization as a response to civil unrest and criminal networks, and greater growth and strengthening of religious fundamentalist actors. All of these trends, together with a more challenging funding environment and increasing inequality and poverty among women and girls, have worsened or created additional challenges to women's rights activists and movements that work to advance gender equality and women's rights around the world.

## ***B. International Debates on the Role of Women, Girls, and Gender Equality in Development***

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<sup>10</sup>See International Labor Organization (ILO). (2009), "Global Employment Trends for Women." Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09275/09275\(2009\).pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09275/09275(2009).pdf)

<sup>11</sup>Haigh, C. & Valley, B. (2010), "Gender and Climate Change Agenda: The impacts of climate change on women and public policy," Women's Environmental Network (WEN), p. 5. Available at: <http://www.wen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Gender-and-the-climate-change-agenda-21.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>Sekaggya, M., (2010), "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders" UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, A/HRC/16/44, 20 December 2010, para. 53. Available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-44.pdf>

### *The rise of gender equality as a cornerstone of development*

Broader debates on the role of gender equality in development have highlighted the need for governments and donors to get concrete and specific in tracking their commitments. At the international level, women's rights and gender equality activists involved in the aid and development effectiveness discussions<sup>13</sup> have been lobbying for a shift in dominant development discourses towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm that recognizes and values reproductive and care work, promotes decent work, environmental sustainability and the empowerment of women and girls and human rights for all. Women rights and gender equality activists and organizations have been at the forefront of advocacy around and critique of the highly gender-blind Paris Declaration (PD) and aid effectiveness processes, particularly underscoring the importance of putting gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights at the center of any effective development cooperation framework. Despite inclusion of §3 in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) where gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability were seen as "cornerstones for achieving enduring impact on the lives and potential of poor women, men and children," implementation has been patchy or seriously limited.

Diverse research has found that, despite official commitments, donors' and developing countries' articulations of gender equality are often vague,<sup>14</sup> lacking well-defined priorities and objectives, and rarely have specific, dedicated and well-resourced budgets,<sup>15</sup> or tracking mechanisms in place. Implementation is further constrained by the lack of clear, time-bound targets and standard accountability mechanisms that track allocation, disbursement and results and link results to existing indicators from international agreed human rights standards and mechanisms.<sup>16</sup> In reality, little is actually delivered in terms of gender equality and human rights.

As a follow up to Paris, and in order to create a stronger development cooperation framework, in the lead up to the Busan Fourth High Level Forum (HLF-4), women's rights activists and organizations developed specific recommendations to advance development and poverty eradication in ways that are consistent with international human rights standards and that give adequate attention to women's rights, the right to development and environmental justice.<sup>17</sup> Recommendations underscored the need for policy coherence so that economic policies

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<sup>13</sup>Civil society organizations (CSOs), and women's rights organizations and activists organized under the Better Aid platform to advocate for development effectiveness paradigm with human rights and women's rights at the center. "Development effectiveness promotes sustainable change that addresses the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality, marginalization and injustice... It also aims to dismantle patriarchal power structures and end women's subordination in productive and reproductive roles...Development cooperation should be about supporting conditions in which people can exercise sovereignty over their own process of development... Indeed, it should aim to eliminate the structural bases of underdevelopment that foster dependency on foreign aid, foreign capital and technologies and external markets..." See "Development effectiveness in development cooperation: a rights-based perspective" in *Better Aid, 2010*, October 2010, p. 3. Available at: <http://betteraid.org/en/betteraid-policy/betteraid-publications/policy-papers/393-development-effectiveness-in-development-cooperation.html>

<sup>14</sup>Pittman, A., Schoenstein, A. and L. Alpizar (2011), "An Assessment of Gender Equality and Human Rights Commitments in Paris Declaration/Accra Agenda for Action Plans," in *Democratic Ownership and Development Effectiveness: Civil Society Perspectives on Progress since Paris*, pp. 321- 328, p. 322. Available at: <http://www.realityofaid.org/userfiles/roareports/roa2011part3.pdf#nameddest=an&page=13>

<sup>15</sup>See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Findings from the Gender Equality Module of the 2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey" Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/6/31/49014760.pdf>

<sup>16</sup>See Staszewska, K. (2011), "EU Donors Under Women's Watch: WIDE Checks up on Gender Equality and Women's Rights in the Development Effectiveness Agenda on the Road to Busan" WIDE. Available at: <http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/WIDE-AE%20briefing.pdf?id=1500> See also Winyi, N.M. (Ed), (2011) "Aid Effectiveness Multi-country Synthesis Report", FEMNET, June 2011. Available at: <http://www.femnet.or.ke/viewdocument.asp?ID=135>

<sup>17</sup>See "Key Demands From Women's Rights Organizations And Gender Equality Activists To The Fourth High Level Forum On Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Korea, 2011) and the Development Cooperation Forum (2012), *ibid*.

(e.g., trade, migration, energy, etc.) and social policies are not working at cross-purposes, resulting in the perpetuation or intensification of social and gender inequalities.

While, at the HLF-4, activists welcomed paragraph 20 of the Busan outcome document, they also felt that mentions of gender equality in the outcome document did not concretize the catalytic and central role of women's collective empowerment and gender equality for development grounding in a rights-based approach. Also at Busan, the United States (US) and Korean governments presented the Joint Busan Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development. The economic empowerment trend was evident in this plan as well as a limited focus on economic employment, education, and entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, women's groups at Busan recognized the efforts of the Korean and US governments to take leadership and produce the action plan and to promote gender equality as a central principle of the HLF-4 and in the Busan outcome document. We also welcomed any efforts by states to increase funding to women's rights and empowerment and urged governments to make substantial financial commitments to the advancement of women's rights.

#### *Rise in influence of BRICS in development cooperation*

Recent events at G20 meetings and the Busan HLF-4 are demonstrating once again the emergence of new multipolar world order. Several countries or groups of countries are playing critical roles in such spaces: Brazil, India, China, Russia (commonly referred to as the BRIC countries), South Africa, Venezuela, Iran, South Korea, Indonesia, and Turkey, to name some of the most prominent. The BRICS and other 'emerging' economies could soon exceed the total wealth production of today's richest countries. Their influence and decisions on women's rights and gender equality commitments will be important to watch in the future, along with the changing commitments of key donors in the North (and the citizens of those countries) to provide ODA and fulfill their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) to ODA. The new dynamic is creating conditions for complex politics among countries that are risking the implementation of key principles such as 'common but differentiated responsibilities' among countries, international solidarity and the recognition of the 'right to development' of all peoples, as well as the implementation of key international agreements on human rights, development, and environmental sustainability.

#### *Increasing opportunities for gender equality agendas in international development processes*

Additionally, in the near future there are multiple upcoming processes and spaces where international development frameworks and priorities are being decided upon, where gender equality and women's rights activists and organizations' voices and agendas should be center stage. These include: the upcoming Rio +20 "United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" in Brazil in June 2012; discussions on the longer-term UN Women Strategic Plan past 2013, the Cairo+20 review conference, the launch of a new 'post-MDG' development framework beginning in 2013 and concluding in 2015; and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing (and the BPfA) in 2015.

### **C. The Investing in Women and Girls Trend**

#### *The rise and influence of the investing in women and girls trend*

Over the past 3-5 years there has been a key shift in development positions with increased interest by different mainstream institutions in the potential and possibilities that "investing in

women and girls” and “investing in gender equality” has for ending poverty, increasing security, as well as enhancing women’s status and livelihoods.<sup>18</sup> Actors from diverse sectors have begun publically prioritizing and speaking about the importance of women and girls, including corporate donors, bilateral and multilateral donors, mixed civil society organizations (CSOs), foundations, individual philanthropists and their philanthropic advisors. Arguments for “investing in women and girls” have mainly been articulated through economic arguments, supported by key documents such as the World Bank’s “Gender Equality as Smart Economics” strategy published in 2007 and more recently their 2012 World Development Report (WDR). The entrance of this approach into the mainstream has also been seen in Nicholas Kristof’s and Sheryl Wu Dunn’s “Half the Sky” and Nike’s “Girl Effect” campaign. Other mainstream institutions have also shifted their rhetoric towards this approach of ‘women as solutions to the crisis’, ‘women as key economic actors’, ‘women as better leaders’, e.g., in the mass media, such as Newsweek, Reuters, BBC, USA Today, the New York Times, CNN and Al Jazeera.

This increased attention is an encouraging development and a validation of what feminists and women's rights movements have been saying for decades, and transforms the context for advocacy to advance women's rights and gender equality. This important shift has the potential to have profound implications on financing for gender equality. This moment represents a significant opportunity for women’s rights activists and organizations and new and diverse actors in the field to work together to collectively push for changes in financing and prioritizing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

While acknowledging the opportunities this trend offers, and that women are central to development and economic growth and equality, as clearly demonstrated by the 2012 WDR, we must equally go beyond this framing to recognize the central role of women in development and to advancing social justice. We must ensure that gender equality is a right, and it is not merely a means to an end (economic growth). Poverty alleviation and economic development strategies must challenge models based on unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, privatization of public systems, and exploitation of unequal gender and social relations.<sup>19</sup> That means governments and donors should also invest in a broad range of strategies to address the root causes of gender inequalities and discriminations in order to generate long term change in women’s lives.

### *The entrance of new actors investing in women and girls: foundations and corporations*

While broadly and historically speaking, foundations (from the US and Western Europe) have not been top funders of women’s rights and gender equality work<sup>20</sup> (with a few exceptions,

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<sup>18</sup>Increasing women’s economic development as a means to build national economies has a long history in international development work, i.e., the WID (women in development), WAD (women and development) to GAD (gender and development) trends from the 1970s-1990s.

<sup>19</sup>See “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),” Available at: <http://www.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>

<sup>20</sup>Recent research by Mama Cash and the Foundation Center has documented a large gap between European foundations’ stated interest in funding gender equality and their actual funding. The study found that 90% of the foundations participating in the research expressed some interest in supporting programs benefiting women and girls but that just 37% of Foundations surveyed intentionally focused at least some of their work on women and girls. Only 4.8% of foundation spending went explicitly to women’s and girls’ programs; 58% of foundations surveyed channeled less than 10% of their spending to programs on women and girls in 2009, while one quarter did not allocate any funds at all to the sector. These findings suggest that there is large potential for European Foundations to increase their support for women’s human rights work. See McGill, L.T., Shah, S., and Weisblatt, K. (2011), “Untapped Potential: European Foundation Funding for Women and Girls” Commissioned by Mama Cash, published by the Foundation Center, p. ix. Available at: <http://www.mamacash.org/page.php?id=2788>

including women's funds), interest has been steadily increasing.<sup>21</sup> More recently a rise in new partnerships between foundations has been taking place to advance investment in women and girls, with a particular focus on girls and adolescents. The Nike Foundation has been a key actor in this sector giving new focus to its giving in 2008 by partnering with Novo Foundation to launch the "Girl Effect" in support of adolescent girls around the globe. The partnership gave a total of \$100 million through 2011, also contributing \$3 million to the Adolescent Girls Initiative of the World Bank in 2008.<sup>22</sup> The Novo Foundation also committed \$80 million over ten years toward ending violence against women and girls in the US.<sup>23</sup> Another recent example of partnership between a consortium of foundations<sup>24</sup> is the "Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage", launched at the 2011 Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) annual meeting. The initiative aims to raise a budget of \$3 million and to establish a network of donors to support ending child marriage.<sup>25</sup> All of these initiatives point toward the currency and influence of "investing in women and girls", representing a unique opportunity to fast-forward gender equality objectives if women's needs and considerations on the ground inform the selection of strategies and interventions.

In order to further deepen commitments to the foundation of gender equality in development, relationships and partnerships must be cultivated with women's movements and women's rights organizations on the ground that have been battling these discriminations for decades and are ready to share their learning and to take on board new challenges. Women's funds have been strong allies to women's organizations in this sense and are a powerful sector at the vanguard of alternative rights-based funding for women and girls that support women's movement building and therefore the collective empowerment of women.<sup>26</sup> An excellent example of a collaboration that is closely connected with grassroots women's organizations and movements is the Girls Action Information Network (GAIN). This is a Nike Foundation supported collaboration with Global Fund for Women (GFW), the American Jewish World Service; EMpower; Firelight Foundation; Global Fund for Children; and Mama Cash where they are working to support and strengthen adolescent girls programming, better understand the challenges and best practices of organizations working with adolescent girls, and increase the visibility of girls' programs and issues in order to increase donor attention and investment.<sup>27</sup> These types of innovative cross-sector networks and collaborations stand to meaningfully support and advance gender equality, by building on the unique strengths and capacities of different partners.

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<sup>21</sup> Research by the Foundation Center and Women's Funding Network found that between 1990 and 2006 foundation giving "specifically targeted to benefit women and girls" grew by 223% which was greater than the percent that overall foundation giving rose (177%) in the research sample. In 2006, Gates Foundation ranked as the number one donor internationally, mostly funding for global health (\$241.7 million). The research found that US foundation support for women and girls was more internationally focused than giving overall and that the majority of funding went to health, not rights. On the other hand, women's funds accounted for the largest share of funding to human rights. See Foundation Center and Women's Funding Network (2009), "Highlights of Accelerating Change for Women and Girls: The Role of Women's Funds," Available at: [http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/womensfunds2009\\_highlights.pdf](http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/womensfunds2009_highlights.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Nike Foundation. "Adolescent Girls Initiative Launched" Available at: <http://nikeinc.com/nike-foundation/news/adolescent-girls-initiative-launched> "Nike Foundation and Buffets Join to Invest \$100 Million in Girls" Available at: <http://nikeinc.com/nike-foundation/news/nike-foundation-and-buffetts-join-to-invest-100-million-in-girls>

<sup>23</sup> Novo Foundation. (2011), "NoVo Foundation Commits \$80 million over ten years toward ending violence against women and girls in the US," May 18, 2011. Available at: <http://novofoundation.org/2011/05/18/novo-foundation-commits-80-million-over-10-years-towards-ending-violence-against-girls-and-women-in-the-us/>

<sup>24</sup> Partners include the Elders, the Ford Foundation, the Nike Foundation and the NoVo Foundation, joined by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Open Society Foundations.

<sup>25</sup> See Novo Foundation. Available at: <http://novofoundation.org/2011/09/20/girlsnotbrides/>

<sup>26</sup> Women's funds have consistently been cited as one of the top and most frequently mentioned donors to women's organizations and movements in the WITM research since 2006, even though their percentage of total giving is smaller than other donors, such as bilaterals and multilaterals.

<sup>27</sup> See GAIN discussion group. Available at: <http://www.worldpulse.com/node/48357>

Additionally, corporations through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and other philanthro-capitalist efforts have increasingly been part of this trend in recent years. We have seen new corporate investments, many focused on building women's entrepreneurship (e.g., Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Women initiative and \$100 million commitment to educate women in developing and emerging markets in management and business skills<sup>28</sup>) or Exxon Mobil's \$47 million investment since 2005 in the Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative, which reaches women in almost 100 countries through NGOs, universities, and government agencies).<sup>29</sup>

There are other actors from the corporate sector (such as Coca Cola and Walmart) that have 'jumped' on this trend, but information is not available to know how much they are really investing. It seems apparent that in some cases corporations are using this heightened interest in women and girls as part of their broader marketing efforts, without meaningfully transforming harmful corporate practices for women and their communities (violation of labor rights, land grabbing, etc.) There are potentially other changes that corporations could be making, outside of direct financial support, that could lead to greater advances for gender equality (for example, paying national-level taxes, thus expanding the pool of public resources available).

While the entrance of these new actors to efforts to advance gender equality can be considered a positive step, we have seen significant limitations with this trend, including a narrow understanding and definition of women's empowerment with a focus on economic integration instead of rights based approaches and the tendency to not include, support, and build on existing experience and knowledge by women's rights movements and organizations.

### *Ensuring the roots of poverty, discriminations, and inequalities remain central to interventions*

One challenge we have seen has been the focus to date on the economic benefits of "investing in women and girls" and gender equality (seen everywhere from the World Bank to the "Girl Effect" campaign to governments to the UN, and even appearing in CSW recommendations).<sup>30</sup> This approach to transforming the reality of women's lives around the world focuses primarily on a narrow definition of women's economic empowerment (women as entrepreneurs or microcredit solutions)<sup>31</sup> and women's leadership (focused on individual leadership primarily in formal political spaces). Support for projects that are focused on the integration of women in the economy or in political leadership, may not necessarily contribute to greater gender equality in the long-run. There is also tendency with some of the new actors to believe that there are 'magic bullets' or 'rapid solutions' to 'help' women.<sup>32</sup> It is crucial to recognize the more complex picture that advancing gender equality and women's rights

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<sup>28</sup>See Goldman Sachs. Available at: <http://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000women/10000-women-immersive/10000-women-brochure.pdf>

<sup>29</sup>See Exxon Mobil. Available at: [http://www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/community\\_women.aspx](http://www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/community_women.aspx)

<sup>30</sup>United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Expert Group Meeting "Agreed conclusions on financing gender equality and the empowerment of women," (2008) p.3, *ibid*.

<sup>31</sup>For example, the Nirantar survey of microcredit groups and poverty reduction in India has found that micro-credit programs instead of increasing women's agency and empowerment to women can reinforce their traditional roles, and does not challenge the roots of existing inequalities. "... The new construction of the good woman, who saves regularly, repays faithfully in the service of the family, while bearing a greater burden of work, is also epitomised as the progressive woman, with all the symbols of outward and upward mobility, as well as the responsibility to keep those symbols intact." See (Nirantar (2007), "Examining Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation and Education within Self Help Groups (SHGs) – A Qualitative Study," p. 41. Available at: [http://www.nirantar.net/docs/SHG\\_%20qual\\_%20eng.pdf](http://www.nirantar.net/docs/SHG_%20qual_%20eng.pdf)

<sup>32</sup>A recent critique by Ofra Koffman (2012) challenges "Nike's Girl Effect" and UN 2010 taskforce data that suggests women that "marry later, delay childbearing, have healthier children, and earn better incomes that will benefit themselves, their families, communities and nations." Instead, arguing that the relationships between early marriage and fertility is much more complex and context-specific. See Koffman, O. (10 February, 2012), "Will the 'girl effect' really help to combat poverty?" Poverty Matters Blog, *The Guardian*, Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/feb/10/will-girl-effect-combat-poverty>

represents. A more holistic definition of women empowerment framed in women's rights, building on existing international commitments and agreements (such as the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW to name just two), is essential to a people-centred development. The enjoyment of women's rights and advancement of gender equality should be a central objective of development strategies that should be fully funded, include specific indicators and focus on shifting structural, entrenched power imbalances, patriarchal attitudes, and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities.

As a complementary strategy to women's economic empowerment, strengthening different dimensions of women's autonomy and empowerment is needed to advance women's rights and gender equality. Lessons articulated in my presentation in the 54<sup>th</sup> session of CSW still hold true today regarding the diverse implementation of women's empowerment, which should be framed in an integral way, taking into account at least the following five dimensions:<sup>33</sup>

- Women's economic autonomy: not only stopping the feminization of poverty or working to eradicate poverty, but transforming macroeconomics and economic structures, building equality and social justice and ensuring that women have access to and control over economic resources.
- Women's political autonomy and full citizenship: working for parity of participation at all levels, and ensuring women's participation across the broad spectrum of formal and informal decision-making institutions and spaces as a reality and not just a quota aspiration; further ensuring that participation contributes to advance women's rights and gender equality as the foundation to building democracy and ensuring women's full citizenship.
- Women's freedom from all forms of violence: whether perpetuated by state-sponsored actors, private actors or by a family member, violence remains one of the most pervasive barriers to women's full enjoyment of their rights. Any effective intervention needs to address violence and advance its eradication.
- Women's sexual autonomy: women must have the freedom to decide how they want to live without risk of violence and discrimination based on their sexuality. Even with so much knowledge and evidence of how sexuality is central to the lives of human beings, there is still limited recognition of the relevance of women's sexuality and sexual rights in relation to all other spheres of development and human rights.
- Women's reproductive autonomy: without reproductive freedom and the proper supports in place (i.e., universal access to quality health services, the decriminalization of abortion), the full range of women's human rights cannot be advanced.

#### *Strengthening the representation and voices of women's rights activists and organizations*

The politics of representation is also an important factor to consider in international meetings and decision making spaces of importance—to what extent are the voices and agendas of women's rights activists, organizations, and movements from the grassroots to the international levels, reflected in key spaces and events of importance? It is also unclear the extent to which funding through these new actors is actually reaching diverse women's rights organizations and

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<sup>33</sup>From a summary of the speech, see Alpizar, A. (2010), "The Implementation Of The Beijing Declaration And Platform For Action, The Outcomes Of The Twenty-third Special Session Of The General Assembly And Its Contribution To Shaping A Gender Perspective Towards The Full Realization Of The MDGs." Available at: <http://awid.org/Library/The-implementation-of-the-Beijing-Declaration-and-Platform-for-Action-the-outcomes-of-the-twenty-third-special-session-of-the-General-Assembly-and-its-contribution-to-shaping-a-gender-perspective-towards-the-full-realization-of-the-MDGs>

movements. Women's rights activists and organizations at all levels have much to share with newer actors in the field in terms of why broader structures of discrimination exist, as well as what sorts of interventions could target the roots of discriminations and inequalities, and could work or not in different contexts.<sup>34</sup> This closer type of working relationship stands to benefit everyone involved, catalyzing innovation and effective partnerships for pushing forward the agenda of global gender equality. We applaud CSW for their efforts to ensure that feminist voices are represented on the panel in these very important conversations related to financing for gender equality and women's organizations and hope this will be the start of more concerted efforts by other development actors as well. This is an essential pending task with UN Women that we expect to see changed this year, with the establishment of CSO Advisory Boards at all levels, and the definition of other forms of meaningful engagement, particularly of feminist and women's rights organizations and movements, in the work of UN Women.

#### ***D. Bilateral and Multilateral Funding Trends for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment***

##### *ODA is increasing, yet still falling behind on stated commitments*

Overall, 2010 has seen the highest levels of total aid at \$128.7 billion; this represents an increase from 2008 of \$119.1 billion. However, this total still only represents .32% of GNI, falling far short of governments' commitments to .7% of GNI by 2015.<sup>35</sup> The donors exceeding the 0.7% target are the same as in 2008: Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.<sup>36</sup> Despite overall increases, individual countries are faring differently depending on the national context and the extent to which the economic recession and other factors are affecting the national economy and economic growth (e.g., cuts to ODA in 2011 have occurred in Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Japan to name a few).

##### *ODA to gender equality is not reaching standalone programming*

According to the OECD DAC, total sector allocable aid in 2009-2010 was \$94.7 billion. Of the almost \$71 billion screened against the Gender Equality Policy Marker, \$24.9 billion marked gender equality as a principal or significant objective. Of the \$24.9 billion to gender equality, only \$3 billion (12%) of this aid went to gender equality and women's empowerment projects as a principal objective.<sup>37</sup> The remaining went to projects that have gender equality as a significant objective (more likely mainstreaming initiatives). This means a very small percentage of ODA allocated for gender equality is actually going to standalone programming with gender equality as a primary focus. This is concerning given governments' commitments to increase both standalone and mainstreamed funding to gender equality.

##### *ODA to women's organizations and institutions has decreased since 2008*

The general atmosphere of funding constraints or unfulfilled commitments is also filtering down and affecting funding for gender equality. When looking specifically at funds dedicated to

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<sup>34</sup>For example, see the study of Bangladesh landless women and the importance of involvement in NGOs for rights awareness and redressal. See Kabeer, N. "Between Affiliation and Autonomy: Navigating Pathways of Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice in Rural Bangladesh," *Development and Change*, Vol. 42, Is. 2, p. 515.

<sup>35</sup>See OECD. "Development aid reaches an historic high in 2010." Available at: [http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,3746,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_46582641\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,3746,en_2649_34447_46582641_1_1_1_1,00.html) and "Development aid at its highest level ever in 2008." Available at: [http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_42458595\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3343,en_2649_34447_42458595_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>36</sup>OECD, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>OECD DAC. 2012. "Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/38/49732892.pdf>

women’s organizations and institutions specifically (code 15170), the OECD DAC shows there has been a 40% decrease in resources since 2008, from \$550.9 million to \$331.8 million in 2010 (see chart below). Countries with steady and sometimes drastic declines from 2008 to 2010 in their support to women’s organizations and gender equality institutions include Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, and the UK. Germany, Sweden and Spain have increased funding to women’s organizations and gender equality institutions up to 2010, while Norway has fluctuated in support over the three-year period. It is important to highlight that these figures also include women’s institutions, such as national machineries, and that they may actually be getting more funding than women’s organizations due to better positioning and ability to absorb funding. Still we know that national women’s machineries have very limited funding in comparison to other state institutions.

One of the main challenges with aid accountability structures is that while there are mechanisms to track flows to particular areas or institutions (such as the OECD DAC gender marker), the actual outcomes or results of aid are missing, particularly in terms of tracking the changes in the lives of the women due to aid. Neither the actual disbursements made nor their time appropriateness can be tracked. Future aid accountability systems, particularly around actual outcomes and results achieved thru aid supported efforts, must address these gaps and link also with existing accountability and monitoring systems for women’s rights such as the CEDAW; this will be an important step to reduce corruption, ensuring money actually reaches the ground, and to seeing what results aid actually makes to women’s lives on the ground.

<b>ODA to DAC Sector Code 15170: Women’s Equality Organizations and Institutions</b>					
<b>(USD million)</b>					
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Total DAC countries</b>	<b>146.375</b>	<b>315.632</b>	<b>550.903</b>	<b>422.800</b>	<b>331.833</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	11.769	14.434	38.509	33.590	13.862
<b>Germany</b>	..	15.868	17.319	35.227	30.712
<b>Ireland</b>	3.344	9.384	10.624	7.622	9.752
<b>Netherlands</b>	10.108	13.417	144.434	28.216	12.296
<b>Norway</b>	18.766	58.369	57.818	81.181	59.831
<b>Spain</b>	45.926	163.129	138.505	105.432	148.781
<b>Sweden</b>	..	3.578	1.761	20.017	9.850
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0.092	0.685	65.100	37.980	9.047

Source: OECD DAC statistics, extracted February 17, 2011.  
<http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>  
 .. no data available

*Rising trend of cuts to civil society in some states*

Support to CSOs, and indeed women’s organizations, may also be in jeopardy in some countries where the role of investing in development aid and civil society overseas is being debated, and in

some cases, where policies representing significant cuts have been put in place. At times these debates are arising in light of constrained national resources due to economic recession and some also combine with the entrance of more conservative political parties with different positions on development aid, e.g., Sweden, Spain, Canada, UK and the Netherlands. The outcome has resulted in cutting funding for many well-established international development CSOs, human rights and women's rights advocacy networks.

#### *Rising interest of multilaterals and bilateral in funding global maternal and child health*

Another development in multilateral and bilateral funding has been the global push for funding of maternal and child health. This push was in part catalyzed as MDG4 and 5 had seen the least progress of the MDGs.<sup>38</sup> In 2010, the UN Secretary General launched an unprecedented investment in global women's and children's health, and many governments and donors have rallied behind the calls for increased investment—Every Woman, Every Child has secured over \$40 billion in commitments to be delivered over the next five years. While this is a positive development, in some cases this has meant that governments are moving away from investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights and moving back to a discourse of women as mothers, rolling us back nearly 30 years to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo where discussions focused on women's reproductive functions and health, before the rights discourse became prominent. Governments must recognize the importance of supporting these global health initiatives and services. However, support should not come at the expense of fulfilling commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment—support for rights based initiatives including comprehensive reproductive health and sexual health services must continue to take priority on donor agendas as well.

#### *The rise of public/private partnerships*

Recent years have also seen increased collaboration and partnerships between bilateral and multilateral agencies and corporations and other private actors to leverage innovative new ways of addressing global development concerns, and gender equality is benefiting from this trend. For example, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is launching a research project to identify the economic benefits of investing in women's health, partnering with a diverse range of actors, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Lancet, the UN, WHO and the World Bank.<sup>39</sup> Public/private partnerships typically tend to focus on global health and economic empowerment issues, coming from an economic growth perspective. While important, women's rights organizations wonder the extent to which these investments are fueling the alternative forms of empowerment described above, which address the roots of discriminations and inequalities and could promote and support change in the long-term. There is also ample opportunity to encourage new collaborations with women's organizations and movements, ensuring they are at the center of innovations to further catalyze changes in women's lives worldwide.

#### *Specific increases in bilateral resources to gender equality*

There have been some bright spots in terms of funding for gender equality, with important new bilateral funds being scaled up and renewed since 2008. One noteworthy increase in funds for

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<sup>38</sup>See most recent analysis of progress in 2011 on MDG4 and MDG5 in the Lancet. Lozano, R. et al. (2011). "Progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 on maternal and child mortality: an updated systematic analysis." Available at: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(11\)61337-8/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(11)61337-8/abstract)

<sup>39</sup>See Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *ibid*.

gender equality has come from the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA). In 2010 SIDA disbursed \$4.12 billion in ODA, of which \$315 million were allocated to the Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality sector—5% of which went to women’s equality institutions and organizations, for a total of \$15.75 million.<sup>40</sup> SIDA committed to maintaining or increasing aid in future years through its Global Gender Equality Program. In fact, the budget line has increased 3.5 times from 2008 to 2011<sup>41</sup> to a budget of 90 million SEK (approximately USD \$13.7 million).<sup>42</sup>

Another important investment made by a key donor to gender equality and women’s empowerment has been the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ MDG3 Fund. The MDG3 Fund was a historic investment with €70 million supporting 45 projects from CSOs worldwide from 2008-2011 (34 of the 45 projects were implemented by women’s organizations, networks or funds). Clearly the results from investing in women’s organizations and CSOs to catalyze changes in gender equality and women’s rights have been recognized by the Dutch government, as the fund has been continued under the new name, Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW). In May 2011, the Dutch government officially launched the FLOW Fund, sourced at €70 million from 2012-2015.<sup>43</sup> FLOW prioritizes work on security, including work eliminating gender-based violence and the active engagement of women in security and peace processes, women’s political participation and economic empowerment.<sup>44</sup>

#### *Increasing multilateral support to women’s organizations from UN Women*

Another key shift in the multilateral sector includes the establishment of UN WOMEN in 2011. However, underfunding represents a serious threat to the efficacy and the scope of the agency—with a budget of less than half the Secretary General’s suggested starting budget of \$500 million in 2011— little more than the combined budgets of the four agencies that were merged into UN Women. This reality further supports a consistent trend of under financing across the gender equality sector. Yet, the need for an effective and well-resourced multilateral voice on gender equality and women’s rights could not be greater.

Women’s rights organizations are counting on UN Women to champion the role of women’s organizations’ and movements’ in development, ensuring that their voices and agendas are visible and that they are key actors at decision making tables in development spaces of importance.

Funding challenges notwithstanding, UN Women manages important financing for NGOs and government agencies dedicated to gender equality and women’s rights: the Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Fund for Gender Equality.

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<sup>40</sup>SIDA. Open Aid. Available at: <http://www.openaid.se/en/sectors/Democracy,%20Human%20rights%20and%20Gender%20equality?year=2010>

<sup>41</sup>In 2008, the budget was 20 million SEK (€1.94 million). In 2009, the budget was 40 million SEK (€3.9 million). In 2010, the budget was 70 million SEK (€6.78 million). In 2011, the budget was 90 million SEK (€8.7 million).

<sup>42</sup>Data provided by Sida representative, September 2009. Also see Alpizar, L. et al, (2010), “2009-2010 FundHer Research Update Brief 1: Trends In Bilateral And Multilateral Funding” Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), p.33. Available at: <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Brief-1-FundHer-Research-Update-Brief-Series>

<sup>43</sup>Kinoti, K. (2011) “The Centrality Of Investing In Women’s Rights Organizations And Leadership: The Launch Of The Dutch FLOW Fund” AWID, 24 June 2011. Available at: <http://awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/The-Centrality-of-Investing-in-Women-s-Rights-Organizations-and-Leadership-The-Launch-of-the-Dutch-FLOW-Fund%20>

<sup>44</sup>Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINBUZA), (2011) “The Netherlands investing in women in developing countries,” Available at: <http://www.minbuza.nl/en/key-topics/development-cooperation/grant-programmes/flow-funding-leadership-and-opportunities-for-women/news/the-netherlands-investing-in-women-in-developing-countries.html>

- The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women continues to be an important source of funding for innovative projects combating violence against women around the world. Since it began its operations in 1997, the UN Trust Fund has delivered over \$78.4 million through 339 grants in over 127 countries and territories. While the majority of grantees are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), grants are also awarded to governments and UN Country Teams. Funding in recent years has decreased since peaking in 2008 when \$21 million was granted. In 2011, the Trust Fund awarded \$17.1 million to 26 initiatives in 33 countries and territories. In 2009, \$10.4 million was granted and in 2010, \$10.1 million.<sup>45</sup>
- The Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) commenced operations in 2009 with the Spanish government's start-up contribution of \$65 million to support women in achieving political and economic empowerment. The FGE awards multiyear grants to NGOs and for partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The Fund is an effective vehicle to reach millions of women in a cost-effective manner. In the three years since its launch, the FGE awarded \$43 million in 40 countries.<sup>46</sup> According to information shared by the FGE, the types of empowerment outcomes that women's organizations are advancing are diverse, such as supporting organizations' advocacy for the gender equality law in El Salvador (which was passed in March 2011), securing decent employment for more than 7,000 Dalit women in India, to mainstreaming gender into agricultural policies in Uganda, to name a few.

*The demand for funding from women's organizations has exponentially increased*

UN Funds have been keeping track of the supply and demand for funding and have found surprising results. For example, in 2011 the Trust Fund received an exponential increase in funding requests estimated at \$1.2 billion. Due to constrained resources, the Fund could only support 1.4% of the total applications received.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the demand for grants in the first round of FGE applications far exceeded the available resources, with 1,239 funding requests totalling \$3 billion from 127 countries. The Fund could only support 1.2% of proposals, and yet 50% of applicants had viable and strong proposals. Another recent example is applications received by The Netherlands to FLOW: In response to a single call for proposals, a total of 238 applications were received requesting over €733 million. Thus, the available € 70 million was more than 10 times oversubscribed.<sup>48</sup>

This mismatch between the supply of funding and grantee demand shows the great and increasing need for support for gender equality and women's rights and empowerment, but it is also a testament to the potential for impact and outreach that we could unleash.<sup>49</sup> The above trends and shifts are important because bilateral and multilateral funding continues to be a significant source of support for women's organizations. WITM research has consistently shown that bilaterals and multilaterals account for close to 30% of the revenue of women's organizations participating in AWID surveys carried out since 2005.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Looking across a broader span of time, since 2006 funding has nearly quadrupled in comparison to 2011 giving (in 2006 and 2007 the Trust Fund granted \$4.9 and \$4.5 million respectively). See United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, "Together for a Better Tomorrow." Available at: [http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/UNTrustFund\\_Brochure\\_en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/UNTrustFund_Brochure_en.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> See United Nations Fund for Gender Equality. Available at: <http://www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/fund-for-gender-equality/> and personal conversations with FGE Director.

<sup>47</sup> See United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, "Together for a Better Tomorrow," *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *FLOW: Explanation of the appraisal procedure*, (November 2011), document sent to AWID.

<sup>49</sup> Fund for Gender Equality Brochure. (2011). UN WOMEN.

<sup>50</sup> Alpizar, et al. (2010a), *ibid.*

### Summarizing the poor overall share of financing for gender equality across bilaterals and multilaterals

Even though donors have acknowledged that gender equality is a cornerstone of development and some governments and multilaterals are financing at greater levels than others, overall commitments and interest in gender equality are not necessarily translating into more resources. Too often funding for gender equality takes a backseat to other priorities. The data illustrate the extent to which gender equality gets short-changed at the bilateral and multilateral levels, despite strong rhetoric on the importance of women and girls in development. For example, using data presented earlier on the OECD DAC (sector code 15170 on funding to women's organizations and institutions), we find that \$331.8 million dollars in the 2010 budget went to women's organizations and gender institutions (including national machineries)—this represents 1.3% of all DAC screened funds dedicated to gender equality (\$24.9 billion). Moreover, the largest dedicated multilateral agency for gender equality, UN Women, had a budget of just \$235 million in 2011, which equals 4% of the total UN budget for 2011 at approximately \$5.4 billion, and does not even reach half the target of \$500 million that we all expected UN Women to have in its first year.

Finally, recent research on the World Bank's commitment to gender equality by Gender Action revealed stark gaps between the discourse and call to action of the 2012 WDR and actual investments—where the World Bank's spending for “social development, gender and inclusion” was less than two percent of its 2011 budget.<sup>51</sup> If women represent half of the population and gender equality is such a high level priority, where multiple international frameworks from BPfA to Busan have affirmed the importance and centrality of investing in gender equality, then financing made available so far is clearly an indication that the political commitment to make this a real priority has still a very long way to go. Fulfilling this commitment is overdue, and we hope all donors will catch up with this pending debt with women around the world and fulfill their obligations soon.

## **IV. WITM Research Findings on the State of Financing for Women's Organizations**

The broader contextual trends and patterns of bilateral and multilateral funding show how high the demand for funding has been and reveals the significant mismatch with actual funds available, despite recognition of the centrality of women and women's rights in development. In this section, we take a deeper look at the state of financing for gender equality from the perspective of women's organizations.

### Characteristic of the sample in the latest survey (preliminary analysis)

A snapshot of the state and sustainability of women's organizations' incomes is described from a preliminary analysis<sup>52</sup> of the 2011 AWID global survey. 1,119 women's organizations and groups from all over the world responded to the survey describing their funding realities since 2008, with particular attention on the 2010 calendar year.<sup>53</sup> There was diverse regional

<sup>51</sup>See Elizabeth Arend's quote in Panagoda, C. (2012)“Despite Rhetoric, Women Still Sidelined in Development Funding.” February 6, 2012 Available at: <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=106663>

<sup>52</sup>These results are from preliminary analyses and final results may change. See upcoming 2012 WITM reports for final results.

<sup>53</sup>85% of the respondents were from registered NGOs with gender equality with a mission primarily focused on promoting women's rights, gender equality and/or empowerment. 15% of respondents were from nonregistered groups of women collective or initiative with a primary focus on promoting women's rights, gender equality, and/or empowerment.

representation of groups with the majority of respondents headquartered in Sub-Saharan Africa (37%), Latin America (15%), South and Southeast Asia (11%), Southern and Central Europe (9%), and the Middle East and North Africa (7%). Less than five percent of respondents came from the Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern Asia, the Pacific, North America, and Western Europe. Most of the respondents work locally (53%) or at the national level (55%).

#### *Income sizes of women's organizations: Small organizations prevail*

The results show that women's organizations' incomes continue to be (as we pointed out in 2006, 2007, and 2008)<sup>54</sup> quite small, even though organizations have experienced some growth in income over time. The median annual income of women's organizations in the sample was \$20,000 USD in 2010, and 75% of organizations had incomes of \$62,000 or less.<sup>55</sup> Contextualizing this funding, over two thirds of women's organizations have annual incomes of less than \$50,000 (68%); around seven percent are large organizations that have incomes of \$500,000 and over, and the rest are small to medium size organizations with incomes between \$50,000-100,000 (11%) and \$100,000-500,000 (11%).<sup>56</sup> These results mirror results from our previous research.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Income budget fluctuations*

The funding situation for women's organizations in the sample has been varied, with a significant number of organizations experiencing funding constraints. The data show that nearly half of women's groups were secure in their funding situations, meeting their ideal budget for 2010 (44%) with very few (3%) seeing budgets surpluses. However, over one third of women's organizations (35%) experienced a significant shortfall in meeting their ideal budget for 2010. Nearly 15% of organizations experienced catastrophic budget shortfalls falling in the 80 to 100% range. The majority of organizations (54%) experienced shortfalls in the 20 to 50% range and 14% of organizations experienced larger shortfalls, ranging from 55-75%. On the less extreme end, minor to moderate shortfalls (between 5 to 15%) affected 14% of women's organizations.

It is likely that these shortfalls were related to the broader loss of certain donors and the general atmosphere of constrained funding. Results from WITM 2011 research show that over a fifth (21%) of women's organizations in the sample have lost donors since 2008. These decreases have impacted organizations sustaining losses in diverse ways, primarily resulting in cutting activities (66%), cutting programs and projects (52%), reducing staff size (47%), or having staff forgo salaries (38%). One fifth of women's organizations in the sample reported experiencing the threat of potential closure. However, the picture is not all bleak. A majority of organizations (57%) have also added new donors and sources of funding since 2008, which suggests a diversification of donors in the sector even while funding losses were prevalent. Diversification

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<sup>54</sup>See 1<sup>st</sup> FundHer report: Clark, C. and Sprenger, E. (2006), "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?" AWID. Available at:

<http://www.awid.org/Library/Where-is-the-Money-for-Women-s-Rights>

See 2<sup>nd</sup> FundHer Report: Kerr, J. (2007). "The Second FundHer Report. "Financial Sustainability for Women's Movements Worldwide."

Available at: <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Financial-Sustainability-for-Women-s-Movement-s-Worldwide-Second-FundHer-Report>

See Third FundHer report: Hopenhaym, F. with Carrasco, L. and Raaber, N. (2008), FundHer Brief 2008. "Money Watch for Women's Rights Movements and Organizations." AWID. Available at: <http://www.awid.org/Library/Money-Watch-for-Women-s-Rights-Movements-and-Organizations-FundHer-Brief-2008>

<sup>55</sup>This figure is preliminary, based on 732 organizations where income has been verified.

<sup>56</sup>3% of organizations reported no income in 2010.

<sup>57</sup>For example, nearly 2/3 of women's organizations have budgets of less than \$50,000; around 4% are large organizations that have budgets of \$500,000 and over, and the rest are medium-sized with budgets between \$50,000-\$500,000 (2<sup>nd</sup> FundHer report).

of funding streams is an important protective factor involved in financial sustainability and autonomy. Upcoming WITM research will more fully explore this trend.

#### *Short-term and project funding continues to prevail over core long-term funding*

The data continue to provide evidence on the overemphasis of short-term, fragmented funding. In 2008, only 30% of respondents reported having flexible grants that explicitly cover diverse expenses not related to a project (core funding). In 2010, little had changed: only 28% of women's organizations received core funding that year, and 13% reported receiving core funding at some point, but not in 2010. That means that nearly half the women's organizations in the sample (48%) have never received core, flexible funding for their work.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to flexible funding, multiyear commitments are central to ensuring the predictability of resources and financial sustainability, as well as allow women's organizations the possibility of adjusting to contextual changes or responding to urgent needs (this is particularly relevant in times of crisis). Overall, 42% of organizations in the sample received multiyear funding<sup>59</sup> at some point (but only 21% of them in 2010). Of those that did receive multiyear funding, two-thirds received two (32%) or three year grants (34%). That means that similar to the general lack of core support, over half (52%) of the organizations in the sample had never received multiyear funding.<sup>60</sup>

#### *Savings and assets' ownership is variable*

The majority of women's organizations are essentially living month to month with varying degrees of financial security. This trend became evident in 2006, and has shown little signs of shifting. In 2010, over 30% of women's organizations report having no savings or reserves. Of those that do, the median amount in savings was reported at \$500 with 75% of women's organizations having savings of \$6000 or less.

Moreover, half of women's organizations report having no assets (50%). The others (46%) that do have assets, more commonly hold depreciating assets, such as furniture (34%), machinery/equipment (30%), vehicles (13%), and inventories (9%). Fewer organizations have appreciating assets, such as land (16%), buildings (11%), and investments (6%).

#### *Financial insecurity is the norm*

In 2011, over halfway through the fiscal year (in November and December 2011), only 13% of women's organizations had secured all the funding they needed for that year. This demonstrates the insecurity that the majority of women's organizations are facing in terms of financial stability. However, in terms of broader safety nets, most organizations (59%) have reserves which would allow them to operate between one to six months, 22% for seven to twelve months, and 11% could survive for more than a year. A very small percentage of organizations (8%) are in a particularly precarious position and are unable to continue operating if they were to lose all funding.

The financial sustainability of women's organizations overall is precarious. This is a key risk factor to building strong and resilient women's organizations and movements that are resistant

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<sup>58</sup> 11% of organizations were unsure if they had received core support.

<sup>59</sup> However, results showed that only 21% of groups received multiyear funding in 2010.

<sup>60</sup> 6% of organizations were unsure if they had received multiyear support.

and stable against external, as well as internal, threats. Governments and donors from diverse funding sectors committed to gender equality and women's rights must attend to sustainability issues within the sector and ensure they are not exacerbating these realities through their practices. In order to support women's organizations and movements, the link between donor driven accountability structures, how this influences what types of interventions get funded, and the quality of resource support (i.e., short-term project based vs. long-term flexible) must be examined and addressed.

In order to deliver upon commitments to increase financing for women's organizations and gender equality, governments and donors must get specific about their strategy for supporting diverse women's movements and organizations, particularly given the reality of funding increasingly being channeled to larger organizations that have the capacity to absorb larger amounts and that are not necessarily part of women's movements. Other types of organizations that are part of women's movements that have the capacity to absorb large funds and re-grant to smaller grassroots organizations include women's funds (e.g., Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, African Women's Development Fund, the Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres, the recently launched FRIDA-Young Feminist Fund, to name just a few<sup>61</sup>), which directly channel resources to grassroots and other types of women's organizations; funds that provide support to women rights defenders at risk, such as the Urgent Action Fund, or women's organizations and networks that re-grant (e.g., Groots, Huairou Commission, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)). In the 2011 WITM survey, 17% of women's organizations that completed the survey were re-granting NGOs with the majority of them working at the local and national levels. Women's funds and re-granting institutions are critical intermediaries as they are able to absorb larger amounts of funding and channel support to reach grassroots organizations and movements, beyond governmental and international nongovernmental funding.

Overall, the results paint a mixed picture for women's organizations' incomes and financial sustainability. While many organizations had met their ideal 2010 budgets and many increases in funding were seen, there is also a significant group of organizations that are struggling. Median incomes are strikingly low and most organizations had not raised the income they needed for the 2011 year, even though they were half way through the year. Across all types of organizations, there seems to be a general trend of fragmented funding, directed more often toward project rather than core support and one year grant cycles at the expense of multiyear commitments. We know that for the type of longer term structural work that women's rights organizations and movements address, there is a mismatch in funding disbursement practices (which range from the quantity, quality and type of funding to the accountability structures attached to that funding). If donor commitments to financing gender equality are to be successful, this requires a shift in how funding is delivered—moving from fragmented, short-term funding cycles to longer term partnerships of predictable, flexible, and multiyear support. Overall, there is also a need to scale up and increase funding for gender equality and women's empowerment and particularly the funds that reach women's organizations, as evidenced by the high demand and low funds available overall, as well as by the lack of the sustainability of organizations and movements in the sector.

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<sup>61</sup>More information on women's funds can be accessed on the website of the International Network of Women's Funds (INWF) <http://www.inwf.org/> or the Women's Funding Network: <http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/>

## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations: Making a Difference in Financing for Gender Equality, Women Rights through Women's Rights Organizations and Movements**

We conclude with the following recommendations for bold policy and practice changes to increase funding allocations for gender equality and women's organizations and movements and to deliver on existing political commitments.

1.-Governments must increase investment in ODA to 20% by 2015 to advance women's rights in sector-specific and crosscutting activities. Governments, multilaterals, and donors must recognize that primarily funding mainstreaming (as seen with the OECD DAC gender marker) is not sufficient and needs to be seriously assessed in order to create results that contribute to gender equality and women's rights. A three-layered approach to gender equality is necessary: financing gender equality as a sector-thematic area; mainstreaming gender equality; and supporting, promoting and ensuring the participation of women's machineries, gender activists, women's rights and women's organizations in all aspects of development cooperation.

2.- Governments, multilaterals and donors must ensure that women's rights organizations' and activists' voices and agendas are equitably represented and are at the center of national and international discussions where gender equality and women's empowerment issues are being debated and decided upon, including spaces that focus on "investing in women and girls" and macroeconomic and development agendas, and including in UN Women as well. A good indicator of initial progress on this is the following: UN Women should have appointed all the relevant CSO Advisory Boards (regional and global) by the next Executive Board in June. But of course, this is just a start.

3.-Bilateral and multilateral donors from all regions and donors from other funding sectors must strongly invest in rights-based solutions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, which is key to achieving the type of bold, systemic changes to women's inequalities that have sparked much of the attention on the importance of investing in women and girls. Governments should be investing in initiatives designed to tackle the roots of poverty, discrimination, and inequalities. Donor and developing country governments, as well as relevant multilateral institutions, must apply policy coherence for development and gender equality. 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.

4.-Governments, multilaterals, and donors should ensure increased, substantial, flexible, predictable and multi-year core funding for women's rights organizations and put effective mechanisms in place to guarantee funding reaches organizations in all of their diversity. They also should support diverse types of organizations, such as women's funds and international women's rights re-granting organizations, that have the absorptive capacity and wider grassroots reach to women's rights organizations and movements. This will help prevent unnecessary fragmentation of funding that occurs when primarily channelling gender equality funds through other actors that may not be strongly connected to women's rights organizations and movements on the ground.

5.-Governments, multilaterals, and donors need to establish clear, measurable, and time-bound gender equality objectives, both mainstreamed and standalone, and instate accountability mechanisms for resources allocated, disbursed and implemented, and the actual results of aid in terms of the types of social, economic, and political transformations being created in women's lives. To that end all donors must:

- 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 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.
- Be trained in and use the OECD DAC gender marker and report on the funds going to women's organizations and institutions (Code 15170).

6.-Post-Busan, an equitable and inclusive multilateral forum for policy dialogue and standard setting on development cooperation should be established that ensures the legitimacy of all development actors, through membership and full representation of all developing country perspectives, based within the 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 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, also need to be ensured.