

POLICY COHERENCE WITH GENDER EQUALITY, EQUITY AND RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

WOMEN'S WORKING GROUP ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT (WWG)¹ Statement at the 2010 ECOSOC High Level Segment, 28 June – 02 July 2010

The WWG welcomes the 2010 High-Level Segment that includes sessions on the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) with the theme “*Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*” and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) which focuses on “*Development Cooperation in Times of Crises: New Commitments to Reach the MDGs.*”

We reaffirm HUMAN RIGHTS and EQUALITY as fundamental values upon which international relations and development must stand. The United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit Declaration states that “*No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.*”

Financing gender equality and women's empowerment is not a partial, issue-based, short-term and arbitrary commitment. It is part and parcel of the interconnectedness and inter-dependence of principles, rights and obligations. Donors cannot “pick and choose” from a boutique of financing commitments such as one or the other MDG goals namely maternal mortality, health, or education. These fashionable trends are often pursued without any additional funding thus worsening the competition for resources among social goals.

What we need is to examine the underlying causes of inequalities and obstacles to peoples' and countries' development and rights and to address these in an integrated and sustainable manner. Issues in development cooperation cannot be isolated from the larger policy context of trade, investments, monetary and external debt, including fiscal stimulus and austerity measures.

Policy coherence for gender justice and socially just development demands that positive impacts of development assistance to low income countries are not negated by losses from unbalanced trade relations. Moreover, there is a need to link these economic and social policies with the procedural and substantive aspects of the Right to Development, women's rights frameworks as Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and human rights guarantees across civil, political, economic, environmental, social and cultural realms.

We welcome government policies that are supportive of adopting a holistic approach to trade and human rights. However in an asymmetrical system of international relations and cooperation, we also understand the need for resolving basic definitions. For example, the South Centre recently pointed out that non-discrimination in the context of human rights means addressing any form of distinction,

exclusion or restriction which as the effect or purpose of nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by a social group of their human rights and fundamental freedoms” while in the context of the World Trade Organization, it refers to national treatment for large foreign corporations even if it means creating hardships for smaller domestic companies to compete (Geneva, June 23-24 2010).

Finally, the AMR and the DCF processes have created opportunities within the UN for governments, civil society organizations, parliamentarians and local officials, to engage with issues and share experiences around global development goals, mechanisms and processes. We realize that much is to be desired in this process. Building on and sustaining inclusive development dialogue require having strong civil society organizations and women’s organizations which promote the rights and development of diverse social groups, hold policies and institutions transparent and accountable while at the same time fulfilling their responsibilities in equally accountable ways. The DCF should be strengthened to become the main space for standard-setting on development cooperation and it should play an important role to promote a profound reform of the international development cooperation system. We urge the UN particularly the ECOSOC to provide adequate support for all-inclusive participation and to endeavor to continually open up spaces for substantive multi-stakeholders’ processes in modalities that ensure women’s voices and meaningful participation through systematic and transparent mechanisms.

¹The members of the WWG on Financing for Development are: African Women’s Development & Communication Network (FEMNET), Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), Feminist Task Force-Global Call to Action Against Poverty (FTF-GCAP), Global Policy Forum (GPF), International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), International Council on Adult Education, REPEM, Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Women in Development Europe WIDE Network, Third World Network (TWN-Africa), and Social Watch. The WWG is currently coordinated by the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).