

Report of online discussion

## **Women and Poverty**

Organized by the Gender Team  
United Nations Development Programme,  
in collaboration with the United Nations Department  
of Economic and Social Affairs

11 January – 12 February 2010

The discussion on "Women and Poverty" was part of a series of United Nations online discussions dedicated to the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000); and was coordinated by WomenWatch, an inter-agency project of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and an unique electronic gateway to web-based information on all United Nations entities' work and the outcomes of the United Nations' intergovernmental processes for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. For more information and other "Beijing at 15" online discussions, visit <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/beijing15/>

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report reflect the opinions of participants to the online discussion and not the official views of the United Nations*



## Report of E-Discussion

# WOMEN AND POVERTY

Coordinated by the Gender Team  
United Nations Development Programme,  
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of Economic and Social Affairs

January 11-February 12, 2010

C. Mark Blackden  
Moderator  
February 24, 2010



## *Summary*

The E-discussion on Women and Poverty was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) from 11 January to 12 February 2010 and cross posted on Gender-net, PR-Net and MDG-Net. The E-discussion generated 120 responses from practitioners, experts, and policymakers from 47 countries, and inspired 846 new members to join the dialogue. The E-discussion presented an opportunity for the broader development community to formulate critical policy messages and action agenda to the Commission on the Status of Women's 15 year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on gender equality; and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, focused on the Millennium Development Goals.

The E-discussion covered a large range of topics related to the gender and poverty. The key messages of the e-discussion include: (i) **Reduce violence:** Address violence, including armed violence, that leads to de-development and impoverishment, and undermines advancement towards women's empowerment and gender equality; (ii) **Improve maternal health:** Provide universal access to healthcare for mothers and children. Earmark special budgetary provisions for delivering services and facilities to women in rural areas for reproductive and sexual health; (iii) **Improve labor market outcomes and economic opportunity for women:** Target active labor market measures to promote social inclusion of the most vulnerable women and men, and address the right of women to land tenure, property, and inheritance; (iv) **Strengthen accountability to women:** Fulfill commitments already made on gender equality, support the work of civil society organizations that are committed to the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment, and focus on agreed accountability systems that will support the achievement of the MDGs; (v) **Build in-country capacity to generate and use sex-disaggregated data:** Insist on collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data in every ministry, department, private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO). (vi) **Prioritize water and sanitation:** Improve access to water and sanitation with the view to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment. (vii) **Mitigate the negative impacts of the financial and economic crisis** on poor women and men and ensure that it does not produce further gender inequalities or disempower women.

The E-discussion also addressed other related issues, including education and skill development, vulnerability and social protection, and food security and rural women farmers.

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## I. Introduction and Purpose of the E-Discussion

As articulated in the invitation letter to the E-Discussion (see Annex 1), the purpose of the E-Discussion on Women and Poverty was “to bring together experts, practitioners and policy-makers, from within and outside of the UN system, to formulate critical policy messages to the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on gender equality (AMR); and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, focused on the Millennium Development Goals.”

The E-Discussion was a joint initiative of the UNDP Gender Team and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), moderated on gender-net by the UNDP Gender Team and cross posted on PR-Net and MDG-Net.

This report aims to provide a synthesis of the E-Discussion, including the organization, process, participants, key points and insights drawn from the postings received, and key messages for leaders and policy-makers. The invitation letter, session launch messages and guiding questions are reproduced in Annexes 1 and 2. Regional data on the participants are summarized in Annex 3. Materials referred to during the discussion and other useful resources are presented in Annex 4. These materials, along with all the postings received during the E-Discussion, are available at [the ECOSOC website](#)<sup>1</sup> and will be distributed on Gender-net, PR-net and MDG-net.

The invitation letter noted that “2010 will be a watershed year for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment” Referring to three major events scheduled to take place during the year, at which gender issues will be brought to the attention of, and addressed by, world leaders:

- In **March**, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will conduct a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).
- In **June**, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will review the status of implementation of the internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- In **September**, the General Assembly will complete a 10-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and propose policy measures to accelerate implementation over the period to 2015.

The E-Discussion aimed in particular to provide inputs into these major events taking place during 2010. This timing helped to animate the core messages and commitments for

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Economic and Social Council Web-site:  
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/amredis2010.shtml>

leaders that were identified during the final session of the discussion, and that are summarized in Part IV below.

## II. Structure and Organization of the E-Discussion

### Regional Distribution of Contributions

In addition to the existing Gender-net, PR-net and MDG-net members, 846 new members registered to follow this E-Discussion. During the five-week discussion period, 120 contributions were received from 104 people. Postings were received from 47 countries, as shown in Table 1 below. In the case of three contributions, the country of origin was not stated or not possible to establish. More detailed information on participants is provided in Annex 3.

<b>SSA (19)</b>	<b>AP (8)</b>	<b>MENA (4)</b>	<b>LAC (7)</b>	<b>EE/CIS (3)</b>	<b>WEOG (6)</b>
40.4%	17%	8.5%	14.9%	6.4%	12.8%
Burundi	Afghanistan	Egypt	Bolivia	Russia	Canada
Cameroon	Cambodia	Jordan	Colombia	Serbia	Finland
Cote d'Ivoire	Fiji	Lebanon	Ecuador	Turkmenistan	Germany
DRC	India	Morocco	El Salvador		New Zealand
Eritrea	Nepal		Jamaica		Switzerland
Ethiopia	Pakistan		Mexico		USA
Ghana	Philippines		Paraguay		
Guinea	Thailand				
Kenya					
Lesotho					
Madagascar					
Nigeria					
Rwanda					
Senegal					
Sudan					
Togo					
Uganda					
Zimbabwe					

  

<b>Key</b>	
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
AP	Asia/Pacific
MENA	Middle East/North Africa
LAC	Latin America/Caribbean
	Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
EE/CIS	
WEOG	Western Europe and Other Groups

### Structure of the E-Discussion

The E-Discussion was structured around three sessions, as follows:

Session 1 (January 11-February 4): New Insights on Women and Poverty

Session 2 (February 5-9): Institutional Responses to Women's Poverty

Session 3 (February 10-12): Core Messages, Actions, and Commitments

For logistical reasons, the sessions were of uneven duration, and response rates varied accordingly (Table 2).

As initially conceived, the E-Discussion aimed to address the following topics:

■ **New Understandings of Women and Poverty.**

What are the new understandings of poverty and its gender dimensions that have evolved since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action? What are good practices in gender-responsive poverty analysis and poverty reduction activities?

■ **Strengthening Institutional Responses.**

How can the institutional and policy environment for addressing the gender dimensions of poverty be strengthened, building on the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration? How can national poverty reduction strategies and programmes as well as international support more effectively address the gender dimensions of poverty in the build-up to 2015?

■ **Key Messages and Commitments for Leaders.**

What are the core policy messages for leaders participating in the 2010 CSW, ECOSOC, and the High-level Plenary Meeting on MDGs? What are the most critical actions required to tackle “gender and poverty”, in light of new obstacles and challenges, such as climate change and the impact of the global economic and financial crisis? How financing for gender equality could be strengthened in order to alleviate the gender dimensions of poverty?

Session	Number of Postings	% of Total Postings
I	85	70.8
II	11	9.2
III	24	20.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: Data from UNDP Gender Team. Number of postings includes multiple postings by the same individual(s).

**III. Principal Contributions to the E-Discussion**

This section presents the guiding questions for each session and summarizes key ideas and insights from the postings received. This summary is necessarily selective, given the sheer volume of material submitted, but every effort has been made to reflect the full range and nature of the ideas expressed. As indicated, all postings can be accessed at the [ECOSOC website](#) and will be distributed on Gender-net, PR-net and MDG-net.

**Session 1: New Understandings of Women and Poverty**

*Guiding Questions*

The guiding questions for the first session were as follows:

- How has poverty and vulnerability of women changed in your country or region since 1995, when the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted? What key programmes and policies have been implemented to reduce poverty and vulnerability of women? Are

there any other factors that make women more vulnerable, for example to the recent economic crisis?

- In your country or region, is poverty, hunger and employment data (MDG 1 targets) disaggregated by sex? Is it widely available and analyzed (e.g. from household surveys, administrative data, censuses and other sources)? What needs to be done to improve the availability of this data and gender analysis of poverty?
- Is this data and analysis used to inform public policies? Does the civil society use it to advocate for or to monitor these policies? Please give concrete examples. What needs to be done to improve the use of this data and analysis in policy-making?

### ***Synthesis of Key Responses***

*“...when a woman owns property she would grow wings”*

Salamatu Yahaya Musa

The first session of the E-Discussion was by far the longest, as reflected in the fact that over 70 percent of all postings related to the first set of questions. What was especially striking was the sheer number of topics covered. While topics can be classified in many ways, the issues covered in the first session ranged from patriarchy, neo-liberalism and male bias, through legal rights, culture, corruption, and care issues, to specific issues relating to health, education, HIV, jobs, gender-based violence, and land rights. Consistent with the third sub-question of this session, several postings addressed poverty diagnostics, data limitations, and the need for a “new methodology” to capture gender and poverty. In the view of some, there are wider systemic issues involved.

*“As highlighted by other participants in this e-discussion, the economic and financial crises should not be seen in isolation from the food, energy, water, environment/climate, human rights and care crises. These interlocking crises are part and parcel of a failed neoliberal growth and development model; a model which is gender blind and indifferent to human rights, including women’s rights. What we are facing is a structural, systemic crisis.”*

Natalie Raaber

In many respects the wide range of the postings is a strength and reflects the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, and the important ways in which gender concerns need to inform the poverty debate. In other ways, however, this can be a limitation, in that there is a tendency to cover many of these topics at the same time. This means that it can be difficult to focus on a specific problem, and deal with it effectively.

In seeking to understand the gender dimensions of poverty, the E-Discussion provided important reminders not to neglect women with disabilities, to address issues faced by sexual minorities, to work with “half-widows” (e.g. women married to men who go to war), and to recognize that women’s work, for the most part, remains “under-counted or uncounted.”

*“We are really lacking reliable data on the situation of disabled women because most data on women does not explicitly mention the situation of disabled women; and likewise most research on the Disabled does not provide data on disabled women. If we had more differentiated data it would be easier for us to lobby governments, international development organizations, and not at last donors.”*

Monika Scheffler

This first session of the E-Discussion helped to identify some good case studies, e.g. on micro-finance in Jordan, conditional cash transfers in Latin America and Egypt, where there were some useful exchanges, work on land rights in Nepal, empowerment through micro-finance linked with HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa.

Postings in this session provided a range of materials on country-specific challenges and responses, on the strengths and limitations of conditional cash transfers (CCTs), on issues of poverty analysis and methodology, on the importance of engaging with men, and on several specific issues, including maternal mortality, violence against women, and the particular challenges facing women in Africa.

*“ ... the convergence appears to be that women do not have control over resources which are necessary to liberate them from poverty.”*

John Chiwuzulum Odozi

### *Information on Challenges and Responses in Specific Countries*

Numerous postings, mainly from UNDP Country Office staff, presented specific country cases, outlining key issues and challenges faced by the country, and, in some instances, indicating the ways in which UNDP has developed responses in projects to tackle these challenges. The country-focused postings are as follows:

- Afghanistan** (Moqamuddin Sera, UNDP)
- Bolivia** (Mariela Padilla Callejas, Office of the Vice President)
- Cambodia** (Ros Va, UNDP)
- Cote d'Ivoire** (Elisabeth Assi-Aguia, NGO AICD)
- DR Congo** (Chantal Ekambi, UNDP)
- Eritrea** (Kifle Tekleab, UNDP)
- Ethiopia** (Abebe Tesfaye, n/s)
- Fiji** (Priya Chattier, UNIFEM)
- Lesotho** (Puleng Letsie, Tiina Turunen and Alka Bhatia, UNDP)
- S. Sudan** (Grace Okonji and Asha Arabi, UNDP)
- Togo** (Flore Antonio and Justine Améyo Assilévi, UNDP)
- Turkmenistan** (Nurjemal Jalilova, UNDP)
- Fiji** (Carol Flore and David Abbott, UNDP Pacific Center)
- Ecuador** (Verónica Quintero, UNDP)

The vulnerability of women to sharp changes in circumstances, including both the economic and food crises, and natural disasters, was highlighted in the contribution on the situation in Fiji and the Pacific Countries.

*“The very sharp increases in basic food prices in 2008 had a very serious impact on household budgets and have put great pressure on women to adjust food purchasing patterns and to develop coping strategies. Overall it is believed that the quality of diet and nutrition has declined as a result of the high prices which have tended to focus food purchases by the [poor on a narrow range on basic food items. Although global food prices have fallen significantly from the peaks in 2008, for many Pacific countries prices have remained markedly higher as a result of increased transport and distribution costs, together with higher margins being charged by overseas suppliers, For women in the Melanesian countries, where they are responsible for much of the home gardening, the coping strategy of more domestic planting and garden-tending work has added to the pressures on their time for other activities.”*

David Abbot and Carol Flore

### *Exchanges around Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs)*

The E-Discussion generated some useful exchanges of ideas and experiences around Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs). Experience in Egypt and Latin America were highlighted, as was discussion about the extent to which CCTs help to promote women’s empowerment.

*“Conditional Cash transfer programs haven’t succeeded in generating the conditions to enhance women’s economic opportunities and to minimize their vulnerability to economic shocks. I can identify the following reasons for that: most of these actions are based on the reproductive role of women. They don’t transform gender relations and they don’t promote the economic autonomy of women.”*

Hidalgo

*“Indeed, conditional cash transfers have proven important in supporting the wellbeing of children. But, in and of themselves, they serve a rather limited purpose for transforming gender relations. Not only in Mexico and Brazil (two very well known programs) but also in many other countries, such programs are unfortunately conflated with “social protection” for women. If governments are to INVEST in poverty eradication and if funds are to be allocated to that effect, what sorts of alternative initiatives might we suggest? My own work in this field points me in the direction of public service job creation-or employment guarantee programs in areas that provide work opportunities in types of projects that reduce part of the unpaid work burdens for women.”*

Rania Antonopoulos

A later posting described the experience in Ecuador, and outlined both advantages and potential dangers of channeling resources through women.

*“As with similar programs in Latin America, in Ecuador conditional cash transfers are channeled through mothers. Women recognize that the transfer helps. Most state that they do not have problems in managing the resources used in their homes and they invest this money on behalf of the family, particularly to improve the food that the family eats.*

*It has been argued that the transfer channeled through the mother, head of household, means empowering women by allowing them greater control over the spending of the family budget. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a study is being planned about the differentiated impact that the program has into males and females. There is a risk that the transfer channeled through women, and their responsibility in complying with co-responsibility, contribute to an overload of duties and domestic responsibilities on women, reinforcing gender stereotypes.”*

Veronica Quintero

### *Poverty Analysis and Methodological Considerations*

Several postings addressed the question of poverty analysis, and how to capture the gender dimensions of poverty. One theme was a pertinent warning about the limitations of focusing poverty analysis on female-headed households.

*“It is worth noting however that poverty level among female-headed households is lower than male-headed households even though this might not be a reflection of the situation among women as individuals.”*

Ernest Okyere

The question of whether women are ‘poorer’ than men within the same household has been the subject of much research, and a case study from Tajikistan was presented (see Annex 4 for a listing of key resources). Other postings focused on the issues of women’s control over resources, and transforming gender relations, indeed that women’s property ownership is itself transformative. There were some interesting exchanges around the limits of conventional methodologies, the need for a “new methodology,” and what such methodologies might comprise.

*“This [income-based poverty line] methodology fails to capture gender differences in poverty and other dimensions of it such as the productive and reproductive workload. Another methodology must be used in order to make visible the real gender differences in poverty.”*

Nidia Hidalgo

*“We do need a methodology that captures the different dimensions between men and women and also one that differentiates among women themselves. What is crucial here, is the difference as Nidia Hildago mentioned, women’s unpaid reproduction work. Poor women suffer from (a) lack of adequate income-this does not need much explanation (b) lack of services , whereby, not only they do not receive these services, but also fill in these gaps as best as they can for their households and communities and (c) disproportionate unpaid work (including unpaid care work-but not only).”*

Rania Antonopoulos

Antonopoulos continued by arguing that there is a meaningful way to capture all this, if there is time use data available. She noted that a consortium of researchers from 10 countries are in the process of developing a work plan in the next few months that, it is hoped, will be able to demonstrate why a geographic mapping across the three domains

(income, public spending and time) must become the main tool, if we are to make transparent what has remained invisible in poverty counts. See Annex 4.

*“SNA is the UN system for data standards; it now clearly shows that the unpaid work women and children do to provision the family farm in water and fuel, to pound rice, and process bean curd, to cultivate individual plots, grow vegetables, care for animals, make clothing, cull forest products, and so on, including for own consumption in the family – all are rightly considered Economic Activity, and the persons carrying out these activities are considered “in the Labour Force” – whether they are female or male, adults or children ... and women’s work is still undercounted or uncounted.”*

Patricia Alexander

While lack of, or insufficient sex-disaggregated data, is often raised as an issue for gender-informed poverty analysis, there was also a useful reminder that this should not in itself provide an excuse for inaction.

*“The unavailability of data and analysis, though important to elaborate efficient strategies, should not be put forth to impede action.*

*A socio-economic analysis of women's condition clearly shows that there are no equal opportunities for paid work, resources (land, inheritance, credit, property) and there are more illiterate women than men. On top of all, the survey clearly indicates that transforming gender relations is key to combat poverty.”*

Christine Ekambi

### *Focus on Africa*

Nearly 50 percent of the contributions to the E-Discussion, where the country of the originator is clearly identifiable, were from people in Africa. As a result, many of the issues raised have particular relevance for Africa. Some were strongly worded concerns with the situation facing women in Africa.

*“In most African countries women are accorded their rights according to customary law, this has been the biggest enemy to development and empowerment of women as all the educated women eventually follow the customs of their land (man is the head of the family, he has the final word, he is always right, the wife is to support her husband at all times) an African marriage without this is challenged, there are few African man who appreciate that their wife has rights other than those he will give to her.”*

Loreen Meda

A posting on the current situation in Kenya brought certain immediacy to the discussion.

*“The propagation of gender inequality continues unabated as evidenced in the current deliberations on the proposed constitution. The draft constitution sought to guarantee women and men equal rights at the onset, during and at the dissolution of a marriage. However, on Tuesday, (19 January 2010) members of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) after debating the chapter for more than five hours, voted to delete sub-clause 42(4) which sought to guarantee women and men equal rights at the onset, during and at the dissolution of a marriage. The decision was reached in spite of protests from women members of the PSC. The committee comprises 5 women members and 21 men.”*

Kabon Kandie

### *Some Key Issues*

The problem of high maternal mortality was the subject of several postings, and was presented, by one, as a “shameful baggage on the shoulders of the international community.” It demonstrates, according to one posting, the highest level of inequity in the world: the risk of a woman dying due to a pregnancy-related cause in Africa is 1:16 compared with 1:3,500 in developed countries.

A number of postings addressed the problem of violence against women, and provided distressing examples of its impact. This issue was to emerge strongly in Session III, as discussed further below.

*“I took a friend to one of our police stations to report a case of physical abuse after the husband bit her for asking him why he was cheating on her. During the fight the husband had started to biting the child as well (2yrs) that is when this friend of mine ran to my house. At the police station we were told to go back and get the husband, I raised my complaint about the matter and I heard them talk amongst themselves that I was one of those women who did not know her place. My friend was too shaken and she was disappointed in me because the protection I had promised her from the police was not forth coming so she decided to go back home and act like nothing had happened.”*

Loreen Meda

### *Engaging with Men*

Several participants stressed the importance of engagement with men.

*“The issue of gender and equality has been talked about and in my opinion will continue to be talked about for the next millennium if we do not also bring man into the discussion.”*

Loreen Meda

*“Targeting women without involving men in active participation more often than not turns out counter development. Experience testifies to the fact that the negative input by men aroused which is not addressed naturally renders the whole effort regressive.”*

Deborah Ajulu

*“Engaging men in the design, implementation and delivery of programmes, for instance, is a means as well as the result of culturally sensitive approaches, and is a requirement of any development process intended to change behaviours and attitudes.”*

Gilles Epee

## **Session 2: Institutional Responses**

### ***Guiding Questions***

The questions guiding the second session were as follows:

- What kind of social assistance/benefits and protection programs (such as cash transfers or other social benefits) are provided by your government? In answering this question,

please provide concrete information on the objectives of these programs and, where possible, the extent to which these target or reach poor women.

- How have the recent economic crisis affected the provision of these programmes and what changes have occurred that might affect their sustainability.
- To what extent have these programmes helped to transform gender relations.

### ***Synthesis of Key Responses***

*“We still do see instances of poverty, hunger, deprivation, domestic violence, and atrocities on women; therefore that malaise lies somewhere deep. Much needs to be done to remove corruption and deep set prejudice against women. The men need to be educated to overcome their male- ego, that empowering women in terms of owning property, income or position of power need not necessarily threaten their position; that subjugation of women is not really a symbol of authority!”*

Sarah Ahmed

Information was provided on the “Oportunidades” program in Paraguay, which tackles issues relating to remittances, domestic workers, and youth employment.

*“Among the most relevant activities to strengthen capacities for income generation and employment of poor and vulnerable youth are: activities to incorporate youth labor issues on the public agenda, in particular women and paid domestic workers, activities on the legislative level, activities to create productive enterprises to boost employment opportunities, activities related to the positive impact of remittances through financial products that take productive use of remittances as collateral for loans, activities aimed at reducing the causes that drive migration, allowing increased access to information for potential migrants.”*

Carmen Vallejo

Poverty alleviation has been a major thrust of India’s 5-year plans, with programs tackling women’s employment, legal status, and housing. Much remains to be done to reduce women’s vulnerability, and to take measures to encourage women’s greater effective participation in community development and decision-making.

Canada’s experience of addressing women’s poverty highlighted a two-prong approach, aimed, first, at recognizing that the best way to reduce income inequality and low income is through the development of human capital, and, second, at facilitating more generous social transfers.

*“Due to their primary care giving roles, [the Canadian Association of Social Workers] recognizes women’s overall participation in the labor market is experienced differently from men. CASW contends that the experience of women should be accommodated in the design of pensions and in all federal government transfer programs ... Research demonstrates, based on the European experience, women’s equality is fostered through anti-poverty strategies that reform pensions with women in mind, integrate tax and program expenditures in a progressive manner, provide flexible income benefits, and address gender inequities in the labour market.”*

Darlene MacDonald

In Sudan, the importance of enabling women to access ICTs was stressed as a key component of fostering empowerment.

*“I would like to suggest for poverty reduction, gender equality and women’s empowerment provision of information communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs have ability to address women needs and to deal with their immediate problems, and in alleviating obstacles stand in the way of empowering women. Women are marginalized in terms of access to modern farming methods, credit facilities, education, training, business skills and marketing of their products which has heightened women poverty. For instance, when we think of women’s access to training, obstacles like persisting gender biases and women’s time constraints may prevent women from actively participating in the training courses intended to bring about social capital benefits and female empowerment. Through ICTs we can design training materials fit to the training needs and the daily schedule of rural women. Needless to say that access to applicable information can serve as effective means for capacity building, empowerment and income-generating livelihoods for women.”*

Fatma Ibnouf

### **Session 3: Core Messages, Action Agenda, and Commitments**

#### ***Guiding Questions***

The guiding questions for the third session were as follows:

- What are your core policy messages for the UN inter-governmental decision-making?
- What critical actions on gender equality are now required in light of the new challenges (e.g. economic crisis, climate change)?
- What are the specific commitments that you would like leaders to take forward to 2015 in order to advance achievements on the MDGs?

#### ***Synthesis of Key Responses***

*“[T]he most important thing that needs to take place this year is a significant corrective: we have to make a commitment to understanding how violence, including armed violence, leads to de-development and impoverishment, and how such violence specifically undermines advancement towards women’s empowerment and gender equality; and we have to work out how to mitigate this complex problem.”*

Vanessa Farr

The final session of the E-Discussion received a total of 24 responses from 15 countries. Ideas were brought out under each sub-question: messages, actions, commitments, though there was some overlap across these categories. Ideas ranged from exhortations to have “hard hitting poverty reduction/alleviation programmes,” and “a robust articulation of gender and poverty issues that does not compromise,” to precise actionable recommendations in key areas.

*“The UN ECOSOC needs to take action on the ad hoc Panel of Experts on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development. The most recent global economic crisis has highlighted the importance of a stable environment for productive and socially reproductive economic activity.”*

Marina Durano

Three issues were at the core of more than one posting: addressing the problems of violence in the world, not least gender-based violence and FGM, tackling the problem of maternal mortality more systematically, and the need to focus on bringing women more into the decision-making process, one element of which is to strengthen engagement with men.

### *Gender-Based Violence*

The problem of violence, and its impact on development, was the subject of several postings. Bringing this topic into policy focus was considered a critical task for leaders. As one noted, “[it] was difficult for participants (after reflecting on the gendered realities of their lives), to grasp the possibility of eradicating poverty without gender equality, and that the absence of a focus on or a link to violence against women was a major weakness. Gender-based violence is such a major factor in the daily lives of women, worldwide, that any attempts to support their efforts to ‘work their way out of poverty’ with whatever types of government or non-government programme support, without dealing with violence are not likely to be successful.” The interconnectedness of gender, violence, and development was explored extensively.

### **Gender Equality at the Center of the Triangle of Development, Freedom, and Peace**

*“While SCR1325 makes a clear demand for the inclusion of women in all aspects of security decision-making, it neither references the freshly minted MDGs nor the human security discussion and so it, too, misses a chance to articulate the necessary relationship between the promotion of human rights (with a specific emphasis on women’s rights), the achievement of peace and security for all, and the achievement of development goals.”*

Vanessa Farr

*“At the global inter-governmental level, the UN and its agencies need to take the policy and programmatic lead aggressively, and follow through on Kofi Annan’s 2005 statement in which he “concludes that it is only through the perfection of the “triangle of development, freedom and peace” which understands the connectedness between threats, challenges and opportunities, that the larger freedom – freedom from want, the purpose of the MDGs – will be achieved”. Gender equality and women’s empowerment (economic, political and social) sits squarely at the center of the triangle of development, freedom and peace to which Mr. Annan refers.”*

Judith Wedderburn

Related to this, was the need to focus on measures to address female genital mutilation (FGM). One posting suggested that a critical response to this issue is to invest in the certification and qualification of anti-FGM experts as a means of helping to overcome this practice. According to this view, the most “critical action” now required is to get the attention of leaders and donors for the importance of qualified anti-FGM experts, so that they invest more funds in policies, actions, plans, projects and measures to combat FGM.

### *Tackling Maternal Mortality*

Action to address maternal mortality was suggested as a critical priority by several participants.

*“The common project that can bring together the interests and preoccupations of the MNCH programs, as well as those of sector managers and health care providers, is that of universal access to care for mothers and children, embedded within an overall strategy of universal access for the whole population.”*

Rita Luthra

*“The MDG5 indicator on maternal mortality is the worst performing indicator among the MDGs. Avoidance and political conservatism contrive to make the reduction of maternal mortality rates a neglected concern. Strengthening health delivery systems will contribute significantly to reducing maternal mortality rates. UN Member States need to confront this issue squarely so that lives are saved rather than lost.”*

Marina Durano

### *Labor Market Changes*

Improving labor market outcomes for women was the subject of several postings. As one participant noted, structural changes in the labor market, such as gender-based segregation of occupations and industries, are needed. The burden of responsibility for care activities and perceptions that women should be doing only the low value-added, low-waged portions of the job ladder have been detrimental to women’s ability to take advantage of wage improvements associated with technological advance. Caring responsibilities have also been limiting factors in mobility and choice of location for work. Another participant suggested that active labor market measures need to be better targeted, combined and treated within a wider social exclusion context in order to have significant positive impact on the position on the most vulnerable men and women.

*“Specific recommendations for women suggest that particular attention should be paid to:*

- *Multiple factors of vulnerability (for instance less educated and single mothers or Roma women in rural areas...).*
- *Making more investments in vocational programmes, functional literacy and ensuring subsidies for employment.*
- *Enabling non-discriminatory institutional framework in the area of labor as well as development of flexible forms of work.*
- *The fact that programmes leave stronger effects on women than on men (as confirmed by comparative experiences).*
- *Ensuring proportional participation of women in the labor market measures to their participation among the unemployed.”*

Jelena Tadzic

Though not the subject of many postings, other specific points were highlighted. One participant emphasized that the most important issue to address is the right of women to **land tenure and inheritance**. Another focused on the fact that countries need to focus on **fulfilling the commitments to gender equality they have already made**. Notwithstanding some advances since the Beijing Conference and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN member States still have not fully implemented their commitments to gender equity as an essential condition for sustainable economic and social development. Yet others focused on the importance of leadership in a wider sense.

*“At this stage we need leaders who are prepared to show moral leadership and integrity; who can demonstrate a commitment to the most marginalized among their population; who can lead their populations in the direction of greater solidarity with the peoples outside of their borders; and who can balance national responsibilities with the development imperatives of populations around the world.”*

Bani Dugal

Other key messages included a reminder of the centrality of education, which should be “compulsory and free,” according to one participant, and that it was essential to focus on water and sanitation, on supporting civil society work, and strengthening accountability mechanisms.

*“Among the specific commitments that I propose that we seek towards 2015 are:*

- *Addressing the provision of **water and sanitation** as a priority to support, enhance and undergird the struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment. A discussion on the link of water and sanitation and the MDGs and in particular MDG 3, and strategies to bring this as a key aspect of the work of the international women's movement is needed and can perhaps be part of the agenda of CSW and CSD [Commission on Sustainable Development].*
- *Supporting with resources (financial and technical) the **work of civil society organizations**, especially women's and community based organizations that are committed to the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, the work and reach of the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).*
- *Focusing on **agreed accountability systems** that will support the achievements of the MDGs targets and focusing on these through the work of UN Agencies in the respective countries.”*

Linnette Vassell

The importance of focusing on rural areas, and on the wide range of needs of rural populations, was stressed.

*“The following might be the most relevant commitments and appropriate to achieve the MDGs:*

- *Free and compulsory primary education for the girls.*
- *Making the women of all ages literate must be mandatory.*
- *Earmarking special budgetary provisions for delivering services and facilities to women in rural areas for reproductive and sexual health.*
- *Campaigns for building awareness among the rural/tribal women on education, sanitation, health, democracy, franchise, women's rights, human rights, HIV/AIDS etc. Vocational training centers in rural areas to make the women economically self reliant and raise their self esteem.”*

Bhawani Shanker Kusum

The importance of sex-disaggregated data, and the imperative of training people in-country to generate and use data, were also stressed by participants.

*“One of the key recommendations has to be insisting on sex-disaggregated data in every ministry, department, private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO). We need targets and measures for all recommendations. Even when policy will be great as it is in Rwanda, if you cannot track what is happening to girls and women, boys and men, you miss out on key information that will lead to effective policy development.”*

Shirley Randell

*“In our aid coordination, we need to re-direct some of the funding to training in the use of data. While billions have been spent on conducting official surveys and censuses (which are often analysed by international experts outside the survey country), not one tenth of one percent of these amounts have been directed toward training in-country analysts in women’s ministries and networks. Yet such training is feasible, and far less costly than the surveys, which lie on shelves and gather dust while advocates lack materials and mentors to put these data to work. In-country, practical training in data use, that is action- and policy-linked, is an affordable kind of technical assistance for agencies like UNDP and bilateral donors, and such project funding has a disproportionately large impact potential. Learning to use our own data and exploring the results we can achieve is exciting and empowering.”*

Patricia Alexander

The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) shared an extensive set of recommendations for future action with E-Discussion participants. It outlined a 5-part program encompassing: a) rethinking development goals and gender equality in a crisis context; b) the need for a rights-based approach perspective to 'invest in women'; c) a stronger UN policy and operational role on economic development and gender equality; d) moving from aid effectiveness to inclusive and sustainable development effectiveness; and e) MDG 8: Haiti as evidence of the lack of progress on a global equal partnership.

#### **IV. Summary of Key Messages and Action Agenda**

The E-Discussion built on the fact that “2010 will be a watershed year for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment.” This is because three major events are scheduled to take place during the year, at which gender issues would be brought to the attention of, and addressed by, world leaders.

- **In March**, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will conduct a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).
- **In June/July**, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will, during the Annual Ministerial Review, review the status of implementation of the internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- **In September**, the General Assembly will complete a 10-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and propose policy measures to accelerate implementation over the period to 2015.

## **Key Action Areas**

We summarize below the key action areas identified by participants in the E-Discussion, as presented in the preceding section.

### *Reduce Violence*

- Establish strong links between violence, including armed violence, and de-development and impoverishment, and how such violence specifically undermines advancement towards women's empowerment and gender equality; and commit to mitigating this complex development problem.
- Take policy and programmatic lead at the global inter-governmental level, and follow through on Kofi Annan's 2005 statement in which he "concludes that it is only through the perfection of the "triangle of development, freedom and peace." Gender equality and women's empowerment sit squarely at the center of this triangle.

### *Improve Maternal Health*

- Strengthen health delivery systems to significantly reduce maternal mortality rates. UN Member States need to confront this issue squarely so that lives are saved rather than lost. The common project is that of universal access to care for mothers and children, embedded within an overall strategy of universal access for the whole population. Earmark special budgetary provisions for delivering services and facilities to women in rural areas for reproductive and sexual health.

### *Improve Labor Market Outcomes and Economic Opportunity for Women*

- Enhance targeted, combined and treated labour market measures within a wider social exclusion context in order to have significant positive impact on the position on the most vulnerable men and women.
- Invest in vocational programmes, functional literacy, subsidies for employment; establish a non-discriminatory institutional framework in the area of labor, and develop flexible forms of work.
- Address the right of women to land tenure, property and inheritance.

### *Strengthen Accountability to Women*

- Fulfill the commitments to gender equality made by UN member States view the view to promote sustainable economic and social development.

- Support, with financial and technical resources, the work of civil society organizations, especially women's and community based organizations that are committed to the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Focus on agreed accountability systems that will support the achievements of the MDGs targets and focusing on these through the work of UN Agencies in the respective countries.

*Build In-Country Capacity to Generate and Use Sex-Disaggregated Data*

- Insist collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data in every ministry, department, private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO). Develop targets and measures for all recommendations.
- Direct funding to training in the use of data. In-country, practical training in data use, that is action- and policy-linked, is an affordable kind of technical assistance for agencies like UNDP and bilateral donors, and such project funding has a disproportionately large impact potential. Learning to use our own data and exploring the results we can achieve is exciting and empowering.

*Prioritize Water and Sanitation*

- Address the provision of water and sanitation as a priority to support, enhance and undergird the struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment. A discussion on the link of water and sanitation and the MDGs, and in particular MDG 3, and strategies to bring this as a key aspect of the work of the international women's movement is needed and can perhaps be part of the agenda of CSW and CSD.

*Crisis Response*

- Take action on the ad hoc Panel of Experts on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development during the 2010 ECOSOC session.

## Annex 1: Initial Announcement and Invitation Letter

### 1. Initial E-Mail Invitation of Wed 12/30/2009

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to invite you to participate in an e-discussion on **Women and Poverty** to be held from **11 January to 12 February 2010**, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA). The purpose of the e-discussion is to bring together experts, practitioners and policy-makers, from within and outside of the UN system, to formulate critical policy messages to the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on gender equality (AMR); and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, focused on the Millennium Development Goals.

Please find here our joint [invitation letter](#) defining the scope of the e-discussion. We encourage you to forward this invitation to colleagues, counterparts and civil society activists who may be interested in following or participating in the discussion. If you are not already a member of the UNDP Gender-Net, MDG-Net or PR-Net, please register for the e-discussion by [clicking here](#).

We are also pleased to introduce Mr. Mark Blackden who will act as our guest moderator for the e-discussion. Mark is an independent consultant, who worked on gender and poverty issues in the Africa Region at the World Bank from 1991-2007. He co-edited a working paper on time use issues in 2006, and moderated UNDP's e-discussion on unpaid care work in 2008. In summer 2008, he worked with UNDP to prepare the book "Innovative Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment" for the MDG3 Partnership Event held at the UN MDG Summit in September 25, 2008. He recently completed an assignment with the International Finance Corporation to prepare a toolkit for addressing gender issues in investment climate reform.

Warm Regards,

Winnie Byanyima,  
Director of UNDP Gender Team

and

Nikhil Seth,  
Director of Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

## 2. Letter of Invitation to Participants of 23 December 2009



23 December 2009

Dear colleagues,

We would like to invite you to participate in an e-discussion on *Women and Poverty* to be held from 11 January to 12 February 2010, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA).

2010 will be a watershed year for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. In March, the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a 15 year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In late June, the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review will examine the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and women's empowerment. In September, the UN General Assembly will undertake the 2010 review of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and propose policy measures to accelerate implementation over the period to 2015.

This e-discussion presents a unique opportunity to make your voice heard, and to influence the deliberations of the above events by formulating critical policy messages and action agenda to the UN intergovernmental processes. We invite you to bring new thoughts and ideas to the policy debate, drawing on your experiences, and help make a difference in the fight against poverty.

The e-discussion will address the following topics:

- What are the new understandings of poverty and its gender dimensions that have evolved since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action? What are good practices in gender-responsive poverty analysis and poverty reduction activities?
- How can the institutional and policy environment for addressing the gender dimensions of poverty be strengthened, building on the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration? How can national poverty reduction strategies and programmes as well as international support more effectively address the gender dimensions of poverty in the build-up to 2015?
- What are the core policy messages for leaders participating in the 2010 CSW, ECOSOC, and the High-level Plenary Meeting on MDGs? What are the most critical actions required to tackle "gender and poverty", in light of new obstacles and challenges, such as climate change and the impact of the global economic and financial crisis? How financing for gender equality could be strengthened in order to alleviate the gender dimensions of poverty?

We hope you will make use of this opportunity to contribute to the United Nations intergovernmental processes, and more broadly, help create a more equal world. We also encourage you to forward this invitation to colleagues who may be interested in following or participating in the discussion. If you are not already a member of the UNDP Gender-Net, MDG-Net or Poverty-Net, please register for the e-discussion at [http://www.undp.org/women/sign\\_up.shtml](http://www.undp.org/women/sign_up.shtml).

Yours sincerely,

Winnie Byanyima  
Director  
UNDP Gender Team

Yours sincerely,

Nikhil Seth  
Director  
Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

## **Annex 2: Session-Specific Launch Messages and Guiding Questions**

### **Session I:**

On behalf of Winnie Byanyima, Director of the UNDP Gender Team, and Nikhil Seth, Director of the UNDESA Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, I welcome you to the 2010 e-discussion on Women and Poverty. 2010 will be a watershed year for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment with a number of high level global events taking place (see below). Rarely has so much international attention been concentrated on gender equality and women's empowerment. The objective of this e-discussion is to enable you to have your voices heard in these fora. We will share the conclusions and recommendations of this e-discussion with the organizers of these events. Finally, we will compile and analyze the experiences and resources shared and send them back to you for your reference.

I hope we can seize the moment to come up with new ideas, critical policy messages, and an action agenda for the 2010 global events that will carry us to 2015. To achieve this objective, the e-discussion focuses on three particular topics: Women and Poverty: Trends and New Insights; Institutional Leverage: Sustaining Progress; and Action Agenda: Policies for 2015. We're also open to any additional ideas that can help make the e-discussion more interactive and valuable to you.

To kick off the discussion I am inviting you to reflect on the following set of questions:

\* How has poverty and vulnerability of women changed in your country or region since 1995, when the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted? What key programmes and policies have been implemented to reduce poverty and vulnerability of women? Are there any other factors that make women more vulnerable, for example to the recent economic crisis?

\* In your country or region, is poverty, hunger and employment data (MDG 1 targets) disaggregated by sex? Is it widely available and analyzed (e.g. from household surveys, administrative data, censuses and other sources)? What needs to be done to improve the availability of this data and gender analysis of poverty?

\* Is this data and analysis used to inform public policies? Does the civil society use it to advocate for or to monitor these policies? Please give concrete examples. What needs to be done to improve the use of this data and analysis in policy-making?

Please help us bring new thinking and new ideas to the policy debate about poverty reduction, gender equality and women's empowerment, drawing on experience with implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. Share your innovative ideas, research and good practice examples with policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners around the world, and help make a difference in the fight for gender equality and eradication of poverty.

I am delighted to introduce Mr. Mark Blackden who will act as our guest moderator for the e-discussion. Mark is an independent consultant, with years of experience working on gender and poverty at the World Bank and more recently on various publications and discussions with UNDP.

Upcoming High Level Fora in 2010:

In March, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will conduct a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

In June, Economic and Social Council will review the status of implementation of the internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and women's empowerment.

In September, the General Assembly will complete a 10-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and propose policy measures to accelerate implementation over the period to 2015.

I'm looking forward to your active participation.

Warm Regards,

Anna Falth  
Gender and Economy Advisor,  
UNDP Gender Team

**Session II:**

*(Excerpt)*

Hello Everyone!

This is your moderator, Mark Blackden. If I had spent a little less time breaking bones (mine), and more on the e-discussion, you would have heard from me already last week.

I have now read all your postings with great interest. Though I may not yet have counted everyone, we've had around 70 responses (excluding repeat postings) from around 30 countries.

...

## Launch of Second Phase

... We're going to move to the second phase of our e-discussion, in which we want to address specific institutional responses to poverty. We want to build on the conversation we have started on conditional cash transfers, by looking at social security and social assistance programs, as one important mechanism for tackling poverty, as several of your postings have already suggested in the first phase.

We know from ILO and other data that very few people benefit from adequate social security, while half of the world's population lives without any social security protection. Social protection is provided through various instruments such as cash transfers, pensions, child care, social services, and various subsidies.

Here are the set of question for this week:

- \* What kind of social assistance/benefits and protection programs (such as cash transfers or other social benefits) are provided by your government? In answering this question, please provide concrete information on the objectives of these programs and, where possible, the extent to which these target or reach poor women.
- \* How have the recent economic crisis affected the provision of these programmes and what changes have occurred that might affect their sustainability.
- \* To what extent have these programmes helped to transform gender relations.

This is a big topic. In the interest of not asking too many questions, let's start and address the first question for the next 2 or 3 days, and then explore other aspects of the social security issue outlined in questions two and three. We would ask you keep your answers focused.

Keep the messages and good ideas coming.

Best, Mark

### **Session III:**

Dear Participants,

With only three days remaining in our e-discussion, I would like to request your thoughts and feedback to suggest policy and advocacy messages to help us shape our input to the upcoming high-level global events taking place in 2010, including Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review (ECOSOC AMR) and the 2010 Millennium Development Goal Review (see below).

We hope to bring new thinking and new ideas to the policy debate about poverty reduction, gender equality and women's empowerment, drawing on experience with implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Here are some final questions to consider:

- What are your core policy messages for the UN inter-governmental decision-making?
- What critical actions on gender equality are now required in light of the new challenges (e.g. economic crisis, climate change)?
- What are the specific commitments that you would like leaders to take forward to 2015 in order to advance achievements on the MDGs?

Keep the messages and good ideas coming. Also, we look forward to concrete recommendations and feasible and targeted solutions on gender and poverty issues.

Thank you very much for all of your active participation.

Best regards,

Mark Blackden

### Annex 3: E-Discussion Participation Data

Listing of E-Discussion Contributions		
Date	Contributor	Country
January 13, 2010	Anita Kelles-Viitanen	Finland
	Salamatu Yahaya-Musa	NS
	Ameena al Rasheed Nayel	Sudan
	Tala Khrais	Jordan
	Radha Paudel	Nepal
January 15, 2010	Nidia Hidalgo	El Salvador
	John Chiwuzulum Odozi	Nigeria
	Fidelis Babugura	NS
	Manal Saleh	Egypt
	Beatriz Vallejo	Colombia
	Basanta K. Sahu	India
	Sarah Ogalleh	Kenya
	Radha Paudel	Nepal
	Cheikdiaw Diaw	Senegal
Caroline	Kenya	
January 18, 2010	Ros Va	Cambodia
	Susana Fried & Deena Patel	USA
	Rania Antonopoulos	USA
	Ernest Okyere	Ghana
	Loreen Meda	Zimbabwe
	Godwin Abu	Nigeria
	Otina Kennedy Odhiambo Otina	Kenya
	Lucie Odhoch	Kenya
	Yobo Fidele	Cameroon
	Elena Sutormina	Russia
	N. Raaber & A. Schoenstein	New Zealand
	Evelyne Ofwona	Kenya
	Anita Mathew	India
	Habiba Ali	Nigeria
January 19, 2010	Elaine Ryan	Switzerland
	Loreen Meda	Zimbabwe
	Amoo Bandele Alabi Ganiyu	Nigeria
	Monika Scheffler	Zimbabwe
	Abimbola Williams	Nigeria
	Shagufta Shah	Pakistan
	Louise Gonsalvez	Canada
	Deborah Ajulu	Uganda
	Annie Matundu-Mbambi	DRC
Shubha Chacko	India	
January 20, 2010	Amitava Mukherjee	Thailand
	Nwakego Molokwu	Nigeria
	Daniel Kostzer	NS

	K.M. Shyamprasad Kabon Kandie	India Kenya
January 21, 2010	Anne-Colette Ngo Mbock Moqamuddin Siraj Sifisosami Dube Charity Oduk Anita Mathew Nyiel Kuol Bijayalaxmi Rautaray	Cameroon Afghanistan Zimbabwe Kenya India Sudan India
January 22, 2010	Nurjemal Jalilova Amarakoon Bandara Rita Luthra Mohamed Benkassmi Ashok Nanda Bijayalaxmi Rautaray Judith Alpuerto Roli Mahajan	Turkmenistan Tanzania USA Morocco India India Philippines NS
January 26, 2010	Sam Olowe Doyin Oluwole Pauline Ianbou Ngouanfouo Gilles Epee	Nigeria USA Cameroon Cameroon
January 20, 2010	Flore Antonio & Justine Ameyo Assilevi Puleng Letsie, Tiina Turunen, Alka Bhatia Susana Fried & Emilie Pradichit Nahia Zeitoun Kifle Tekleab Chantal Ekambi Raveloarisoa Noro Lalao Sandy and Carol Reynolds Cheikdiaw Diaw Louise Gonsalvez Grace Mbugua	Togo Lesotho USA Egypt Eritrea DRC Madagascar Canada Senegal Canada Kenya
February 1, 2010	Priya Chattier Patricia Alexander Fidoline Ngo Nonga Tanushree Gangopadhyay Moses Garang Mohamed Benkassmi	Fiji Canada Cameroon India Sudan Morocco
February 3, 2010	Grace Achieng Okonji & Asha Arabi Joan Osa Oviawe Pauline Ngouanfouo	Sudan Nigeria Cameroon
February 4, 2010	Abebe Tesfaye	Ethiopia
February 17, 2010	David Abbot and Carol Flore	Fiji
February 4, 2010	Alpha Ayande	Senegal
February 9, 2010	Carmen Vallejo Sarah Ahmed Darlene MacDonald Fatma Osman Ibnouf	Paraguay India Canada Sudan
February 11, 2010	Kabon Kandie	Kenya

	Rogers Nsubuga	Uganda
February 12, 2010	Bugaga Gabby	Burundi
	Sandy and Carol Reynolds	Canada
	Mariela Padilla	Bolivia
	Elizabeth Assi-Aguia	Cote d'Ivoire
February 11, 2010	Vanessa Farr	USA
	Rita Luthra	USA
	Ameena al Rasheed Nayel	Sudan
	Marina Durano	Philippines
	Sylvia Sitawa	Kenya
	Bani Dugal	USA
	Shirley Randell	Rwanda
	Anita Mathew	India
	Sushil Bhardwaj	India
	Dushiyant Gunatilake	India
	Hope Kabuchu	Uganda
February 12, 2010	Jelena Tadzic	Serbia
	Bernd Wachholz	Germany
	Carmen Rodriguez	Mexico
	Natalia Cardona	USA
	Judith Wedderburn	Jamaica
	Khaled El Mohtar	Lebanon
	Theodore Mpatswenumugabo	Guinea
February 16, 2010	Bhawani Shanker Kusum	India
	Ameena al Rasheed Nayel	Sudan
	Natalie Raaber	New Zealand
	Linnette Vassell	Jamaica
February 17, 2010	Veronica Quintero	Ecuador
	Fidelis Babungura	Uganda

Notes:

Session I (Yellow)

Session II (Green)

Session III (Blue)

NS = Country of Origin Not Stated.

### Gender, Land Rights, and HIV

From Fried and Patel

Recent research from South Asia has documented the link between women's property ownership and a substantially lower risk of marital violence. In fact, asset control gives women greater bargaining power within households and helps protect against domestic violence, a key risk factor for HIV. Research in Kerala, India, for example, found that 49% of women with no property reported physical violence as compared to only 7% of women who did own property (ICRW, UNDP, GCWA, "Women's Property Rights as an AIDS Response Emerging Efforts in South Asia," 2007). Land/property rights can provide women with a secure place to live, a site for economic activity and means of livelihood. Property and inheritance rights also reduce economic dependence on men and extended families, and provide collateral for credit. They can help women and girls to avoid being drawn into livelihoods that place them at greater risk of infection.

From Fried and Pradichit

One successful project linking microfinance, women's empowerment/anti-violence programming and community mobilization in a group-based lending format to prevent HIV in a community is the Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) study in South Africa (Pronyk, 2005).

In Asia, for example, UNDP has actively supported the development of the Women and Wealth Project (WWP), in partnership with Population and Community Development Association (PDA), an NGO based in Bangkok. This regional pilot initiative pursues the socioeconomic empowerment of women living with and affected by HIV through development of small-scale social enterprises in Cambodia and India.

[i] UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia & the Pacific. Women and HIV in Asia and Pacific: A Development Practitioner's Guide

(Chapter 4: Women and Economic Empowerment)

[ii] Julia Kim, Giulia Ferrari, Tanya Abramsky, Charlotte Watts, James Hargreaves, Linda Morison, Godfrey Phetla, John Porter & Paul Pronyk. Assessing the incremental effects of combining economic and health interventions : the IMAGE study in South Africa, Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2009

[iii] Aids2031 Social Drivers Working Group. Revolutionizing the AIDS Response: Adopting a Structural Approach, Synthesis Paper Draft

[iv] Mechai Viravidya, The Women and Wealth Project (WWP) website (<http://www.wwp-we.org/wwp.php>)

## **Time Use and Care Tasks**

From Antonopoulos

A consortium of researchers from 10 countries are in the process of developing the work plan in the next few months and we hope that we will be able to demonstrate why a geographic mapping across the three domains (income, public spending and time) must become the main tool, if we are to make transparent what has remained invisible in poverty counts.

## **Poverty Analysis**

From Alexander

Are women “poorer” than men within the same household? Two women researchers have demonstrated, using Tajikistan data, that household survey data can show the differences in poverty levels of men, women and children, given women’s lower wage earnings, if we have any evidence of differential “income pooling” behaviour between women and men in a country or region – even if all the farm income cannot be analysed individually. (Income pooling behaviour is the extent to which individuals share their individual earnings with all the household members. Paper: see Jane Falkingham and Angela Baschieri, <http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/13984/01/s3ri-workingpaper-a04-21.pdf> )

## **CCT Study**

From Ryan

I would like to follow-up on the issue of cash transfers that was raised by Nidia Hidlago of UNDP El Salvador by sending the independent expert's report to the 2009 Human Rights Council. The Report Of The Independent Expert On The Question Of Human Rights And Extreme Poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona entitled Promotion and Protection Of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social And Cultural Rights, Including The Right To Development examines cash transfer programmes from a human rights perspective. Text referencing to gender are found on page 17 onwards.

## **Maternal Mortality**

From Oluwole

Road Map for Accelerating the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals related to Maternal and Newborn Health in Africa (WHO/AFRO 2007). Developed in 2004 by WHO Regional Office for Africa and 14 key partners (UNFPA, UNICEF WCARO and ESARO, World Bank, USAID, West African Health Organization, East, Central and Southern African Health Community, University of Watersrand, Academy for Educational Development, Family Care International, JHPIEGO, Population Council,

Saving Newborn Lives and Engenderhealth), the "Road Map" is aimed at accelerating the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and the attainment of the MDGs in Africa. The Ministers of Health of 46 countries adopted this strategy in 2004 and committed to increasing investment to maternal and newborn health and scaling up interventions to reducing maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality through a strengthened health systems.

### **Women's Legal Status and Rights**

From Bugaga Gabby

Support for the different players in promoting gender equality: a study on punishing the crime of rape in Burundi was performed by the Association of Women Lawyers.

### **Forward-Looking Agenda: Messages, Actions, Commitments**

From Maria Durano

Many of these issues have been raised and discussed by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, whose statements are available on DAWN's website.

From Jelena Tadzic

UNDP Serbia is currently supporting study to map the most vulnerable groups at the labor market and investigate the impact of economic crisis on their position with the aim to provide recommendations on the measures for improvement, taking into account a wider perspective of their social exclusion.

The study was conducted in 2009 by leading Serbian economic think tank, Foundation for Advancement of Economics (FREN). In the final stage of research, results were presented to Government representatives on 11th February 2010 with the aim to incorporate their comments in final study recommendations. Representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, National Employment Service, Gender Equality Directorate, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, ILO and UNDP participated in the discussion.

From Natalia Cardona

We would like to share with you Social Watch's most recent occasional paper and Gender Equity Index. The Occasional Paper is entitled Beijing and Beyond: Putting Gender Economics at the Forefront, Fifteen Years After the World Conference on Women.

From Bhawani Kusum

I would like to share with you the experience of Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) derived from its work with the rural poor and tribal women in hundreds of villages in the Rajasthan state of India for last 25 years.

From Natalie Raaber

You can access the full AWID statement from which these points are drawn [\[here\]](#).