



United Nations Nations Unies

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
United Nations Development Programme

**Expert Group Meeting on “The impact of the implementation
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on the
achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”**

United Nations Office at Geneva
11-13 November 2009

BACKGROUND PAPER

Prepared by:

JAYATI GHOSH*

Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations, New York
Fax: (212) 963-3463
daw@un.org
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>

** The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.*

This paper provides a brief examination of the current state of progress for women with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and attempts to analyse the reasons for relative success or lack of it in terms of meeting specific targets in different regions of the world. It uses this analysis to consider the important areas of intervention that are necessary at local, national, regional and international levels in the current conjuncture. The first section examines the recent progress with respect to meeting the MDGs, with special focus on women and girl children. Each of the major MDGs is considered briefly in terms of the current evidence, globally and within different regions. In the second section, the main reasons for the trends as well as differential performance in each of the indicators, across regions and countries, are identified. A special focus is placed on recent temporal trends, including the impact of the global financial and economic crisis and other such factors. The third section identifies those elements of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) that remain particularly significant for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, especially in the context of recent deliberations and outcome documents of various international and inter-governmental meetings. This is then used to suggest relevant entry points for public action in the current international context, and to consider how some of the demands need to be revised or modified in the light of recent developments and tendencies.

I. Meeting the MDGs

MDG1: Poverty, hunger and employment

MDG 1 is to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. This includes the following specific targets:

- Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

In terms of the first target of halving the proportion of poor, prior to the global economic crisis there were indications that the target would be met in a significant number of countries, including the most populous nations in Asia. It should be noted that the definitions and associated measurement of the poor have changed very recently and this led to an increase in the estimated number of poor people in the world but also to the suggestion that the rate of poverty reduction had been faster than previously assumed.¹ However, very recent trends have indicated some setback, related to the impact of the global economic crisis on employment, livelihood and wages, which is discussed in more detail in the next section. The recent evidence on the incidence of poverty is therefore disheartening and suggests that progress towards meeting this particular target has been extremely adversely affected, and if this trend continues it would not allow the target to be achieved in several regions.

Table 1: The proportion of employed people living on less than \$1.25 per day

Region	1997	2007	2008*
Developed regions	16	9	10
Developing regions	41	24	28
Sub-Saharan Africa	64	58	64
North Africa	6	3	3
South Asia	55	38	44
Southeast Asia	36	17	21
East Asia	38	11	13
West Asia	9	10	25
CIS Asia	26	21	23
Transition South East Europe	20	11	13
Latin America & Caribbean	13	7	8
Oceania	37	35	38

¹ The international poverty line was originally set at \$1 a day in 1985 prices, measured in terms of 1993 purchasing power parity (PPP). This was subsequently revised to a \$1.08 a day, and then to \$1.25 a day. The PPPs were derived from a set of price surveys, conducted within the International Comparison Programme, but the most recent survey in 2005 (which was published in 2008) required a large revision to the previous estimates of price levels and therefore, the real sizes of some developing economies. In particular, China and India were found to have GDPs around 20 per cent lower than was previously estimated on the basis of the new (supposedly more accurate) set of price surveys. This in turn raised the number of poor people especially in these countries but also suggested that the rate of poverty reduction has been around the same or even slightly faster than previously assumed (Chen and Ravallion 2008).

Source: Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, UN

It is evident from Table 1 that the incidence of poverty among the working population increased (significantly in some regions) in 2008 compared to the previous year, reversing the pattern of decline that was evident over the previous decade. In extreme cases, this has even meant an absolute increase in poverty rates among the employed population over the period 1997 to 2008, such as in Oceania, or no change as in Sub-Saharan Africa. What is particularly worrying is that regions with already high poverty incidence seem to have been particularly adversely affected in the most recent period, including South Asia. East Asia (and within it China) accounts for the most remarkable success in poverty reduction over the past decade, but even here the crisis seems to have led to a reversal, although less marked than elsewhere. Since unemployment rates have also been rising through the current crisis, the actual impact on poverty is likely to be even greater.

The gender implications of these trends are clear. While data on consumption expenditure or income are typically collected at the household level, it is well known that women and girls tend to be disproportionately represented among the poor. Women-headed households are among the poorest and most disadvantaged of all households. Within households, females are affected by differential lack of access to assets and land titles, by less education, unequal domestic power relations and discriminatory social norms, all of which affect their capacity and freedom to undertake activities that could reduce their poverty.

Part of the reason why the recent performance towards reducing poverty has been disappointing relates to the inability to meet the second target, of reducing hunger. The experience with respect to this target has been worse after it was explicitly formulated in 2000 than before. In the period after the global food crisis of the 1970s, increased investment in agriculture and various other measures implemented across the developing world to ensure greater self-sufficiency in food led to some progress in reducing chronic hunger by the early 1990s. But according to the FAO, between 1995-97 and 2004-06, the number of hungry people increased in all developing regions except Latin America and the Caribbean, and even in those regions, trends have reversed in the most recent period. The reasons for this are explored in the second section of this paper, but they relate not only to the general reduction in official development assistance (ODA) that affected a number of poor developing countries, but also changes in policy across the developing world that led to a relative neglect of agriculture and domestic food distribution.

As a consequence, performance on the nutritional outcome indicators has been relatively poor. Table 2 shows that in some developing regions, the proportion of underweight children under 5 years has remained relatively high and shown very little decline over nearly two decades. Girl children are typically worse affected by this, especially in those countries and societies where patriarchal patterns lead to reduced food consumption by females relative to males within the household.

Table 2: Per cent of children under 5 years who are underweight

	1990	2007
Developing countries	31	26
Sub-Saharan Africa	31	28
North Africa	11	7
South Asia	54	48
Southeast Asia	37	25
East Asia	17	7
West Asia	14	14
Latin America & Caribbean	11	6

Source: Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, UN

Overall, the target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger has shown very little improvement even before the global economic crisis adversely affected incomes and food consumption in the developing world. Table 3 shows that the number of hungry people actually increased for the world as a whole, and particularly for certain developing regions. Rather than halving, or even decreasing, the number of malnourished people globally increased by more than 50 million between the early 1990s and mid-2000s. This was entirely because of increasing hunger in the developing world, as the numbers declined in developed countries. East and Southeast Asia also showed good performance in terms of falling numbers of malnourished people, but the numbers of malnourished people increased quite sharply in South Asia (by 50 million) and Sub-Saharan Africa (by 44 million). The growing prevalence of hunger and food insecurity was associated with relatively high GDP growth in several regions, such as India and countries in Latin America. The contrast with East and Southeast Asia is stark, and points to the role of public policy in ensuring that aggregate income growth translates into better provision of basic needs such as food for the general population.

Table 3: Number of undernourished people (millions)
(based on FAO minimum level of dietary energy consumption)

	1990-92	2004-06
World	826.2	872.9
Developed countries	19.1	15.2
Developing countries	845.3	857.7
South Asia	286.1	336.6
East Asia	183.3	136.3
Southeast Asia	105.7	84.7
CIS Asia	4.0	5.8
West Asia	6.1	0.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	168.8	212.3
North Africa	4.0	4.9
Latin America & Caribbean	52.6	45.3

Source: Report on State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009, FAO

While this was the state before the global economic crisis, the crisis made matters significantly worse. But, as the FAO has noted, the continued increase in the number of undernourished people during both periods of low prices and economic prosperity and the very sharp rises in periods of price spikes and economic downturns shows the weakness of the global food security governance system. The period just before the crisis was marked by major and extreme increases in global food prices, which rose by nearly 300 per cent for the important food grains in the 18 months between January 2007 and June 2008. Subsequently global trade prices of major food grains fell again to March 2009, and then started rising again. Increasing world prices were passed through to a substantial extent in developing countries, where food prices rose significantly even if not by as much as the spike in global prices. In many developing countries, the prices of food have not come down thereafter even when global prices started falling. According to the FAO (2009) in July 2009 the most recent prices of major food grain groups were higher than they were 24 months previously in almost all developing countries for which it collects data. The prices of rice, millet and sorghum were more than 25 per cent higher in 80 per cent of developing countries; while the price of wheat was more than 25 per cent higher in more than 70 per cent of countries and that of maize in more than 60 per cent of countries. At the same time, money incomes of the working poor who would be most affected by such a price rise do not seem to have increased much if at all, largely because of the impact of the crisis on employment conditions.

The recent combination of higher domestic food prices, lower incomes and unemployment because of the global economic crisis has substantially increased food insecurity, except in East and Southeast Asia. As a consequence, the FAO now estimates that around 1.02 billion people in the world are hungry in 2009, which is the highest number since 1970. This figure presents a clear movement in the opposite direction from the target set by MDG 1. It also has clear adverse gender implications, because women tend to be disproportionately denied food within the household especially when it is scarce. Women's reduced access to food has negative cascading effects across generations, as poor nutrition among pregnant mothers leads to low birth weight babies, with adverse consequences for their future health and growth potential (both physical and cognitive). In the developing world as a whole, one in four children is underweight at birth, and in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa the ratio is nearly one half. The indicator has also shown very sluggish decline, falling by only 5 percentage points from 31 per cent in 1990 to 26 per cent in 2007.²

Both poverty and hunger are critically affected by employment conditions, which is why the target of providing decent work for all is such an important one. This target, too, has been relatively under-achieved, and the recent crisis has exacerbated this trend. Globally, unemployment rates fell only marginally during the economic boom of the past decade, from 6.3 per cent in 1998 to an estimated 6.0 per cent in 2007 (ILO, May 2009). In South Asia, Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, open unemployment rates actually increased over this period, despite reasonably rapid GDP growth. The crisis has had sharp effects upon employment and already caused very substantial increases in unemployment. Within the

² Even such figures are likely to be underestimates in the poorest countries, since lack of development also means that 57 per cent of children in developing countries are still not weighed at birth. The ratio is as high as 68 per cent in South Asia and 66 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, although it is only 22 per cent in East Asia.

broad figures, the rates of open unemployment for women, and especially young women, have been a growing cause for concern.

Table 4: Female unemployment rates

	1998	2007	2008	2009 (moderate projection)	2009 (severe projection)
World	6.6	6.0	6.2	7.1	7.7
Developed economies	7.8	6.0	6.1	7.8	9.0
CIS and non-EU Europe	12.5	8.2	8.8	10.3	11.9
East Asia	3.9	3.2	3.6	3.9	5.1
Southeast Asia & Pacific	5.2	5.8	5.9	6.5	6.7
South Asia	4.5	5.8	5.8	6.2	6.4
Latin America & Caribbean	10.9	9.2	9.4	11.4	10.6
Middle East	15.4	12.2	12.3	13.1	13.3
North Africa	18.0	15.8	15.0	15.9	17.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	7.7	8.2	8.2	9.0	8.8

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends May 2009 Update

It is not only the absolute level of unemployment and the high and rising rates of unemployment that are causes for concern in terms of not meeting the target set in MDG1, but also the quality of work, since the purpose of the target is to provide universal access to decent productive work. It is difficult to measure conditions of work, but typically own-account workers and contributing family workers have been seen as more vulnerable because they tend to be concentrated in informal activities that do not provide legal workers' protection. Therefore bringing down the proportion of such workers, and increasing the proportion of those in regular paid employment in formal activities, has also been seen as a useful target.

The proportion of women workers in vulnerable employment tends to be significantly higher than men's, especially in the developing world. However, there are wide variations across regions. In the developed countries, including Europe, there tends to be little difference and, if anything, the involvement of women in such vulnerable work is slightly lower than men's, and the overall proportion of such workers is also lower. But in countries where the position of women is already circumscribed by rigid patriarchal norms that prevent or constrain employment outside the home, the differences tend to be very high, sometimes as much as fifteen percentage points. The proportion of vulnerable workers to total workers was coming down, albeit very slowly and marginally, before the crisis. But the crisis is likely to have thrown this tendency off course, with some increases projected in the proportion of such vulnerable employment especially among women workers. As is evident from Table 5, this trend may well result, in the more pessimistic scenario, in high incidences of vulnerable employment of women especially in some regions, similar to those prevalent a decade ago.

Table 5: Vulnerable employment among women workers
(per cent of all women workers engaged in own-account or family activities)

	1998	2007	2008	2009 (moderate projection)	2009 (severe projection)
World	55.9	52.5	51.3	50.9	53.2
Developed economies	10.5	8.7	8.6	9.4	9.9
CIS and non-EU Europe	20.3	20.1	18.7	19.7	24.1
East Asia	67.7	61.1	58.0	58.1	60.2
Southeast Asia & Pacific	68.8	66.7	65.5	66.7	68.8
South Asia	89.5	85.6	84.7	85.3	86.4
Latin America & Caribbean	33.9	30.3	30.6	31.5	33.9
Middle East	57.3	46.3	45.8	46.7	52.3
North Africa	55.8	52.1	51.1	55.0	56.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	85.7	81.0	80.4	82.0	85.3

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends May 2009 Update

The main regions of success in achieving MDG 1 in any meaningful way have been East and Southeast Asia. China alone is the chief contributor to the improvement, especially with respect to poverty reduction and nutrition, and to a lesser extent reduction of vulnerable employment. This success is not the result of GDP growth alone, but reflects the impact of domestic social policy as well, and this assessment provides some important lessons for other countries.

MDG2: Universal primary education

MDG 2 is to achieve universal primary education, with the target to ensure that all children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. This target seems closer to fulfilment than the targets described earlier, in that the past decade has seen a significant expansion of school infrastructure and facilities in most of the developing world.

Table 6: Literacy and primary school enrolment and attendance, 2000-2007

	Literacy rate, male youth (15-24 years)	Literacy rate, female youth (15-24 years)	Gross Primary school enrolment ratio, male	Gross Primary school enrolment ratio, female	Net Primary school attendance ratio, male	Net Primary school attendance ratio, female
CIS & CE Europe	99	99	92	90	93	91
Developing countries	90	84	89	86	80	77
East Asia & Pacific	98	98	98	97	92	92
South Asia	84	74	88	83	81	77
Latin America and	97	97	94	95	90	91

Caribbean						
Sub-Saharan Africa	77	68	75	70	64	61
Middle East and North Africa	93	85	86	81	88	85

Source: State of the World's Children Report 2009, UNICEF

However, despite some recent progress, several major concerns remain. The first relates to the gender gap. As is evident from Table 6, in both enrolment and attendance, female rates are significantly below male rates in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, although the gap appears to have closed in other developing regions. Second, it is in these same regions that actual attendance appears to lag behind enrolment, especially for girls. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, actual attendance is only 61 per cent for girls, so four out of every ten girls does not attend school. A third, and often overlooked issue concerns those who have been excluded by the current policy thrust towards primary education, i.e. the illiterate youth who are no longer eligible to attend primary school but who will be an important part of the citizenry and the labour force for the next several decades. In South Asia, a quarter of female youth falls in this category. Illiteracy will remain an important source of deprivation and exclusion in their lives unless specific interventions are undertaken to ensure universal functional literacy. Therefore the existing target, which places all the attention on primary schooling, may be inadequate to deal with the social needs of some regions where there is a large pool of illiterate young people who are too old to attend primary school.

Another important issue relates to the quality of schooling, in that the urge to ensure greater quantity may often lead to some sacrifice of quality standards. This is particularly likely in relatively poor economies with a large backlog of unmet needs for schooling and public budgetary constraints, where efforts to provide education are not matched by enough basic infrastructure, facilities and qualified teachers to ensure a productive and useful learning experience. The experience of “parallel schools” in some states of India, where school expansion has been driven by the need to universalise schooling with few resources, shows that this can become an important concern.

A related concern are high drop out rates which are still prevalent in many developing countries, with a high proportion of children not completing primary schooling and a much higher proportion not going on to secondary school. The sharp drop in enrolment ratios for secondary schooling is one reflection of this problem. This is especially marked for girl children, who often tend to drop out of school at the later elementary stage or before secondary school not just because of social norms, but for other reasons such as physical difficulties of access (distance to school) or poor quality of schooling or inadequate provision of necessary facilities such as separate toilets for girls.

The global economic crisis appears to have had a negative effect on the indicator for MDG 2 as well, although the impact is not as sharp as it is for employment and poverty. Micro studies conducted by the UNDP in several regions such as developing Asia have shown that as household incomes are affected, particularly among the less privileged and

economically deprived groups, a frequent response has been the withdrawal of girl children from school.

MDG 3: Gender equality and empowerment of women

MDG 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women. This has the specific target of eliminating gender disparity first in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and eventually in all levels of education. The preliminary date for this target has already passed, and therefore there should now be no gender disparity in schooling at both primary and secondary levels. This target is, however, not met in many of the more populous parts of the developing world. While in East Asia and Latin America, the disparity at least in secondary education appears to have been removed, this target is still quite far from being achieved in some developing regions. Even where enrolment rates appear to be similar across boys and girls, actual attendance rates vary with girls less likely to attend. And even when they do attend, they are more likely to drop out at different levels of schooling.

Table 7: Secondary school enrolment and attendance

	Net secondary enrolment, male	Net secondary enrolment, female	Net secondary attendance rate, male	Net secondary attendance rate, female
CIS & CE Europe	79	75	79	76
Developing countries	51	49	48	43
East Asia & Pacific	60	62	60	63
Sub-Saharan Africa	28	24	26	22
Latin America and Caribbean	69	74	-	-
South Asia	-	-	51	43
Middle East and North Africa	67	62	54	52

Source: State of the World's Children Report 2009, UNICEF

Gender bias is an important source of exclusion from further schooling, but it is not the only one. Location (rural/urban), ethnicity and social grouping, income, language and disabilities can all be important factors accounting for educational disparity. Where they overlap with gender, the impact is more adverse. Often these multiple factors of inequality are not visible from overall data on girls' education. Therefore, in addition to examining the aggregate data on schooling, it is important to focus on particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups with respect to secondary schooling, in order to ensure that additional factors do not provide cross-cutting barriers to the educational advancement of girls.

Higher and technical education remains more challenging to achieve for young women, even in countries where the gender gap in schooling has been closed. Even where there is greater enrolment of women, the more high-yielding professional courses tend to be disproportionately taken up by men. Increased costs of such education because of privatisation and reduction of government subsidies in many countries has exacerbated this tendency, as families are less willing to make large outlays of investment for the higher education of girls.

Empowerment has many other manifestations beyond education, and one important aspect is access to employment. Women are disproportionately employed in more vulnerable forms of employment and in lower value-added activities. Women's work participation rates vary significantly across regions, but in general female work participation rates are lower than those for men, reflecting not only the demands of child bearing and unpaid involvement in the tasks of social reproduction, but also social and other constraints upon the employment of women outside the household. Female work participation rates (defined as the proportion of women of working age who are gainfully employed) tend to be especially low in North Africa (22 per cent) West Asia (25 per cent) and South Asia (34 per cent). They are highest in East Asia (65 per cent) but even so are significantly lower than male rates in these countries. Furthermore, women in developing countries tend to be disproportionately employed in agriculture and low-paid services, and constitute a small minority of workers in manufacturing employment in most developing countries. Even in regions where export-oriented employment has been enabled by the reliance on young female workers, such workers tend to be concentrated in the relatively low-paid and less skilled parts of the production process. Indeed, the phase of marginal increase in female involvement in export-oriented activity appears to have passed, as recent trends show both relative and absolute decline in female manufacturing employment even in the most export-driven economies (Ghosh, 2008).

The continued prevalence of a large burden of unpaid work for women, and its lack of recognition by society and in the formal economy, is also a reason for lack of empowerment for women. The global crisis is likely to put further pressure on households to increase the time allocated to such work because of reduction of public services and greater costs associated with them. As a result, the burden on women and girl children within the household is likely to increase.

MDG 4: Child mortality

MDG 4 is to reduce child mortality. This goal contains two specific targets: to reduce by two-thirds the under-5 mortality rate; and to provide access to affordable essential drugs. Child mortality varies dramatically across developing regions and even within them, rural rates are much higher than urban rates, even in relatively poor countries. In the regions where child mortality rates are high, around one-third of such deaths are accounted for by neonatal mortality, reflecting poor medical infrastructure as well as poor nutrition of mothers. There is no evidence of a gender gap in this ratio because typically male mortality rates tend to be higher than female rates for physical reasons. (The only country where the female child

mortality rate is significantly higher than the male rate in China (UNDP HDR, 2009), which probably is the result of imposing a one-child policy upon what is still a patriarchal society.)

Table 8
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)

Region	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2008	Average annual rate of		Progress towards the MDG target
							Decrease 1990-2008 (%)	reduction 1990-2008 (%)	
AFRICA	168	165	152	139	134	132	21	1.3	insufficient
Sub-Saharan Africa	184	180	165	152	146	144	22	1.4	insufficient
Eastern and Southern Africa	167	162	146	129	122	119	29	1.9	insufficient
West and Central Africa	206	202	188	176	171	169	18	1.1	insufficient
Middle East and North Africa	77	66	56	47	44	43	44	3.2	insufficient
ASIA	87	82	71	60	56	54	38	3	insufficient
South Asia	124	111	99	83	78	76	39	3	insufficient
East Asia and Pacific	54	49	41	32	29	28	48	4	on track
Latin America and Caribbean	52	43	33	26	24	23	56	4.5	on track
CEE/CIS	51	49	37	27	24	23	55	4.4	on track
Industrialized countries	10	8	7	6	6	6	40	2.8	on track
Developing countries	99	95	86	77	73	71	28	1.8	insufficient
Least developed countries	179	168	150	136	131	129	28	1.8	insufficient
World	90	87	78	70	66	65	28	1.8	insufficient

Under-five deaths (in millions)

Region	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2008	Proportion of under-five	
							Decrease 1990-2008 (%)	deaths worldwide in 2008 (%)
AFRICA	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	-5	51
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	-10	50
Eastern and Southern Africa	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	6	19
West and Central Africa	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	-18	30
Middle East and North Africa	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	50	5
ASIA	6.7	5.8	5.0	4.1	3.8	3.7	45	42
South Asia	5	4	3.7	3.2	2.9	2.8	39	32
East Asia and Pacific	2	2	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.8	64	9
Latin America and Caribbean	1	1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	67	3
CEE/CIS	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	75	1
Industrialized countries	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	1
Developing countries	12.2	11.3	10.3	9.2	8.8	8.7	29	99
Least developed countries	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5	8	40
World	12.5	11.4	10.4	9.3	8.9	8.8	30	100

Source: http://www.childinfo.org/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN.pdf

While some regions and countries are on track to meet this particular target, in other regions the rate of decline in under-five mortality is still very slow and grossly insufficient to reach the MDG goal by 2015. This is the case particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, which already have among the higher rates in the world. Among the 67 countries with high under-five mortality rates (40 per 1,000 or more), only ten are on track to meet this target.

MDG5: Maternal health

MDG 5 is to improve maternal health, with the specific target of reducing by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio; and achieving universal access to reproductive health. Maternal mortality is difficult and complex to monitor, particularly in settings where the levels of maternal deaths are highest. Information is required about deaths among women of reproductive age, their pregnancy status at or near the time of death and the medical cause of death - all of which can be difficult to measure accurately, particularly where vital registration systems are incomplete.

Table 9: Maternal health indicators, 2000-2007

	Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	Contraceptive prevalence (%)	Antenatal care coverage (%) At least once	Antenatal care coverage (%) At least four times	Delivery care coverage (%), Skilled attendant at birth	Delivery care coverage (%), Institutional delivery
CIS and Central/Eastern Europe	46	64	90	-	94	89
Developing countries	450	60	77	46	61	54
East Asia and Pacific	150	78	89	66	87	73
Eastern and Southern Africa	760	30	72	40	40	33
Latin America and Caribbean	130	69	94	83	85	86
Least developed countries	870	29	64	32	39	32
Middle East and North Africa	210	56	72	-	81	71
South Asia	500	53	68	34	41	35
Sub-Saharan Africa	920	23	72	42	45	40
Western and Central Africa	1100	17	71	44	49	46

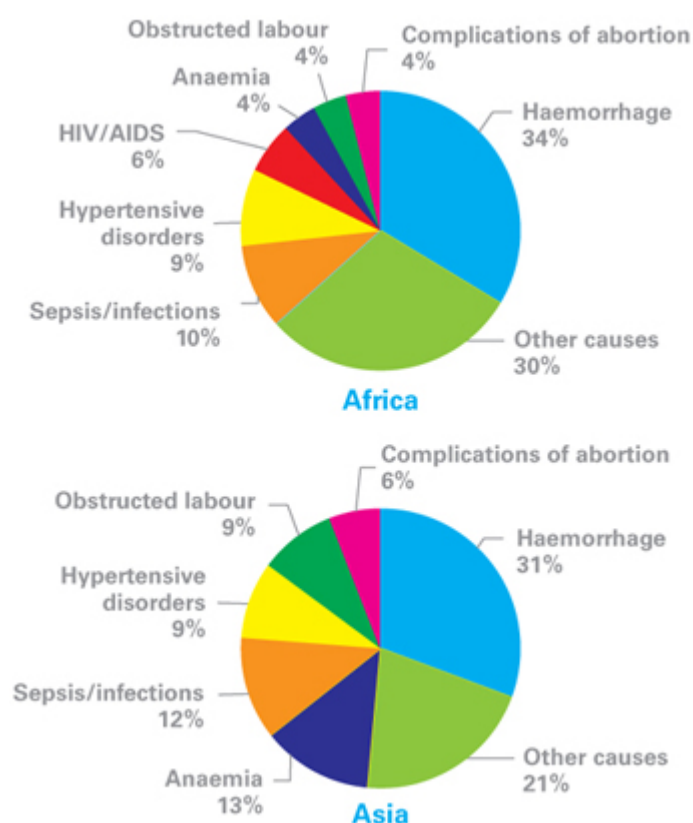
Source: State of the World's Children Report 2009, UNICEF

Both adequate health and nutrition before pregnancy as well as sufficient antenatal care are very important to address maternal mortality, as is the nature of the delivery to ensure the survival and health of both mother and child. Less than half of all pregnant women in the developing world have access to minimally adequate antenatal care. The reduction in maternal mortality rates has been slow and almost negligible for the developing world as a whole, falling from 480 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 450 in 2005. Even this decline is only because of some progress in certain regions, particularly East and Southeast Asia and

North Africa, which have shown declines of more than 30 per cent over this period. In South Asia, the maternal mortality rate declined by 20 per cent, which is still too slow to meet the target without substantial acceleration in the next few years.

Sub-Saharan African countries still show the highest maternal mortality rates, often around double the average for developing countries. This is partly related to poor infrastructure, but South Asia, which performs equally if not more poorly in terms of facilities for pregnant women and delivery of care, has lower rates of maternal mortality. Overall, various indicators show low health empowerment of women especially in Africa, such as very low contraceptive prevalence.

Causes of maternal death (1997–2002)



Source: http://www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html

The regions with the highest rates of maternal mortality – Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – also show the slowest rates of reduction, suggesting that they will find it more difficult to meet the target. In South Asia a major cause for high maternal mortality rates is poor nutrition among mothers, which is linked to the failures in terms of progressing towards MDG 1, while in Africa, poor information and empowerment of women, inadequate medical infrastructure and lack of access to timely and adequate professional care probably play the most important roles.

One important reason for high maternal risk is early pregnancy and motherhood. Pregnancy early in life contributes to the estimated 70,000 maternal deaths every year among girls aged 15 to 19 years. An infant's risk of dying in his or her first year of life is 60 per cent higher when the mother is below the age of 18 years than when the mother is older. Therefore, it is important to look at the evidence on age at marriage.³ From Table 10 it is evident that early marriage is still widely prevalent among the same regions that exhibit high rates of maternal mortality, with half of the young women in least developed countries as a group, being married before the age of 18 years. Early marriage corresponds to early pregnancy: the adolescent birth rate is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa and has declined only marginally in the period since 1990. The same is true for South Asia, where the continued prevalence of early marriage probably contributes significantly to the inability to reduce maternal mortality rates more rapidly.

Table 10: Incidence of Child marriage (under 18 years) per cent, 1998-2007

	Total	Urban	Rural
CIS and Central and Eastern Europe	11	11	13
Developing countries	36	22	46
East Asia and Pacific	19	12	25
Eastern and Southern Africa	36	20	43
Latin America and Caribbean	-	-	-
Least developed countries	49	37	55
Middle East and North Africa	18	12	23
South Asia	49	32	58
Sub-Saharan Africa	40	25	48
Western and Central Africa	44	28	55

Source: State of the World's Children Report 2009, UNICEF

MDG 6: HIV-AIDS and other diseases

The goal here is to halt and eventually reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. This problem is especially important for Sub-Saharan Africa. Worldwide, the number of HIV-AIDS cases now appears to have peaked, but the disease still affects more than 33 million people. Further, infection rates are rising in East and Central Europe and Central Asia. Africa dominates in HIV-AIDS incidence: over one third of new HIV infections and 38 per cent of AIDS deaths in 2007 occurred in Southern Africa. Altogether, sub-Saharan Africa is home to 67 per cent of those living with HIV. Women account for half the people living with HIV worldwide and nearly 60 per cent of those infected in sub-Saharan Africa.

³ Some regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean have high incidence of adolescent pregnancy outside marriage, but in other regions age at marriage is a reasonable proxy for early pregnancy.

The spread of this disease has also been associated with social dislocation and violence against women.

Access to treatment for the disease has been growing, and has increased by around ten times since 1990. Globally, women suffering from the disease now tend to have better access to anti-retroviral medication than men, although this differs across regions and countries. Nevertheless, access to medication is still unacceptably low for what is a major life-threatening illness: it was estimated in 2007 that 69 per cent of those who were infected and required treatment did not have access to the necessary drugs. The costs of such medicines are still too high for poor populations, and public programmes to provide medication to target groups such as pregnant women (to prevent transmission to their children) still cover only a minority of even the targeted population.

Malaria remains an important killer disease, with mortality heavily concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounted for 95 per cent of the deaths from malaria in 2006. The main international intervention has been the provision of insecticide-treated bed-nets; the use of these has spread from 2 per cent of Sub-Saharan African children in 2000 to 20 per cent in 2006. While this is a positive development, it is not sufficient either in scope or in terms of effective control of the disease, since people can be bitten by mosquitoes when they are not asleep.

Tuberculosis incidence (among the non-HIV positive population) has levelled off in recent years in all major developing regions except Sub-Saharan Africa – mortality from TB is associated with poor levels of sanitation and nutrition among affected persons. However, the target of halving the cases of TB globally is unlikely to be met.

MDG7: Environmental sustainability

The targets in this regard are to integrate the principles of sustainable development in policies and programmes, and to reverse the loss of environmental resources; to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation; to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers.

With respect to this goal, the focus has recently shifted to climate change issues rather than pollution, degradation, congestion and over-extraction, which remain the most significant environmental problems affecting developing regions and poor women in developing countries in particular. Deforestation continues apace and has even been accelerated by supposedly “green” policies such as the promotion of bio-fuels through subsidies, which has diverted farm land across the developing world and led to destruction of rain forests in the Amazon.⁴ High-growth regions such as East Asia have been characterised by unsustainable use of the environment and over-extraction of natural resources, and the consequences are being felt in desertification, atmospheric pollution, salinity and declines in

⁴ The mean annual deforestation rate from 2000 to 2005 (22,392 km² per year) was 18% higher than in the previous five years (19,018 km² per year). (Barreto, P.; Souza Jr. C.; Noguérón, R.; Anderson, A. & Salomão, R. 2006. Human Pressure on the Brazilian Amazon Forests. Imazon. Retrieved November, 2009.

soil quality, destruction of water sources, etc. Growing urbanisation across the developing world has resulted in the proliferation of slums and often more congested and unhealthy conditions of slum dwellers, rather than improvement. To these trends must now be added the adverse effects of climate change, which are being felt quite sharply in the form of increased incidence of natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, droughts, as well as changing patterns of rainfall that affect agriculture.

These features have particularly adverse effects on women and girl children, because their economic activities (outside and within the household) are usually in forms that are directly affected by the environment. Women are typically responsible for provisioning for and care of other members of the household, and their relative lack of access to assets makes them more vulnerable to sudden shifts in climate and other ecological pressures.

This MDG looks very far from being achieved thus far; in fact in all the developing regions the movement appears to be in the opposite direction. Public expenditure on adaptation and mitigation remains inadequate, and the transfer of technical know-how that would enable cleaner and greener technologies to be used in the developing world is also not being implemented. In addition, the inadequate recognition of the important role that women can and do play in climate change mitigation and adaptation has reduced the effectiveness of public policy in this regard.

II. Factors affecting MDG performance

The preceding discussion points to a sobering reality: not only are several of the MDGs quite far from being achieved in some of the more populous parts of the developing world, but progress towards these goals has received a significant setback in the very recent period, largely as a consequence of the direct and indirect effects of the global financial and economic crisis. Further, it is not the case that high economic growth tends to ensure better performance in terms of meeting the MDGs: while the high-growth region of East Asia has shown substantial progress, regions such as South Asia (and within it, particularly India) which have also experienced high economic growth in the recent past, have nevertheless exhibited relatively poor performance in meeting important MDGs especially with respect to hunger and employment. This suggests that specific policy regimes, public strategies and socio-economic and institutional conditions all play a role in affecting the capacity and willingness of governments and donors to achieve the MDGs.

The nature of the previous boom

Until the 2008 financial crisis caused an abrupt decline in trade and investment flows, the world economy had been experiencing a major economic boom, especially since 2002. However, while the boom did cause average incomes to increase in the developing world and especially in certain parts of it (such as East Asia) much of this growth was also problematic. Not only did it prove to be unsustainable, based on bubbles created by speculative practices that were enabled and encouraged by financial deregulation, but it also relied excessively on natural resource extraction with eventually damaging consequences. And the growth was deeply unequal, within and across national economies. Contrary to general perception, most people in the developing world, even within the most dynamic segment of Asia, did not gain from that boom. In fact, several tendencies adverse to women could be noted. Real wages of women in some of the most dynamic economies like China and India did not increase on average (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2006) and gender wage gaps continued to be high and often rising in most of the developing world. In several countries, ‘defeminisation’ of export-oriented employment has been observed, especially as such work became more technology intensive (Tejani and Milberg, 2010). Women's work became more fragile and uncertain, with greater dependence upon informal contracts and home-based or petty self-employment with little in the way of labour protection. Critical features of living conditions were often adversely affected, ranging from reduced access to safe and adequate food and nutrition, to health care.

The financial bubble in the US attracted savings from across the world, including from the poorest developing countries, so that for at least five years the South transferred financial resources to the North. Developing country governments opened up their markets to trade and finance, gave up on monetary policy and pursued fiscally “correct” deflationary policies that reduced public spending. Some development projects remained incomplete and citizens were deprived of the most essential socio-economic rights. Despite popular perceptions, a net transfer of jobs from North to South did not take place. In fact, industrial employment in the South barely increased in the past decade, even in the “factory of the world” China. Instead, technological change in manufacturing and the new services meant

that fewer workers could generate more output. Old jobs in the South were lost or became precarious and the majority of new jobs were fragile, insecure and low-paying, even in fast-growing China and India. The persistent agrarian crisis in the developing world hurt peasant livelihoods and generated global food problems. Rising inequality meant that the growth in emerging markets did not benefit most people, as profits soared but wage shares of national income declined sharply.

Almost all developing countries adopted an export-led growth model, which in turn was associated with suppressing wage costs and domestic consumption in order to remain internationally competitive and achieve growing shares of world markets. This led to a situation of rising savings rates and falling investment rates in many developing countries, and to the holding of international reserves that were then sought to be placed in safe assets abroad. This is why globally the previous boom was associated with the South subsidising the North: through cheaper exports of goods and services, through net capital flows from developing countries to the US in particular, through flows of cheap labour in the form of short-term migration. The earlier phase wherein export-orientation was generally associated with feminisation of labour appeared to have been substituted by a tendency of ‘defeminisation’ of formal sector jobs and feminisation concentrated only in the lower end of economic activities (Ghosh 2008, Sundaram 2009, Tejani and Milberg 2010).

In this boom, domestic demand tended to be profit-led, based on high and growing profit shares in the economy and significant increases in the income and consumption of newly globalised middle classes, which led to bullish investment in certain non-tradeable sectors such as financial assets and real estate as well as in luxury goods and services. This enabled economies to keep growing even though agriculture was in crisis and employment did not expand enough. What happened to women’s work was particularly interesting – despite sharp increases in work force participation, open unemployment rates also rose and micro survey data suggest that unpaid work also increased, suggesting a peculiar combination of double burden and distress search for work. This was true even in booming economies of India and China.

The patterns of production and consumption that emerged meant that growth also involved exploitation of nature and the environment. The costs – in terms of excessive congestion, environmental pollution and ecological degradation – are already being felt within societies, quite apart from the implications such expansion has on the forces generating climate change. The ecological constraints to such growth are already being felt, among regions and people of the world who have gained the least from the overall expansion of incomes. At the same time, crucial activities that are necessary for the economy were inadequately rewarded. Farming in particular became increasingly fraught with risk and subject to growing volatility and declining financial viability, and the lack of attention to peasant livelihoods also put the crucial task on food production on a more insecure footing in many countries. Meanwhile non-farm work did not increase rapidly enough to absorb the labour force even in the fastest growing economies of the region.

The recent boom was thus not stable or inclusive, either across or within countries. On the other hand, the slump is likely to affect all countries. As economies slow down, more jobs

will be lost and people, especially those in the developing world who did not really gain from the boom, will face loss of livelihood and deteriorating conditions of living. The evidence already indicates that women and girl children are being disproportionately affected by the adverse consequences of the global crisis within regional and national economies.

The effects of the crisis

The main transmission mechanisms for the crisis to impact upon economies have been the following:

- the global decline in exports, which has directly affected export production and then domestic markets through negative multiplier effects;
- the reversal of capital flows, including both portfolio capital and external bank lending;
- the procyclicality of aid flows, which have added directly to the negative effects of terms of trade shifts and loss of export markets in low income developing countries;
- the impact of the crisis on migrant workers (both cross-border and internal) and therefore upon remittances to sending households and regions;
- exchange rate devaluation which has affected domestic production and prices;
- the impact of extreme volatility in global food prices; and
- the fiscal constraints in many developing Asian countries that have already led to cutbacks in important public expenditure that affects access to basic services and the quality of life.

These processes have already had adverse effects upon women in a variety of ways, and several of these effects are likely to be exacerbated in the near future even if and when the economies recover. Some of the main effects are: employment effects; declines in real wages and incomes from self-employment; changes in patterns of migration; the impact of higher food prices on food consumption of women and girls; access to health care; access to education; greater exposure to domestic and other forms of violence because of increased social tensions.

The most immediate direct impact of the crisis on employment is through exports. For example, manufacturing exports from developing Asia have declined sharply from around September 2008 and continue to decline as of July 2009. Women workers dominate in export-oriented manufacturing production across most of Asia, especially Southeast Asia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, with a ratio of two to five female workers for every male worker in sectors such as textiles, garments and electronics (Dejardin and Owens, 2009). It is well known from the experience of the Asian financial crisis a decade earlier that women workers are usually the first to be laid off, given the job segregation that puts them in low paying and more “flexible” activities unlike the more diversified and relatively more secure occupations of male workers. For example, women were laid off at seven times the rate of men in South Korea (Seguino, 2009). Initial evidence from several countries suggests that this is already happening (UNDP RCC Colombo, 2009). In addition, the pressure on exporters to compete in an increasingly hostile environment has been associated with attempts to reduce labour costs by driving down wages and forcing remaining workers to work for longer hours, often for

less pay. This has been observed in Asia, for garments industries in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, electronics factories in Thailand and the Philippines, and a range of exporting sectors in India. It has also been noticed in Mexico and Guatemala where export production in the maquila d'oras and in garments industries has been hit.

However, it is not only in export sectors that women's employment has been affected. Other sectors tend to be affected by the negative multiplier effects of declines in exports, and so construction and other industries catering to the domestic market have also been hit. But two other categories of workers that have been less the focus of official policy deserve special mention: women cultivators and women working in the informal sector and as home-based workers.

The majority of women workers in the developing world are in farming, either as cultivators or agricultural workers. The impact of the crisis on agriculture is much more severe than has been recognized, because cultivators across the developing world have already been through more than a decade of agrarian crisis, which persisted even through the period of rising international crop prices. In general, the agrarian crisis in developing countries is related to public policies from the early 1990s onwards, that systematically reduced the protection afforded to farmers and exposed them to import competition and market volatility; allowed private profiteering in agricultural input supply and crop purchases without adequate regulation; reduced critical forms of public expenditure; tried to cut subsidies by increasing the prices of important inputs like fertiliser and water and electricity rates, ran down or destroyed important public institutions that have direct relevance for farming, including public extension services and marketing arrangements; reduced access to institutional credit; and did not adequately generate other non-agricultural economic activities. At the same time, trade liberalisation meant that farmers had to operate in a highly uncertain and volatile international environment. Volatile crop prices also generated misleading price signals (Ghosh, 2010). This caused large and often undesirable shifts in cropping pattern which ultimately rebounded on the farmers themselves. The associated increase in debt (often to private moneylenders) has become a major challenge on the viability of cultivation. All these difficulties are heightened in the case of women farmers, because in most developing countries, lack of land titles and other recognition has tended to deprive them of benefits such as access to institutional credit, extension services, subsidised inputs, etc. They therefore tend to have higher costs of cultivation than their male counterparts, and less state protection. In turn they are also likely to be deprived of the benefits of any crisis relief packages in the absence of specific measures.

Women in informal work have already been negatively affected. As opportunities for paid employment dwindled, in many countries women workers turned to home-based subcontracting activities, or work in very small units that do not even constitute manufactories, often on a piece-rate basis and usually very poorly paid and without any known non-wage benefits, substituted to some extent. This was evident in all the countries that suffered from the Asian crisis of the late 1990s (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2009) and is once again being repeated today. Thus the economic downswing is directly reflected in both declining orders or contracts and falling rates of remuneration. For example, in India, more than half of the 15 million women workers in the unorganised sector are involved in home-based work for different types of industry, dominantly on a piece-rate basis, ranging from

handloom to food processing work to petty engineering, and even hazardous work involving acids and chemicals. Very recent micro-evidence confirms the poor and sometimes even deteriorating conditions of such work, and the rapid decline in piece-rates as well as the reduction in opportunities for work even in such activities. There is evidence of 50 per cent decline in rates for waste collectors in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (SEWA, 2009) and almost equally sharp declines in rates for home-based workers in greater Delhi (AIDWA, 2009).

The decline in access to credit for self-employed women is also evident, as even the meagre institutional credit that women could earlier access has tended to dry up and even non-institutional sources have become more difficult and expensive for women to access. This has caused costs to increase even as small producers are being forced to reduce prices of their goods and services in order to compete in increasingly adverse market conditions. Floro and Dymski (2000) have already shown how financial crises can change gender relations through intra-household adjustments.

Migration, especially cross-border migration, is a more complex matter. It was widely predicted (World Bank, 2008) that remittance flows would quickly show signs of decline, and initial reports from countries such as Mexico, Jordan, Pakistan and Bangladesh also bore this out. But as the crisis unfolds, it is also becoming clear that the patterns of migration and remittances may be more complex than was previously imagined. In several countries (such as India for example) remittance inflows have actually increased rather than declined so far. To some extent this too can be expected, because even if the crisis leads to large-scale retrenchment of migrant workers who are forced to come home, they would return with their accumulated savings. In such a case, there could even be a (temporary) spike in remittances rather than a continuous or sharp decline because of the crisis. Eventually, as the adverse conditions for overseas employment further aggravate, this would then lead to declines in remittance inflows.

However, a sharp decline in migration and remittances is not inevitable, largely because of the gender dimensions. International migration for work is highly gendered, with male migrants leaving dominantly for employment in manufacturing and construction sectors, while women migrants are concentrated in the service sectors, such as the care economy broadly defined (including activities such as nursing and domestic work) and “entertainment”. The different nature of work also affects remittance flows. In the first place, female migrants are far more likely to send remittances home, and typically send a greater proportion of their earnings back. Also, male migrant workers find that incomes are much more linked to the business cycle in the host economy, so their employment and wages tend to vary with output behaviour. Thus job losses in the North during this crisis have been concentrated in construction, financial services and manufacturing, all dominated by male workers. By contrast, the care activities dominantly performed by women workers tend to be affected by other variables such as demographic tendencies, institutional arrangements, and the extent to which women work outside the home in the host country. So employment in such activities is often relatively invariant to the business cycle, or at least responds to a lesser extent. Therefore female migrant workers’ incomes are more stable over the cycle and do not immediately rise or fall to the same extent as male migrant workers’. This in turn means that source countries that have a disproportionately higher share of women out-migrants (such as Philippines and Sri Lanka) would tend to experience less adverse impact in

terms of downturn of remittances. This does not mean that there will be no impact at all, but certainly the adverse effects will be less and will take longer to work through than if the migration had been dominated by male workers.

Another expectation was that return migration would be dominated by the worst hit workers, who in turn were expected to be the undocumented, irregular or illegal migrants who are mostly in low-wage and low-skilled occupations, and do not qualify for any kind of official support such as welfare benefits or social security from the host country. But once again, the initial evidence belies this expectation. There are several reasons for this. Such migrants may be unwilling to return home to possibly even more fragile and insecure employment conditions in the home country. Many developing countries, including in Asia, have been even worse hit by the financial crisis that originated in the US economy. So the push factors that operated to cause international migration in search of work are as strong as ever. The unwillingness to return in such a context may be even stronger where the undocumented migrants have already developed some local social networks that allow them to survive for a period while they look for other employment. In the host country, undocumented migrant workers may even be preferred by employers who see in them a cheaper source of labour than legal migrants or local workers. A context of crisis may well make that preference for cheaper labour even sharper. This may be yet another reason why women migrants may be less badly affected, since women migrants dominate in the undocumented and illegal category. In any case, one of the basic pull factors still remains significant: the demographic transition in the North that is increasing the share of the older population that requires more care from younger workers, who must therefore come from abroad. So the current crisis may temporarily slow down the ongoing process of international migration by women for work, but is unlikely to reverse it.

However, internal migration, especially from rural to urban areas, has already been hit and indeed the opposite process of returning migrants is now more evident, for both men and women. In China, for example, it is estimated that more than 30 million workers returned to their villages after employment opportunities in urban areas dried up.

The coming together of the food crisis and the financial crisis has especially severe implications for women in the developing world. In 2008, the dramatically high global prices of important food items adversely impacted upon national food security for food deficit countries and affected the food security of vulnerable groups within countries. It is now quite widely acknowledged that financial speculation was the major factor behind the sharp price rise of many primary commodities, including agricultural items over the past year. The subsequent sharp declines in prices were also related to changes in financial markets, in particular the need of financial agents for liquidity to cover losses elsewhere. These price changes did not reflect real demand and supply at all, since both scarcely changed over the year (Ghosh, 2009). Financial deregulation in the early part of the current decade gave a major boost to the entry of new financial players into the commodity exchanges, and allowed unregulated activity in commodity futures markets, which became a new avenue for speculative activity. The result was excessive volatility displayed by important commodities over 2008, not only the food grains and other crops, but also minerals and oil.

Such volatility had very adverse effects on both cultivators and consumers of food. It sent out confusing, misleading and often completely wrong price signals to farmers that caused over-sowing in some phases and under-cultivation in others. Women farmers who are less likely to have assets or insurance that would protect them even partially from such volatility have been especially adversely affected. Also, as noted in the previous section, while the pass-through of global prices was extremely high in developing countries in the phase of rising prices, the reverse tendency has not occurred as global prices have fallen. Thus both cultivators and food consumers lost out because of extreme price instability, and the only gainers were the financial speculators who were able to profit from rapidly changing prices. This scenario has particular implications for women and girl children, who tend to be the first to lose out in intra-household food distribution in contexts of food shortage.

In addition to the impact on nutrition, the crisis has strong negative effects upon the basic conditions of life of women in other ways. In many developing and transition countries, the crisis has been associated with a fiscal crisis of the state, and some countries (such as Pakistan and Ukraine) have already had to approach the IMF for emergency assistance. The IMF, which now accepts the need for countercyclical macroeconomic policies in the developed countries, still insists on very harsh procyclical policies in the developing world, and forces governments to cut back on expenditure and raise user charges for public services in order to reduce fiscal deficits. This has meant reduced access to crucial public services. When combined with the effect of losses of livelihood and wage incomes, the effect can be disastrous. There are already reports from several countries of reduced household expenditure on health leading to increased risk of maternal mortality and withdrawal of girls from school. In addition, withdrawal or reduction of public services usually puts a greater burden on unpaid labour within the household, which is typically performed by women.

Policy responses

Such adverse effects are not inevitable, since they can be ameliorated or even reversed by policy measures. But the extent to which different governments in Asia can undertake effective policy responses is conditioned by the extent to which they have been affected by the crisis in the first place. In particular, the extent of financial contagion and possible local financial crisis has depended on how far the country concerned has gone along the road of financial liberalisation. Countries with large external debts and current account deficits have faced particular problems, as the recent problems of developing (Pakistan, Sri Lanka), emerging (Latvia, Ukraine) and developed (Greece) countries make clear. Those countries that have gone furthest in terms of deregulating their financial markets along the lines of the US (for example Indonesia) have been the worst affected and may well have full blown financial crises of their own (Saparini, 2008). By contrast, China, which has still kept most of the banking system under state control and has not allowed many of the financial “innovations” that are responsible for the current situation in developed markets, is relatively safe from the possibility of financial crisis. .

The countries that have been able to take effective measures to revive employment, control food prices and so on over the crisis, are those that are not dependent upon foreign resources. Thus China has managed to keep domestic food prices largely stable despite the international volatility, but this has not been true of most other countries of developing Asia.

The ability to engage in expansionary fiscal policy has also been severely constrained by resources and the continuing explicit or implicit conditionality of international sources of funds, as has also been noted by UN-DESA (2010). The drying up of ODA in this context has also played an adverse role in least developed countries where ODA often is a significant component of government budgetary resources (United Nations, 2009).

Several policy issues arise, such as the significance of fiscal rather than purely monetary measures for recovery, the need to focus fiscal expansion not only on bailouts and subsidies for corporations but more importantly on public expenditure directed towards increasing employment and maintaining living standards. Fiscal expansion must be based on wage-led growth, with emphasis on certain kinds of spending – food distribution, health, education. But the most relevant point for purposes of this paper is the need to remove the male breadwinner bias that is inherent in many of the supposedly “people-oriented” policies that have been instituted or are being contemplated in response to the crisis. This bias is expressed in many ways, such as in allowing male heads of households to determine the nature and content of assistance received, to promoting male employment rather than recognising the crucial productive role of women in agriculture and the informal sector, and not recognising the growing burden of unpaid work performed by women in the context of crisis. For example, unemployment assistance programmes typically require evidence of formal employment, which is much less common for women who are more heavily employed with informal contracts or in petty self-employment.

These biases require that several aspects of national policy have to be revised in order to ensure that the differential impact of the continuing crisis on women is appropriately mitigated.

At the international level, two extensions can be made to the valuable proposals made by the Stiglitz Commission set up by the UN General Assembly. First, the pro-cyclicality of international aid (both bilateral and multilateral) is a serious cause for concern, and without immediate increases in non-conditional aid it is unlikely the MDGs will be realized in most developing regions, especially the least developed countries. This is particularly important because much official development assistance (ODA) is explicitly directed to funding activities that have direct significance for women, in the provision of infrastructure, access to food and health provision. Second, given the highly unequal and contractionary effects of devaluation upon developing countries, which in turn has adverse impacts upon real wages and essential consumption, it is necessary to encourage developing countries in Asia and elsewhere to institute capital management techniques that will control the destabilising flows of capital that cause havoc in exchange rates. Third, the crucial interaction between food and finance needs to be recognised and dealt with. It is true that the resolution of the global food crisis requires policies in the real economy, such as government interventions to provide more public support for sustainable and viable cultivation patterns and to create and administer better domestic food distribution systems; and international arrangements and co-operative interventions, such as strategic grain reserves, commodity boards and other measures to stabilise world trade prices. But dealing with the food crisis also requires specific controls on finance, to ensure that food cannot become an arena of global and national speculation. These controls should include very strict limits (indeed bans) on the entry of financial players into commodity futures markets; the elimination of the “swap-dealer

loophole” that allows financial players to enter as supposedly commercial players; and the banning of such markets in countries where public institutions play an important role in grain trade. Given the impact that food price volatility can have on the nutrition of women and girls, the gender implications of this proposal are clear.

III. The continued relevance of the Beijing Platform for Action

There is no doubt that the Beijing Conference was an extraordinary moment in the history of the international women's movement. As Kabeer (2005) has noted, "it represented a historically unprecedented mobilisation of feminist advocates, activists and academics in the international political arena", both prior to the conference and subsequently. This gave important legitimacy to the Platform for Action, which could serve as a framework to guide and suggest policy making at the national and international levels, as well as provide ideas and mobilising principles to the various women's groups and representatives of civil society who were concerned with improving the conditions of women and their empowerment. Perhaps even more than with the MDGs, which are much more narrow and technical in their specification, the Platform for Action has had an uneven and often disappointing record in terms of implementation, especially in those countries where it was perhaps the most necessary.

It is important to note how relevant the Platform for Action and its call for action remains nearly fifteen years after this important initiative. Not only the goals and mission statement, but also the analysis remains contemporary. For example, it was noted that "widespread economic recession, as well as political instability in some regions, has been responsible for setting back development goals in many countries... Recent international economic developments have had in many cases a disproportionate impact on women and children, the majority of whom live in developing countries... Economic recession in many developed and developing countries, as well as ongoing restructuring in countries with economies in transition, have had a disproportionately negative impact on women's employment. Women often have no choice but to take employment that lacks long-term job security or involves dangerous working conditions, to work in unprotected home-based production or to be unemployed. Many women enter the labour market in under-remunerated and undervalued jobs, seeking to improve their household income; others decide to migrate for the same purpose. Without any reduction in their other responsibilities, this has increased the total burden of work for women."

It is a disappointing reflection on the status of the Platform's implementation if all of these points that were made then can be made with equal validity today, despite a relatively prolonged global economic boom with much greater international integration in the intervening period. Exactly because it is still so relevant, almost all of the points made in the Platform for Action can be usefully drawn upon in the current context to drive a more equitable, gender sensitive and sustainable pattern of growth. But this in turn points to a deeper problem: if all governments have officially accepted the Beijing Platform for Action, and have undertaken steps in conformity with it, why has the progress been so halting, slow and so easily reversed by factors such as economic crisis and war or violence?

Several reasons can be put forward. First, in many countries official implementation has been tardy, half-hearted and more symbolic than actual. Second, implementation has often not been combined with, or demanded by very active civil society engagement that would force governments to live up to their promises. Third, this Platform for Action directly challenged many vested interests, power equations at all levels and entrenched patriarchal

attitudes, so it has inevitably been difficult to implement at different levels. As a result, it is possible for implementation to be confined to the token or symbolic level, with governments setting up committees or institutional arrangements that meet the preliminary requirements, but often not going beyond to really transform policies in effective ways. Fourth, many governments found that they did not have the financial or technical or social resources that are required to implement many of the proposed measures, and international aid in all of these areas has been inadequate. The global economic crisis has exposed the sharp procyclicality of official aid flows, which in turn has contributed to the economic and fiscal difficulties of even willing governments, in finding resources to implement some important measures highlighted in the Beijing Platform for Action.

While all of these are important reasons, there may be a broader factor behind the relative failure to achieve the aims of the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the failure to stay on target for meeting some of the more significant MDGs. This is that specific policy proposals and quantitative targets become difficult to achieve if wider economic and political processes are actually operating to push the economy and society in the opposite direction. To take a few examples, achieving better conditions of employment and remuneration for women's work is more difficult when overall employment is on the decline, or when (even during a boom) employment expansion is based on strong competitive pressures that operate to suppress wages. Improving the lot of women cultivators is difficult when there is a widespread agrarian crisis. Eliminating the exploitation of girl children through paid or bonded labour or even trafficking requires greater effort if the material conditions of their households are so dire that there seem to be few feasible alternatives. And so on. This is not a call for inaction on these specific items, but rather an insistence that particular actions must be combined with a broader macroeconomic policy thrust that is focussed upon increasing productive employment, preserving livelihoods and ensuring gender-equitable development.

So strategies to meet both the MDGs and the stipulations of the Beijing Platform for Action must address broader economic and political issues and take on directly the macroeconomic policies that are typically seen as “outside the purview” of those dealing specifically with women's issues. Some of the areas that require special attention from a gender perspective, and the need to revise the call for action or adjust in the light of recent experience, are discussed in what follows.

Fiscal policies

With respect to macroeconomic policies, the Beijing Platform for Action was especially concerned to ensure the inclusion of women in economic policy making that was to become more participatory in nature, and to prevent structural adjustment and stabilisation measures from generating processes that would operate against the material interests of the majority of women. Therefore it enjoined on governments to do the following:

- “Review and modify, with the full and equal participation of women, macroeconomic and social policies with a view to achieving the objectives of the Platform for Action;
- Analyse, from a gender perspective, policies and programmes - including those related to macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment, external debt problems,

taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy - with respect to their impact on poverty, on inequality and particularly on women;

- Assess their impact on family well-being and conditions and adjust them, as appropriate, to promote more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services;
- Pursue and implement sound and stable macroeconomic and sectoral policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal participation of women, encourage broad-based sustained economic growth, address the structural causes of poverty and are geared towards eradicating poverty and reducing gender-based inequality within the overall framework of achieving people-centred sustainable development;
- Restructure and target the allocation of public expenditures to promote women's economic opportunities and equal access to productive resources and to address the basic social, educational and health needs of women, particularly those living in poverty."

As a result of the Beijing Platform for Action, many governments have indeed instituted mechanisms to try and create greater levels of participation in policy dialogues as well as recognising responses from civil society. However, this has not necessarily translated into greater inclusion in terms of the actual formulation and implementation of policies. In terms of macroeconomic policy, the focus has typically been more on stability than on growth, and even in terms of growth the focus has not been on broad-based and sustained growth but on expansion of GDP. There therefore remain critical issues to take up with national governments to strengthen responsiveness from a gender perspective.

The very important demand regarding the targeting of public expenditures to promote women's economic opportunities appeared to have been at least partially fulfilled in the increase in policies of gender-sensitive budgeting in many countries, whereby public expenditures were subjected to a gender audit in terms of the extent to which they reached or benefited women and girls. This is an improvement and marks some progress towards greater recognition of the gendered implications of fiscal policies. However, the way gender-sensitive, or –responsive budgeting has evolved in many countries, it has become a token and symbolic mechanical exercise, whereby bureaucrats attempt to classify certain types of expenditure as directed towards women simply in order to fulfil pre-stated quotas, as has been noted with respect to gender-budgeting as undertaken in the Government of India's budgets (Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, CBGA 2010). A more creative and flexible approach to the implications of particular forms of spending is required. Similarly, gender-sensitive budgeting has tended to ignore taxation policies, which can also have quite serious gender implications. The danger is that when such a demand is made, governments can easily claim to have met the demand by instituting formalistic procedures of gender-sensitive budgeting that do not really meet either the spirit or the real intentions of the proposal, which are to ensure that fiscal policies (both taxation and expenditure) take note of the possible gender-differentiated impacts and adjust accordingly.

Monetary and banking policies

The Beijing Platform for Action recognized the important of financial inclusion for women and therefore made detailed demands in this regard. These included the demands that governments should undertake the following specific measures:

- “Enhance the access of disadvantaged women, including women entrepreneurs, in rural, remote and urban areas to financial services through strengthening links between the formal banks and intermediary lending organizations, including legislative support, training for women and institutional strengthening for intermediary institutions with a view to mobilizing capital for those institutions and increasing the availability of credit;
- Encourage links between financial institutions and non-governmental organizations and support innovative lending practices, including those that integrate credit with women’s services and training and provide credit facilities to rural women.”

In addition, the Platform for Action also specified that commercial banks and other financial institutions in both the public and private sectors need to examine their policies to achieve the following:

- “Use credit and savings methodologies that are effective in reaching women in poverty and innovative in reducing transaction costs and redefining risk;
- Open special windows for lending to women, including young women, who lack access to traditional sources of collateral;
- Simplify banking practices, for example by reducing the minimum deposit and other requirements for opening bank accounts;
- Ensure the participation and joint ownership, where possible, of women clients in the decision-making of institutions providing credit and financial services.”

The experience of the past fifteen years shows that these demands have generally not been met. Instead, the focus has been on providing micro-finance facilities for women, dominantly in the form of micro-credit, increasingly with some links to institutional finance. This has often been touted as a development panacea (Robinson, 2001), that simultaneously delivers poverty reduction and women’s empowerment, but the reality is more complex and less optimistic. The chief benefit of microfinance is that it allows commercial lending without collateral in the form of assets, by using group lending as the means to ensure repayment because of the role of peer pressure.

While there are both benefits and costs of this approach, one major problem with treating microcredit as a possible development panacea is that it has tended to reduce policy concerns about ensuring more extensive access of women to the regular channels of institutional finance, and left them only with the relatively limited form of microcredit while the bulk of formal lending continues to go to men. There is little doubt that some access to credit for women is usually better than none at all. There is evidence that it helps in diversification of income sources and creates cushions for consumption in periods of natural disaster and other shocks to household income, in addition to possibly empowering women to some extent. But the conditions of microcredit, typically involving small amounts and a speedy and tight repayment schedule, tend to preclude substantial asset creation and

investment in productive ventures. In addition, concerns have been expressed about the “low income, low credit, low investment, more income, more credit, more investment” model that underlies most microcredit delivery (Hulme and Mosley, 1996). This is too simplistic, because it assumes that all the poor, and women in particular, will be equally able to take advantage of and benefit from any entrepreneurial opportunities irrespective of their particular economic circumstances and the wider economic environment. In India, microcredit provision has been led by the government rather than by NGOs, and emphasising the creation of links with formal finance institutions. While this should have been a progressive step in terms of giving women borrowers who were earlier excluded access to the formal finance system, the small amounts of such credit meant there was hardly any real impact on the financial position of women, even while it heightened the problems of peer pressure and exclusion of less privileged borrowers in groups.

In other words, it is possible that the emphasis (and even euphoria) about micro-credit served to direct attention away from the need to ensure the greater inclusion of women into formal financial institutions. Two systems of credit have emerged: formal institutions for the rich and the organised sector; informal credit and microfinance for the poor and for women. This problem has been aggravated by the current financial and economic crisis, which has adversely impacted upon informal credit sources as well. The actual implementation of the steps outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action therefore remains of crucial relevance today.

Food security and nutrition policies

The Beijing Platform for Action had recognised the critical role of production (and women’s role in cultivation) in ensuring food security in developing countries. It had also noted the significance of public distribution policies. Therefore it called on states to do the following:

- “Develop agricultural and fishing sectors, where and as necessary, in order to ensure, as appropriate, household and national food security and food self-sufficiency, by allocating the necessary financial, technical and human resources;
- Develop policies and programmes to promote equitable distribution of food within the household;
- Provide adequate safety nets and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems, as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women living in poverty to withstand adverse economic environments and preserve their livelihood, assets and revenues in times of crisis;
- Develop and implement anti-poverty programmes, including employment schemes, that improve access to food for women living in poverty, including through the use of appropriate pricing and distribution mechanisms.”

In most parts of the developing world (except East and Southeast Asia) there has actually been a reversal in these crucial strategies. This is also why the first MDG is so far from being met in many countries, and why the situation was adverse even before the current global economic crisis further increased food insecurity. Therefore it is imperative that this element of the Beijing Platform for Action be highlighted with the utmost seriousness.

Employment policies

The Beijing Platform for Action explicitly noted that productive employment was key to women's empowerment and that, to ensure greater access to such employment, a number of public interventions are required. Therefore the Platform for Action called upon states to do the following:

- “Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women's unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment;
- Ensure the full realisation of the human rights of all women migrants, including women migrant workers, and their protection against violence and exploitation; introduce measures for the empowerment of documented women migrants, including women migrant workers; facilitate the productive employment of documented migrant women through greater recognition of their skills, foreign education and credentials, and facilitate their full integration into the labour force;
- Introduce measures to integrate or reintegrate women living in poverty and socially marginalised women into productive employment and the economic mainstream; ensure that internally displaced women have full access to economic opportunities and that the qualifications and skills of immigrant and refugee women are recognised.”

These issues remain equally relevant, if not even more urgent, today. Secure and good quality employment generation is still generally not the main focus of government policy anywhere in the world as governments remain more concerned with raising the growth rates of output even though the employment patterns during the previous boom and the current crisis have both meant that more fragile and insecure forms of low-paying employment have proliferated especially for women, rather than decent work. Making employment a central concern of national and international policy making therefore remains an urgent priority.

Environmental policies

Much of the discussion on the environment in the Beijing Platform for Action reads as if it had been written yesterday rather than nearly fifteen years ago. Consider the following: “The continuing environmental degradation that affects all human lives has often a more direct impact on women. Women's health and their livelihood are threatened by pollution and toxic wastes, large-scale deforestation, desertification, drought and depletion of the soil and of coastal and marine resources, with a rising incidence of environmentally related health problems and even death reported among women and girls. Those most affected are rural and indigenous women, whose livelihood and daily subsistence depends directly on sustainable ecosystems. Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated. While poverty results in certain kinds of environmental stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which are a matter of grave concern and aggravate poverty and imbalances.” The only major environmental factor that has been left out of this is climate change, which is already impacting the poor in tropical developing countries

adversely, and within these areas the most vulnerable groups such as rural poor and women within them.

Several of the strategies outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action are still very important in the current context:

- “Ensure opportunities for women, including indigenous women, to participate in environmental decision-making at all levels, including as managers, designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental projects;
- Encourage (subject to national legislation and consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity) the effective protection and use of the knowledge, innovations and practices of women of indigenous and local communities, including practices relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;
- Take appropriate measures to reduce risks to women from identified environmental hazards at home, at work and in other environments, including appropriate application of clean technologies;
- Integrate a gender perspective in the design and implementation of, among other things, environmentally sound and sustainable resource management mechanisms, production techniques and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas;
- Promote the participation of local communities, particularly women, in identification of public service needs, spatial planning and the provision and design of urban infrastructure.”

Health policies

The inability to meet the MDGs related to health is significantly related to the lack of sufficient resources as well as inadequate gender sensitivity with respect to health policies. This suggests that despite good intentions, many of the very significant formulations with respect to women’s health that were outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action have not been implemented as required. In particular, the goal of “increasing women’s access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services” cannot be achieved without significant increases in per capita public spending on health in most developing countries. Yet this has not occurred especially where it is most required, as in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia – instead it has typically fallen (WHO 2008). Some of the more important specific proposals are noted here:

- “Reaffirm the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, protect and promote the attainment of this right for women and girls and incorporate it in national legislation;
- Design and implement, in cooperation with women and community-based organizations, gender-sensitive health programmes, including decentralized health services, that address the needs of women throughout their lives and take into account their multiple roles and responsibilities, the demands on their time, the special needs of rural women and women with disabilities and the diversity of women’s needs arising from age and socio-economic and cultural differences, among others; include women, especially local and indigenous women, in the identification and planning of health-care priorities and programmes; remove all barriers to women’s health services and provide a broad range of health-care services;

- Allow women access to social security systems in equality with men throughout the whole life cycle;
- Provide more accessible, available and affordable primary health-care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, which includes family planning information and services, and giving particular attention to maternal and emergency obstetric care;
- Take all appropriate measures to eliminate harmful, medically unnecessary or coercive medical interventions, as well as inappropriate medication and over-medication of women, and ensure that all women are fully informed of their options, including likely benefits and potential side-effects, by properly trained personnel;
- Strengthen and reorient health services, particularly primary health care, in order to ensure universal access to quality health services for women and girls; reduce ill health and maternal morbidity; ensure that the necessary services are available at each level of the health system and make reproductive health care accessible, through the primary health-care system, to all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible;
- Give particular attention to the needs of girls, especially the promotion of healthy behaviour, including physical activities;
- Ensure the availability of and universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation and put in place effective public distribution systems as soon as possible;
- Ensure the involvement of women, especially those infected with HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases or affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in all decision-making relating to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.”

Education and training of women

It was noted earlier that there has been substantial progress in elementary education enrolment rates, although there is still differential performance across regions in this regard. However, retention rates for girls and young women in higher education remains a problem even in regions and countries where otherwise the gender gap has been reduced or overcome in primary education. Retention of girls in education depends upon a number of social, economic and cultural factors, but the quality of the education provided and its costs are typically important elements. Therefore many of the points made in the Beijing Platform for Action are still extremely important:

- “Provide the required budgetary resources to the educational sector, with reallocation within the educational sector to ensure increased funds for basic education, as appropriate;
- Advance the goal of equal access to education by taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, religion, national origin, age or disability, or any other form of discrimination and, as appropriate, consider establishing procedures to address grievances;
- Eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action when appropriate;

- Create a gender-sensitive educational system in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy- and decision-making;
- Increase enrolment and retention rates of girls by allocating appropriate budgetary resources; by enlisting the support of parents and the community, as well as through campaigns, flexible school schedules, incentives, scholarships and other means to minimize the costs of girls' education to their families and to facilitate parents' ability to choose education for the girl child; and by ensuring that the rights of women and girls to freedom of conscience and religion are respected in educational institutions through repealing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on religion, race or culture;
- Improve the quality of education and equal opportunities for women and men in terms of access in order to ensure that women of all ages can acquire the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes, skills and ethical values needed to develop and to participate fully under equal conditions in the process of social, economic and political development;
- Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities.”

This is not an exhaustive list of all the areas in which the Beijing Platform for Action remains timely and relevant for designing and implementing policies at local, national, regional and international levels. However, these do provide some indication of the direction in which policies must move if both the aims of the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs are to be achieved. For the international level, there were many useful suggestions made in the Beijing document about the need for greater gender awareness and sensitivity in the planning and provision of international aid. However, the drying up of such aid even during the boom and especially now during the global crisis, has emerged as a more important concern. It is therefore imperative to demand significant increases in non-conditional aid provision particularly to some poor developing countries that have been very badly hit by an international crisis that was not of their own making. Otherwise, the public expenditure that forms a necessary (even if not sufficient) element of the strategies that are required is unlikely to be feasible.

Entry points for action:

Therefore, the following policies are suggested as some (but by no means all) essential entry points for policies and processes aimed at linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with the MDGs.

1. Make the generation of decent work for both men and women a major focus of macroeconomic and development policy. To start with, this also requires the regular collection of data on employment and labour market conditions, which many countries do not currently have. In addition it will require the tailoring of macroeconomic policies to recognise and meet this goal.

2. Focus on the needs of productive and viable agriculture overall and the specific needs of women farmers. Ensure that women farmers have access to land, inputs, credit, extension services for better cultivation technologies and markets.
3. Improve the material conditions of informal activities, especially those in which women are significant participants, by increasing access to credit at reasonable rates, ensuring input provision, providing greater access to new technologies and markets, and supporting co-operatives.
4. Ensure financial inclusion of women by increasing and universalising their access to institutional finance in both banking and insurance. Do not see micro-credit as a substitute for genuine financial inclusion, but rather as a useful addition.
5. Emphasise universal access to affordable food as a policy priority and take measures to control prices of basic food grains and other essential items. In public food distribution systems, provide food on the basis on individual entitlements rather than household-based and encourage sensitisation to ensure equal access of women and girls to food within the household.
6. Ensure that macroeconomic policies are not pro-cyclical but growth oriented and developmental. On no account reduce real spending on essential public services in health, sanitation, basic infrastructure provision, and education.
7. As far as possible, ensure that services such as primary health care and reproductive health care and education are provided free of cost and that the delivery systems do not discriminate against women.
8. Recognise the critical role played by women in environmental protection as well as the gender-differentiated impacts of ecological change and damage to the environment, and plan policies accordingly.
9. Abandon the "male breadwinner" model of much public sector service delivery and ensure more voice to the concerns of women in such delivery and in the planning of policies.
10. Ensure that legal systems do not discriminate against women and also that property and other laws are gender neutral.

References

All India Democratic Women's Association (2009). Report on the Condition of Work of Home-based Women Workers in Delhi. New Delhi: AIDWA.

Barreto, P.; Souza Jr. C.; Noguerón, R.; Anderson, A. & Salomão, R. (2006). Human Pressure on the Brazilian Amazon Forests. Imazon. Retrieved November, 2009.

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, CBGA (2010). “An Assessment of UPA-I through a Gender Budgeting Lens” (2010) available along with other feature articles at: http://www.cbgaindia.org/featured_articles.php?p=2 (accessed 1 June 2010).

Chandrasekhar, C.P. and Jayati Ghosh (2009). The costs of 'coupling': the global crisis and the Indian economy. Cambridge Journal of Economics 2009, 33 (4), 725-739.

Chandrasekhar, C.P. and Jayati Ghosh (2006). Employment Conditions: Working More for Less. Business Line, 28 November 2006.

Chen, Shaohua and Martin Ravallion (2008). “The Developing World is Poorer Than We Thought, But No Less Successful in the Fight against Poverty.” Policy Research Working Paper 4703. The World Bank Research Development Group. Washington, D.C.

Chibber, Ajay, Jayati Ghosh and Thangavel Palanivel (2009). The effects of the global financial crisis on developing Asia: A Synthesis Study Incorporating Evidence from Country Case Studies. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific. Colombo

Dejardin, Amelita King and Jessica Owens (2009). “Asia in the global economic crisis: Impacts and responses from a gender perspective”, paper presented at ILO Workshop on Responding to the Economic Crisis – Coherent Policies for Growth, Employment and Decent Work in Asia and Pacific, Manila, Philippines, 18-20 February 2009.

Floro, Maria and Gary Dymski (2000) “Financial crises, gender and power: An analytical framework”. World Development Vol. 28, No. 7, pp. 1269-1283.

Food and Agricultural Organization United Nations (2009). The State of Food Insecurity in the World: Economic crises – impacts and lessons learned. Rome.

Ghosh, Jayati (2009). “The Outcry is muted, but the Food Crisis is getting worse,” [The Guardian](#), Friday 9 January, 2009

Ghosh, Jayati (2008). “The Systemic crisis’ impact on women: sub regional perspectives: The Impact of the Crisis on Women in Developing Asia”. AWID, Brief No. 3.

Ghosh, Jayati (2010). “The unnatural coupling: Food and global finance”. Journal of Agrarian Change Symposium on the Global Food Crisis (January). Available at: www.networkideas.org

Hulme, David and Paul Mosley (1996). Finance Against Poverty. Volume 1. London: Routledge.

International Labour Organization (2009). Global Employment Trends, May 2009 Update. Geneva

Kabeer, Naila (2005). “The Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals: Different processes, different outcomes”, EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.11. 4 February 2005.

Robinson, Marguerite S. (2001). The Microfinance Revolution: Sustainable Finance for the Poor. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank: Washington, DC

Saparini, Hendri (2009). "Policy response to overcome crisis: A lesson from the Indonesia case", paper presented at IDEA's conference on Re-regulating finance, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. Available at: http://www.networkideas.org/ideasact/feb09/Beijing_Conference_09/Hendri_Saparini.pdf (accessed on 1 June 2010).

Seguino, Stephanie (2009). “The global economic crisis and women”, Presentation to UN Commission on Status of Women, 53rd Session, 3-15 March 2009, New York.

SEWA, WIEGO and Realizing Rights (2009). Policy brief: “Global Economic Crisis and the Informal Economy: Smaller-and-Smaller Slivers of a Shrinking Pie.” Available at: www.realizingrights.org/pdf/GEC.pdf (accessed on 1 June 2010).

Sundaram, Jomo Kwame (2009). "Export-oriented Industrialization, Female Employment and Gender Wage Equity in East Asia." Economic and Political Weekly, VOL 44 No. 01 January 03 - January 09, 2009, pp. 41-54.

Tejani, Sheba and William Milberg (2010). Global Defeminization? Industrial Upgrading, Occupational Segmentation and Manufacturing Employment in Middle-Income Countries. SCEPA Working Paper 2010-1, Working Paper Series. April 27, 2010. The New School: Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis (SCEPA)

United Nations (2009). The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009. New York

United Nations (2009). Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System. New York.

United Nations (2010). World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010. New York.

United Nations Children's Fund (2009). The State of the World's Children Report 2009: Maternal and Newborn Health. New York.

United Nations Children's Fund (2009). Progress for Children: A Report Card on Child Protection. Number 8. September 2009. New York.

United Nations Development Program (2009). Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development. New York.

United Nations Development Program RCC Colombo (2009). "Impact of the global financial crisis on developing Asia:" Case studies based on quick surveys in 12 countries.

World Health Organization (2008). World Health Report 2008: Primary Health Care: Now More Than Ever. Geneva.