

IANWGE Workshop
on
“Ten-year review of gender mainstreaming: Focusing on results”

MDGs: A Platform for Promoting Women’s Human Rights
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Introduction:

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emerged from an unparalleled global consensus, expressed by 189 nations in the Millennium Declaration, to promote a shared vision of priorities for achieving human development, human security and human rights. The eight goals (and 18 targets and 48 indicators) that comprise the MDGs include a specific goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment, with one target and four indicators that build on major priorities expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action and numerous regional and national plans for the advancement of women.

The Challenge

It has become something of a sound bite to note, when referring to the MDGs, that “Gender equality is a goal in its own right as well as central to all of the other goals.” But how does this sound bite move from rhetoric to reality? In its gender review of thirteen MDG reports in 2003, UNDP found limited consideration of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, with only half acknowledging gender equality in the poverty goal and none reflecting gender equality issues in goals 7 and 8. Since this initial review, over eighty national and regional MDG reports were produced with some improvement in the integration of a gender perspective. A comprehensive gender review will be published by UNDP in 2005. Ministries of Women’s Affairs, UN/Gender Theme Groups, and women’s rights networks on the ground have reported on the challenges they confront in efforts to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment across all MDGs consistent with commitments in the Beijing PFA, CEDAW or SC Resolution 1325.

The Presentation

This presentation will focus on how gender equality advocates, in a growing number of countries, are devising effective approaches to use the MDGs as a platform to strengthen commitments to women’s human rights and empowerment. It will:

- use examples from the UNDP Project “Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals” that UNIFEM is executing in 5 countries (with financial support from the Government of Japan and DfID in Cambodia, Kenya, Kyrgystan, Morocco, Peru) as well as reports from initiatives in other countries.
- highlight strategies that UN Gender Theme Groups and others are devising to mainstream gender into MDG analysis, reports, campaigning and implementation.
- build on analyses that demonstrate how the MDG, CEDAW and Beijing frameworks can be mutually supporting and converging, rather than separate.

The inter-agency task force on Gender and MDGs, co-chaired by UNDP and the World Bank, has compiled a kit on how UN agencies integrate gender equality in their respective work on the MDGs. The kit is available to members of the IANWGE.

Possible areas to explore:

- In the context of UN reform and the consensus on the MDGs, what guidance, tools and/or resources can the IANWGE provide to ensure that UN Country Teams (UNCTs) systematically use MDG processes to strengthen progress toward gender equality and women’s empowerment?
- How do we reduce transaction costs for national partners to ensure that gender equality frameworks are mutually re-enforcing?