

Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships

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Introduction

As efforts intensify to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, developed and developing countries have committed to new partnerships and aid modalities, designed to align aid to nationally-determined development priorities, to pool diverse aid sources into direct support to the national budget or to particular sectors, and to ensure greater stability and predictability in aid flows. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness¹ summarizes the principles and indicators of progress agreed to by the OECD-DAC donor countries and the developing country partners.

Linking gender equality to the aid effectiveness agenda

Gender equality is central to achieving the MDGs and other development goals, making it important to ensure that aid structures target and monitor progress towards gender equality goals. Ultimately, gender equality outcomes will be important signs of the effectiveness of the new approach to aid delivery and partnership.

To support gender equality, the new aid architecture should include:

- **adequate financing for programmes that respond to women's needs;**
- **accountability systems for governments and donors to track and enhance their contributions to gender equality; and**
- **gender-sensitive progress assessments, performance monitoring and indicators for aid effectiveness.**

This note is an outcome of a November 2005 international consultation in Brussels organized by the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the European Commission.² It identifies an initial set of considerations to ensure that gender equality is central to the aid effectiveness agenda. This note is intended for policy-makers currently adjusting to the new aid modalities — such as officials and analysts in Ministries of Finance, Planning and Women's Affairs; women's rights advocates at domestic,

regional and international levels; and bilateral and multilateral development actors such as Resident Coordinators in the UN system.

Principles of the New Aid Agenda

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was developed as a follow-up to the Monterrey agreements³ and the G8 Summit. It calls for donors to increase aid and to adopt concrete actions that can be monitored while aid delivery and management is reformed. The Paris Declaration established aid effectiveness targets and progress indicators that were endorsed by member states at the September 2005 World Summit at the United Nations.

The Paris Declaration and its guidelines set out the principles for the new approach:

Ownership: Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies and coordinate development action.

Alignment: Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures, and link funding to a single framework of conditions and/or a manageable set of indicators derived from the national development strategy. It also entails expanding the shift from project/programme-based aid towards general or sectoral direct budget support in order to ensure holistic support for poverty reduction strategies and development priorities.

Harmonization: Donors make their actions more consistent with each other, more transparent and collectively effective. This includes rationalizing donor activities, increasing predictability, regulating conditionality and scaling up aid toward the levels required to achieve development goals.

Results: Managing and implementing aid with a focus on results.

Mutual Accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results through systems, procedures and capacities in donor and recipient countries that measure aid performance.

Central approaches to planning and aid delivery in the new aid architecture

Budget Support

Budget Support covers financial assistance as a contribution to the overall budget. Within this category, funds may be nominally accounted for against certain sectors, but there is no formal limitation on where funds may actually be spent.

Sector Wide Approach (SWAp)

Sector Wide Approaches involve donor support to the development of an entire sector in a given country, such as health, education or agriculture, rather than specific project support.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as a prerequisite for borrowing by its poorest and most indebted country clients. They are intended to outline the country's main problems relating to poverty and its strategy to overcome them. PRSPs are meant to be drafted by the recipient government through a national participatory process in consultation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Basket Funding

Basket Funding is a joint funding modality by several donors towards a programme, sector or budget support. It may entail agreement of donors on harmonized procedures.

Gender equality in a changing development assistance architecture – opportunities and risks

Women stand to benefit as much as any other social category from development assistance that supports a nationally-owned development strategy and accountability systems that can track progress. Predictable aid flows — one of the anticipated benefits of the new aid architecture — may also work to advance gender equality, encouraging investment in activities that promote gender equality in the long term but that may not have immediate short-term results. Gender-sensitive institutional change, for instance, takes time, as do changing attitudes and building public awareness. However, women will only benefit from the new aid architecture if gender equality is recognized as a key component of poverty reduction and national development. In addition, women need to be fully represented in decision-making, and equally included among the 'publics' served by bureaucracies.

The Paris Declaration and related guidelines, indicators and action plans focus on the

processes of building national ownership, harmonizing and aligning aid flows and assessing impact. They do not specify the *content* of development priorities. There is one exception: a commitment to carrying out environmental impact assessments (including their relation to health and social issues). But otherwise, no measures to promote gender equality or human rights standards are being proposed. While environmental sustainability has been recognized as a structural component of economic and human development, the centrality of gender equality to development effectiveness is not explicitly acknowledged through impact assessments or any other measures.

An overarching check on the content or direction of development spending in aid recipient countries does of course exist: all aid is expected to contribute to achieving the MDGs. Although the third Millennium Development Goal seeks to advance gender equality, governments have tended to focus on the most easily measurable associated target for this goal: closing the gender gap in education.⁴ Many other essential elements of the struggle for gender equality are omitted.

A closer look at the Paris Declaration's key pillars of aid effectiveness reveals several areas of concern and opportunities with regard to their implications for women's engagement and gender equality.

Ownership

Women have taken a keen interest in national development planning around the world, and have participated in debating national priorities where possible. But some studies show that national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and other planning documents can fail to incorporate gender equality goals adequately.⁵ National action plans for the advancement of women (now available in more than 120 countries) are still rarely fully integrated in national development plans, nor is adequate provision for implementing them made in national budgets.

[The stress placed on national ownership in the new aid relationships provides a tremendous opportunity for developing countries and donors alike to ensure that women take a meaningful role in articulating women's needs and seeking responses from policy-makers.](#)

Women's meaningful ownership of national development processes requires a concerted investment in women's analytical capacity, policy-makers' gender analysis skills and donors' support. In Uganda there was inadequate attention to women's priorities in the 1997 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), and in its first revision in 2000. This galvanized officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, as well as the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to mobilize women in civil society and colleagues at other ministries to form a PEAP Gender Team. With DFID support, the team prepared for the second PEAP revision in 2004 by analyzing the impact of gender inequalities on economic growth, and by including gender benchmarks in dialogue between the government, the World Bank and other donors engaged in direct budget support.⁶ It is sobering to note that it took seven years for a gender-sensitive national poverty strategy to emerge, even in a country with a diverse and robust domestic women's movement

and with supportive donor engagement. Assessments of the quality of national ownership that fail to determine the extent to which women's perspectives and priorities are reflected in national development plans will result in a gender-biased measure of ownership.

Alignment

Through direct budget support, donors aim to align aid flows with the government sectors that are reported on national budgets. There is sufficient evidence of the limited degree to which gender equality priorities are mainstreamed in national development plans (and consequently in budgets) to cause concern that alignment will mean that national priorities funded through direct budget and sector support will not adequately address gender equality priorities.

Alignment has so far been discussed mainly as it affects national-level aid flows. In a context where governments are increasingly moving towards decentralization to local levels, it is not clear how alignment will affect the flow of aid funds to the local level or what provisions are expected to ensure that inter-governmental fiscal transfers reflect aid funds. From a gender equality and poverty reduction perspective this is an important issue because the level of funding flows to local levels has a significant impact on the resources available for poor or socially-excluded groups. The indicators of aid effectiveness in the Paris Declaration do not measure the adequacy of the flow of resources to local levels. Not only are indicators needed on this, but to be gender sensitive they could include assessments of how effectively local government spending addresses women's needs.

As to the shift from project-based aid to sectoral budget support, to date most experience in sector-wide approaches has been in health and education. Some studies of SWAPs in health and education have been critical of the degree to which these have mainstreamed gender, with gender priorities still often added at the margins, not made part of institutional change strategies.⁷ Moreover, despite evidence over many years from gender analyses that women are profoundly affected by spending patterns in other sectors —

such as justice and law enforcement, public safety, rural and urban infrastructure, transport, etc. — there have been few efforts to track how spending in these areas affects different groups, including women. There is a risk that the alignment of aid with budgeted priorities may exacerbate spending deficits in areas that can have an impact on gender equality — areas that may otherwise have benefited from external financing.

Alignment also entails the identification of priority sectors in the national development plans for technical and institutional capacity building. The lynchpin of most direct budget support agreements is coordinated donor support to public sector reform — in effect, capacity-building in good public sector governance, in order to produce what the Paris Declaration calls ‘reliable country systems’ in financial management and procurement.

This offers an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that efforts to improve the efficiency of the public sector and to tackle corruption, also build incentives to make public sector actors more responsive to women, and to build in performance monitoring and standards that measure and reward efforts to address women’s needs.

There are not many examples of public sector reform or good governance efforts that fully integrate a gender equality perspective. Capacity-building efforts in this regard tend to be limited to affirmative action measures to hire more women public servants, or gender training for staff in National Women’s Machineries and gender focal points in other departments. However, there are some emerging examples of better practice in this regard. For instance, in 2004 the UNDP in Mozambique provided technical support on gender mainstreaming to the Public Sector Reform Unit. It backed up the Gender Coordination Group in providing gender mainstreaming advice during the government/donor Joint Review of the Public Sector Reform Programme.⁸ Similarly, partnerships between UNIFEM and Ministries of Finance in countries like India, Morocco, Senegal, Ecuador and Nepal around gender-responsive budgeting also mark a

qualitative shift to effectively mainstream gender in public sector budgeting processes.

Capacity-building needs to take a new form in two respects if it is to serve the purpose of promoting gender equality along with efficiency and probity:

1. Public sector reform efforts must build gender sensitivity into revised incentive systems, performance measures and monitoring systems.⁹
2. Capacity-building for bureaucracies dedicated to advancing gender equality (such as National Women’s Machineries) must attract significantly greater resources than it has to date, with a focus on skills-building in gender-sensitive macroeconomic analysis, so that these entities are in a better position to influence national planning processes.

Harmonization

The principle of harmonization commits donors to agree on common approaches for aid management and eliminating competing conditionalities. Considering the transaction costs that the diversity of donor approaches and reporting demands places on developing countries, harmonization is welcome. But for gender equality to survive as a central element of harmonized approaches, commitments to gender mainstreaming amongst donors must be robust. A number of recent evaluations of bilateral and multilateral agency performance in this arena suggest this is not the case.¹⁰ These evaluations list a range of problems, from an uneven grasp by agency staff of what ‘gender mainstreaming’ means for their work, to ‘policy evaporation’, where commitments on paper are never implemented, partly because of inadequate financing for gender equality work.¹¹ There is, in short, a danger that harmonization may further marginalize action on gender equality unless more rigorous accountability tools and measures of agency performance are applied to donors’

own record on promoting gender equality. Donor harmonization requires an unprecedented level of consensus between a variety of stakeholders in the development arena. Where commitment to an issue like gender equality is faltering or uneven, or where the issue arouses resistance, there is a risk that it will be sidelined in the interest of consensus. If donor harmonization is not to further marginalize action on gender equality, it is incumbent on donors at this time to renew and reassert their commitments to gender equality, and to do this not least through substantial funding commitments.

It may well be that it is under the rubric of 'harmonization' that the best opening exists for introducing gender equality assessments of aid effectiveness. The Paris Declaration calls for the development of harmonized approaches to strategic environmental assessments at the sector and national levels, and acknowledges that 'similar harmonization efforts are also needed on other cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and other thematic issues' (article 42). No indicator is yet assigned to track these assessments, but it is clear that this is an invitation to gender equality advocates to propose one.

Managing for results

The tracking of results-based aid at the country level is to be carried out through transparent and monitorable country performance assessment frameworks. These frameworks consist of sets of indicators that monitor progress against national development strategies and sector programmes. Proposed sources for these include nationally-adopted policy matrices or PRSP indicators.

The Paris Declaration identifies means for measuring public financial management, accounting and auditing systems, procurement systems, results frameworks, transparency and capacity. However, none of the assessment tools

referred to so far incorporate elements to monitor gender and social equity. In a recent document issued by the OECD-DAC secretariat on 3 August 2005, 'Baselines and suggested targets for the 12 Indicators of Progress'¹², the OECD acknowledged the limitations of the indicators for measuring 'reliable country systems' which were widely criticized for their lack of transparency, objectivity and reliability. This document stated: 'It was agreed that the World Bank would be asked to take account of concerns expressed by members on the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) methodology for assessing national development strategies and in particular on the need for the CDF assessment to consult partner countries. Members also suggested that the assessment criteria should give priority to such issues as (i) participation of stakeholders to national development strategies (NDS), (ii) linkages to the Millennium Development Goals and (iii) clear relationship between the NDS and medium term budgets'.

Aid-related country performance assessments:

The Paris Declaration makes reference to three sets of indicators that are to be used to operationalize the new aid modalities:

- Indicators that focus on the *processes* of building national ownership, harmonizing and aligning aid flows and assessing impact. They do not deal with the *content* of development priorities.
- Indicators that measure the presence of 'reliable country systems' such as the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) and Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) assessments. These indicators generally privilege economic and fiscal management considerations over social equity and gender equality considerations.
- Indicators to assess progress against the national development strategies and sector programmes that are negotiated nationally and developed in conjunction with national

development plans and reflect the competing priorities.

Acknowledgement of the limitations of the indicators that are currently in place opens opportunities to incorporate gender equality into the indicators of good performance.

Gender-sensitive indicators can be introduced in country policy matrices and PRS frameworks. These should be in line with commitments to CEDAW, the MDGs, the Beijing Platform for Action and other agreements to address social inequalities.

Sector-based results must go beyond maternal mortality rates and sex-disaggregated school enrolment ratios to measure the impact of government spending and revenue raising on male and female poverty, employment opportunities or political participation and many other areas. Moreover, gender-sensitive indicators can be introduced within budget frameworks, especially those following performance-based budgeting formats which are being adopted in many developing countries as part of their fiscal reform strategies. Performance-based budgeting provides opportunities to incorporate gender-sensitive indicators in budget performance indicators. These indicators are integrated into the budget cycle to better align spending decisions with government priorities. Gender equality advocates at the national and local levels can develop systems and capacities to track the extent to which national development strategies and sector programmes meet gender equality goals.

Mutual accountability

Mutual accountability is to be achieved through joint assessment missions by donors and government. The emphasis here is on the extent to which donors and aid recipients have remained focused on national spending priorities, and also on transparency and probity in the disbursement of funds by donors and the use of aid funds at the national level. The framework of mutual accountability will build trust between donors and aid recipients. It may well also offer openings for both parties to query the depth of commitment to gender equality in their partnership. For this to be

the case, accountability needs to be seen in a broader frame, as the accountability of public authorities, whether donors or developing country governments, not just to each other, but to their own societies.

Specific accountability indicators of the impact on gender equality of development spending at national and local levels are needed so that accountability institutions and civil society groups may scrutinize the quality and impact of spending decisions. Such indicators can be included in annual performance assessment frameworks for PRSPs and SWApS, in public expenditure tracking surveys, beneficiary incidence analysis and participatory service delivery surveys, to demonstrate the impact of aid on gender equality.

The extent to which such reporting results in citizen action to motivate improved performance from their governments depends of course not only upon the strength of domestic women's movements, but upon the quality of domestic accountability systems. National accountability systems in many developing countries can be relatively weak. They may also fail in particular to respond to gender-specific aspects of the misuse of power or public resources. Some accountability institutions may not consider gender equality to be their responsibility. Others may be inaccessible to women, so that legislatures, judiciaries, and public audit systems may never even be exposed to women's complaints about the ways they may be excluded by or discriminated against by power holders.¹³

In many contexts the fragility of domestic accountability systems has been compensated for by the creation of new opportunities for government actors to consult with civil society groups. This improves information exchange and, in principle, provides opportunities for ordinary people to articulate concerns about government actions. Indeed, the Paris Declaration commits partner countries to strengthen accountability by building parliamentary oversight roles and by ensuring broad-based participation in formulating and reviewing national development strategies. Strengthened parliamentary oversight is to be welcomed. To

ensure that any failings in addressing women's needs are addressed, parliamentary committees, MPs and opposition groups need capacity building in gender analysis. Broad-based participation in policy formulation and review is likewise welcome. However, participation often takes the form of one-off or *ad hoc* consultation, and this is no substitute for the development of more robust accountability institutions.

Consultations that do not give participants adequate information (particularly about official spending) or methods to register complaints and trigger investigations will simply produce disillusionment and disengagement. In addition, many civil society groups lack the analytical capacities and political weight to effectively raise critical issues. The revision of Mozambique's agricultural sector SWAp PROAGRI, for instance, involved national consultation with a range of groups, including women small-scale farmers. These women suffered from gender-specific constraints in accessing land, credit and markets, yet these were never raised during the consultations.¹⁴ This case shows that the onus cannot be on those with the least power to raise criticisms of the planning decisions of powerful actors.

For accountability systems to be gender sensitive, capacity building is needed to trigger investigations into gender-based exclusions and abuses. The mandates of accountability institutions need to be reviewed to incorporate gender equality as a key responsibility. Reporting systems must include sensitivity to women's priorities, and women citizens must have the means of demanding investigations of abuses of their rights or neglect of their needs.

Gender budget initiatives (GBIs) are one way of ensuring that accountability systems linked to public expenditure at various levels are more gender sensitive. At the macroeconomic policy-making level, the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme has used its analysis of the Public Expenditure Review and of the Medium Term

Expenditure Framework to link policies to actual spending commitments to women and the poor.¹⁵ This will enable them to expose gaps in matching stated priorities with substantial funding allocations. At the local level, GBIs in three states in India (Karnataka, West Bengal and Maharashtra) devised innovative approaches for holding local governments accountable to women's priorities. Successful examples were generated in terms of greater accountability of municipal councils and mayors to women's concerns as well as introduction of concrete changes in resources available to women at local levels. In Karnataka, elected local women leaders have advocated successfully with the Chief Accounts Officer of Mysore to double resource allocations to women's priorities and to reintroduce a women's health insurance scheme. In West Bengal, women local councilors are raising questions to the local government on proper recording of agreements reached at *panchayat* (local council) meetings and on how beneficiaries of special safety net programmes for those living below the poverty line are identified.

Integrating Gender Equality in Aid Effectiveness and Monitoring Systems

Integrating gender in aid effectiveness requires that the relevant tools, capacities and economic policy frameworks are gender responsive. Gender equality advocates have developed concrete tools and strategies for the alignment of national policy-making, implementation and monitoring with gender priorities.

On the *planning and diagnosis* side, experiences of incorporating a gender perspective in national development strategies expose gaps in gender analysis and show lessons for the integration of women's rights. National machineries for women, women's rights networks and bilateral and multi-lateral institutions have developed systems for gender-sensitive analyses of people's needs, and for gender audits of spending patterns to expose gaps in public sector responses to people's needs.¹⁶ Most important of course is the meaningful inclusion of women and associations promoting gender equality in policy debates.

These civil society associations need capacity-building in advocacy and in quality analyses of women's needs and gender-based inequalities.

On *implementation and monitoring*, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) presents a useful tool that responds to the requirements of gender-responsive aid effectiveness. Gender budget initiatives around the world have demonstrated how gender analysis and budget formulation can be aligned to achieve positive policy outcomes. It presents a methodology that examines inputs, activities, outputs and impacts of budget policies in their expenditure and revenue-raising measures. Country experiences demonstrate the potential application of gender budget analysis and tracking tools. GBIs have contributed to structural changes where Finance Ministries are instituting policies that ensure budgeting from a gender perspective, as is seen at the national level in Morocco, Egypt, India and Venezuela, and at the local level in India, Nepal, Ecuador and Bolivia.¹⁷ Transformation in the budgeting process in Morocco was demonstrated with the production of the first gender-sensitive Economic and Financial Report (EFR) which accompanies the 2006 Finance Bill. This EFR includes a gender report, which represents a baseline to measure progress in relation to budget and outcome indicators in four ministries (Finance, Health, Education and Agriculture).

Aid channeled through Direct Budget Support is usually assessed against the PRSP and an associated monitoring framework using poverty-related indicators.¹⁸ Therefore, the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators in the PRSP matrices is vital.

The cross-cutting nature of gender equality priorities can be a challenge to monitor, but this can be addressed by finding indicators that link different national commitments. In Central Asia, for instance, UNIFEM supported efforts to align PRSP and MDG indicators with indicators to track progress on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. This enabled national planning to be linked to comprehensive commitments to gender equality and women's rights.¹⁹

Indicators to track gender equality can be linked to government efforts to advance women's rights. Efforts at regional levels in this regard are noted from the UN Economic and Social Commissions in Latin America and Africa. The UN Economic Commission for Africa, for example, has developed Gender Indices that measure gender inequalities and identify gaps that require additional government investment.²⁰ Such efforts could be further developed for integration in the country assessment measures that determine national readiness for new aid relationships. In this way, progress in meeting commitments to build gender equality (eg CEDAW, etc.) can be one of the elements determining eligibility for new types and levels of aid.

The connection between *policies, spending commitments and actual implementation* will also be strengthened through the introduction of gender-sensitive performance measures and incentives in the public sector and also, in some cases, through better gender balance in service delivery staff. There is as yet limited experience in gender-sensitive public sector reform, but there are lessons to be learned from sector-specific innovations, such as the public health programme in northeastern Brazil. In this case a new cadre of front-line women staff were recruited and given incentives to be more responsive to the needs of women and children, resulting in a dramatic fall in the infant mortality rate.²¹ Other approaches to building the capacity of public sector institutions to implement national gender equality goals can include the integration of gender equality goals to the Memoranda of Understanding on sector-wide cooperation and Codes of Conduct.²²

Integrating gender in *accountability systems* requires the promotion of gender justice through legal reforms, tackling the forms of corruption that afflict women and, of course, capacity-building in civil society. Gender equality advocates have addressed the gender-specific failings of accountability systems for years, with perhaps the most significant progress occurring in the arena of law reform.

A forward-looking agenda

The debate on how the aid effectiveness agenda can be harnessed to speed up implementation of gender equality commitments has just begun. Bringing women at all levels — in capitals and communities, from government ministries and from civil society groups — into the discussion is critical to ensure that the goal of full national ownership and alignment with widely-shared national priorities can be secured. The UNIFEM-EU meeting identified a number of initial priorities.

Some immediate actions include:

Strengthening national capacity

Capacity-building initiatives must attend to capacity deficiencies with regard to gender equality — both the capacity of gender equality advocacy groups effectively to voice women's priorities in public decision-making, and the capacity of public institutions to respond adequately to women's needs. National Women's Machineries, along with civil society associations promoting gender equality, require capacity-building in macroeconomic analysis and effective advocacy. Public sector institutions require capacity-building that goes far beyond *ad hoc* gender training. Incentive systems, performance measures and internal accountability systems need to be reviewed to ensure that they support responsiveness to women's needs, and the relevance of gender equality to improved outcomes must be demonstrated to staff.

Sex-disaggregated data and targeted dissemination

High-quality gender analysis, and effective gender-sensitive capacity-building, require improved data on gender differences in social, economic and political status. The new aid modalities offer donors and governments an opportunity to invest seriously in measures to improve the capacity of national data collection systems to collect and disseminate sex-disaggregated data. Civil society organizations can complement this by offering comparative or even competing information on specific issues of concern, and may be particularly helpful in fleshing out quantitative data with qualitative material. Data must be disseminated in such a way as to be accessible to interested parties,

including those with limited literacy, and must be available in multi-stakeholder forums for debating policy choices — such as those established through SWAps, PRS processes and local government forums.

Gender-sensitive performance indicators

The absence of gender-responsive indicators for measuring the aid effectiveness agenda raises a question: are we measuring progress on achieving development priorities or simply measuring management processes, consistency of aid flow and economic performance? It is not too late to ensure the inclusion of aid performance indicators that specifically measure changes in gender equality, and it is essential to do this because of the simple fact that what gets measured tends to get done. Such indicators can be added to national policy matrices and to the Annual Progress Report for PRSPs. At the level of upstream aid modalities, the most promising opening for such an indicator at the moment is under the rubric of donor harmonization — where it has been agreed that harmonization efforts are needed on cross-cutting issues such as gender equality.

Supporting civil society's accountability function

Direct budget support needs to be complemented with independent funding for civil society in order to ensure its continued role and relative autonomy in monitoring public policy, promoting accountability and advocating for social justice and inclusion. Currently some basket funding arrangements do provide financing mechanisms for civil society groups —

for instance in Kenya a ‘gender and governance’ basket fund channels funds to civil society groups. But some observers feel that this constrains recipients of these funds to a service provider role, and also in effect excludes smaller and newer organizations.²³ Thus there is no substitute for independent access for civil society to external funding if it is to sustain and develop its oversight or watchdog function on the state. Institutional innovation to enable civil society groups to work as a more effective check on government actions is also needed. This would include measures to improve the access of civil society groups to normally inaccessible formal accountability systems. Measures such as local public hearings on development spending, public interest litigation and participation in parliamentary investigations, or the right to offer information and testimony, can considerably enhance the contribution of civil society to holding public authorities to account.²⁴

Clarifying donor and recipient countries’ accountability for advancing women’s rights

Donor and recipient countries have made domestic, regional and international commitments to promoting women’s rights. Accountability systems have to be refined to monitor their performance in advancing women’s rights, and a broader set of actors — in other words, beyond internal accountability systems — must be included in scrutinizing policy and spending decisions. If women’s political voice is not strong at the domestic level, regional and international mechanisms must invest in the capacity and political clout of domestic gender equality groups, and in the interim, promote accountability. Domestic accountability systems must be supported in developing a capacity to monitor gender equality in government actions, through revision of the mandates, incentives, operating and information systems, and accessibility to ordinary citizens of accountability institutions.

Notes

¹ Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness <http://www.aidharmonization.org/ah-overview/secondary-pages/editable?key=205>; Rome Declaration on Harmonization <http://www.aidharmonization.org/ah-overview/secondary-pages/why-RomeDeclaration>.

² The meeting, ‘*Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*’, gathered government representatives from developing and developed countries, including Ministries of Planning, Gender Equality and Finance, women’s organizations, regional organizations, and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies — including the OECD and the EC and UN agencies. Further information about the consultation and other resource materials can be found at http://www.unifem.org/news_events/event_detail.php?EventID=31.

³ Monterrey agreements on financing development were agreed upon in March 2002. The agreements aim to confront the challenges of financing for development required to achieve internationally agreed upon development goals (ie United Nations Millennium Development Goals). Further information on the Monterrey agreements can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/Monterrey_Consensus.htm.

⁴ Painter, G, 2004, ‘Gender, the Millennium Development Goals and Human Rights in the context of the 2005 Review Process’, Draft report for GAD Network, commissioned by DFID.

⁵ There is a considerable literature on this — for some examples, see Caroline Moser, 1989, ‘Gender Planning in the Third World’, *World Development* vol. 17, no. 11; Shirin M. Rai (ed), 2003, *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State? Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Kathleen Staudt (ed.), 1997, *Women, International Development, and Politics: The Bureaucratic Mire*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2nd Edition.

⁶ Mpagi, Sanyu Jane, 2005, ‘The National Development Policy Process — Opportunities for Engagement: A Case of Uganda’, paper prepared for the UNIFEM — EC consultation: *Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*, 9-11 November, Brussels, Belgium; Van Diesen, A. and J. Yates, 2005, ‘Gender Mainstreaming in the Context of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Budget Support — the Case of Uganda’, mimeo.

⁷ DAC Working Party on Gender Equality, 2001, ‘Report on the consultation workshop on gender equality in sector-wide approaches’, The Hague, 22-23 February,

