

# **Gender and the Post 2015 Framework**

## **Key messages from New York Multi-stakeholder Roundtable**

### **7th March 2013**

As we move toward the end date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), work towards a new post 2015 global architecture to frame development outcomes and track progress is already underway. Recognising the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York as a strategic moment to feed into these processes, a **multi-stakeholder roundtable** was organised, co-hosted by BRIDGE/Institute of Development Studies, Switzerland and South Africa. The roundtable brought together a diverse group of actors from country delegations, United Nations (UN) country missions, civil society, UN agencies and research institutions. The aims were to highlight the need to place gender equality and women's empowerment at the heart of a new post 2015 framework and to consider concrete ways to ensure commitments are translated into action. Key messages from the meeting were:

#### **A twin track approach to gender equality is needed**

It is vital that the new framework both recognises gender equality as a discrete issue and addresses the gender dimensions of other goals around issues such as climate change, agriculture, economic growth and food security. The new framework must therefore include:

#### **A stand-alone goal on gender equality**

Evidence indicates that the existence of MDG3 on gender equality has galvanised efforts towards the implementation of gender-aware policies and programmes, resulting in a greater focus on addressing women's and girls' needs and on reducing the gender gap, particularly in education and governance. It is imperative that the post 2015 framework continues to build on this momentum and includes a specific goal on gender equality. The new goal must promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as human rights and address the underlying *structural causes* of gender inequality.

Specific targets should focus on:

- Ending all forms of violence against women and girls
- Ensuring women and girls have the capacity to make choices, including about their sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Ensuring women have voice and influence – not only representation in governments but substantive decision-making power everywhere, from the household to the global level
- Ensuring women have access to decent work with equitable pay and good working conditions
- Addressing the additional burden of unpaid care work that often falls to women and girls
- Ensuring women have equal access to land and other assets
- Ensuring girls have equal access to both primary and secondary education
- Challenging social norms that create discrimination and perpetuate gender inequalities

#### **Effective integration of gender equality through all other goals**

It is not enough to 'add women' once policies and programmes have been designed. Rather, they must be gender-aware from the outset and include equal numbers of men and women in their development. At a minimum:

- Every post 2015 goal should include at least one relevant target on gender equality
- All goals should require sex and age disaggregated data, and should take disability into account

#### **The new framework must be grounded in human rights**

Goals and targets are only meaningful if they are underpinned by the fundamental recognition of women's, men's, girls' and boys' human rights. There are many existing international instruments and frameworks – including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. These must be reinforced through the new framework and through its implementation.

## **Clear gender equality indicators and robust evidence must inform the framework**

Vital work is needed now to build strong, representative indicators that are able to capture complex changes in women's, girls', men's and boys' lives at international and national levels. These indicators need to be developed in participatory ways and to reflect the realities of people who are often marginalised because of age, disability, sexual orientation and other factors. There is a need for both qualitative and quantitative evidence to measure progress against indicators. It is vital to capture nuanced information that goes beyond numbers and reflects – for example – changes in attitudes of women and men, shifts in social norms and the quality of women's participation in decision-making.

## **The post 2015 process is an opportunity to rethink the current development model**

This is a critical time to look back as well as forward. The current neo-liberal economic model that drives development policy is unsustainable and is largely premised on the low-paid labour of poor women. The inadequacies of the existing development model have become increasingly evident in recent years, with increasing gaps between rich and poor within developing countries, a growing food insecurity crisis in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, escalating climate change, a growing problem of violence against women and girls, and continued exploitation of women in the workplace. It is vital for governments to work with civil society, including the women's movement, to identify effective alternatives that empower women and girls and integrate gender equality concerns into a sustainable development approach that takes into account broader issues relating to trade, agriculture, food and climate change.

## **Sufficient funding and capacity must underpin commitments to gender equality**

Commitments to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment goals in the post 2015 framework can only be effectively realised if they are properly financially resourced. Donors and country governments must therefore engage in gender budgeting processes whereby sufficient money is earmarked for policies and programmes that will facilitate real, sustainable changes. In addition, institutions must ensure they build internal capacity and political will to support their gender equality commitments, and that clear accountability mechanisms are in place to assess progress.

## **Organisations represented at the roundtable included:**

**Civil society organisations and networks:** Action Aid, Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD/AFARD), BRIDGE, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), FEMNET Mali, Gender Links South Africa, Genre en Action, Handicap International, Girls not Brides, Help Age International, I am Woman Initiative, Internationale de l'Éducation Région Afrique (IERAF) - Ghana, Oxfam, Planning Alternatives for Change, Plan UK, Reso-Femmes International, Social-Eco Fund - Kazakhstan, Swiss Peace, Sustain US, UK Gender and Development Network, Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), Womankind Worldwide, World Lebanese Cultural Union, World YWCA.

**Governmental organisations:** Irish Aid, the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the UN, the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN, the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the New Zealand Commission for Gender Equality, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of South Africa, the Swedish Permanent Mission to the UN, the Swiss Permanent Mission to the UN, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, the Turkish Permanent Mission to the UN, the UK Department for International Development, the UK Permanent Mission to the UN.

**Multilateral organisations:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Gender Equality, 2015 High Level Panel Secretariat, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, the World Bank.

**Research institutions:** Columbian Law School, Institute of Development Studies, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), New York University, the Overseas Development Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland.