EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace

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EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equ

Given government preference for direct budget support and the existence of multiple mechanisms in the new aid modalities…gender equality advocates will need to address the shrinking spaces that produce profound inequalities for the realization of representation, agency, dialogue, access, accountability and visibility for gender equality work.[1]

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I. Introduction

The last five years have been marked by a number of milestones toward establishing a new aid architecture. From the Millennium Summit (2000) to the Monterrey Consensus (2002), the Marrakech Roundtable (2004), and most recently, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, countries have affirmed the need to improve aid effectiveness, increase volumes of aid, and ensure that increased levels of aid effectively address today's development challenges. Five overarching principles are identified in the Paris Declaration as guiding concepts for a stronger partnership between donor and recipient countries: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to development, peace and aid effectiveness. The European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC/ILO) have joined together in the EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace to support stronger action on gender equality and women's empowerment in national development processes and in cooperation programmes supported by the EC. The EC/UN Partnership programme will also include a focus on effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000 to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in responses to conflict and post-conflict situations.

The three-year programme (2007-2009) will be implemented in 12 countries: **Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname, and the Ukraine**.

II. Establishing an inextricable link between aid effectiveness and gender equality

Women will only benefit from the new aid architecture if gender equality is recognized as a key component of poverty reduction and national development.[2]

The EC/UN Partnership takes place in the context of convenings and commitments to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to strengthening development effectiveness. In 2005, UNIFEM and the EC collaborated to host *Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*. The commitments emanating from this gathering and from related initiatives – including Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee led meetings in **Nairobi** and **Dublin**, as well as UNIFEM led consultations in Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States and at sub-regional level in East, West and Southern Africa – have guided the development of this joint programme. The EC, UNIFEM, and ILO have also been partners in supporting capacity development at national and local level in Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), which offers an approach to strengthen the gender equality dimensions of national budget processes in the context of new aid modalities.

The opportunities and challenges for ensuring that a strong focus on aid effectiveness yields more effective action on gender equality and women's empowerment are significant. Two, in particular, guide this programme:

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[1] UNIFEM. *Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships: Experiences from Africa, Burundi Consultation Outcome Report*, July 2006. Available at: http://unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=80

[2] UNIFEM. Promoting *Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships: UNIFEM Discussion Paper*, March 2006. Available at: http://unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=64

- The EC has committed to channel 50 per cent of government-to-government assistance through national planning and budgeting frameworks. For the EC, general budget and sectoral budget support will increasingly become the preferred mode of aid delivery. The EC's 2007 Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development[3] points out that for new aid modalities to empower women in partner countries, gender equality must be a core value and goal at all levels of development cooperation.
- A High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness will be held in Ghana in late 2008 to review progress in implementing the principles of the Paris Declaration. The Forum offers an opportunity to review the extent to which the Paris Declaration principles are fostering implementation of commitments to gender equality and to advocate for a continued strengthening of this focus. The EC/UN Partnership programme will support analysis, advocacy and partnerships that build a case for a stronger focus on gender equality in the lead up to Ghana 2008 and beyond.

III. The EC/UN Partnership: Supporting National Action on Gender Equality

Evidence shows that gender equality has not fared well in the broader aid effectiveness agenda…[and] experience suggests that there is a high risk of gender equality being sidelined in the evolving Joint Assistance Strategies, and that understanding of the Paris Declaration is almost always gender blind.[4]

The programme will support the integration of gender equality as a key driver of development in the context of the aid effectiveness agenda. Recognizing the EC's leadership role in promoting new aid modalities, the programme will improve the integration of gender equality into EC programmes, and produce information and tools that support greater responsiveness to gender priorities in national development processes and in cooperation programmes. Working with a wide range of national partners in the 12 countries, the programme will:

- Produce mapping studies. The studies will gather data on the extent to which national priorities for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in national development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches, general budget support, multi-donor trust funds and consolidated appeals.
- Support national consultations on gender equality and aid effectiveness with diverse stakeholders – national women's machineries and other government partners, civil society organizations, women's groups and networks, EC delegations and bilateral and multilateral organizations. The consultations will build on the findings of the mapping studies to identify capacity needs, monitoring indicators, and partnerships that will be key to ensuring a strong gender equality dimension in new aid modalities, including in national development plans and budgets.
- Develop technical resource materials to support in-country and regional capacities to bring a stronger gender equality perspective to aid effectiveness, including through relevant thematic online discussion forums.
- Expand capacities of gender equality advocates and experts to promote greater responsiveness to gender equality in aid effectiveness processes, in the lead up to and following the 2008 Ghana High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

The programme hosts an inter-active website **(www.gendermatters.eu)** to provide a one-stop shop for information on gender equality and new aid modalities by making available the knowledge, resources and tools produced in countries worldwide on the topic. It will offer tutor-assisted learning modules, information resources, a discussion forum, an on-line newsletter and a contact database. An on-line helpdesk will provide technical assistance to partners involved in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in new aid modalities and national development plans.

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[3] COM(2007)100 – SEC(2007)332. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/COMM_PDF_COM_2007_0100_F_EN_ACTE.pdf DCD/DAC/GEN(2006)1. Available at:

[4] http://www.olis.oecd.org/olis/2006doc.nsf/8d00615172fd2a63c125685d005300b5/7e0e6321dffbea8ec1257196002988b0/$FILE/JT03211206.PDF

IV. For more information…

European Commission

The EC chairs the Programme Steering Committee and is represented by the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, (Unit E4 Governance, Security Human Rights and Gender, Unit F3, Central Management of Thematic Budget Lines), DG DEV (Unit DEV/B/3, Human Development, Social Cohesion and Employment) and DG RELEX (Unit RELEX/B/1, Human Rights and Democratisation) in Brussels. At the national level, EC delegations play a leading role in the programme in the 12 participating countries.

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United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

UNIFEM is the executing agency for programme activities at country-level through its sub-regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

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International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC/ILO)

The ITC, as the training arm of the ILO, make its practical approach to capacity development for gender mainstreaming available to programme partners and stakeholders. It manage the programme website, on-line learning modules and contribute to the global Gender Help Desk.

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