

United Nations
Division for the Advancement of Women
Expert Group Meeting on financing for gender equality
and the empowerment of women
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**FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY –
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EIGHTH COMMONWEALTH WOMEN’S
AFFAIRS MINISTERS MEETING**

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Background

The 8th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (8WAMM) was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 11-14 June 2007 under the theme 'Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy'. 8WAMM was preceded by the 8WAMM Partners' Forum from 8-10 June 2007. This brought together Commonwealth associations, civil society organisations and other partners in various workshops and created the opportunity for dialogue, sharing experiences and learning on the theme "Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy".

8WAMM was attended by delegations from 32 countries. It has been described as one of the best publicised Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings ever, which is important in keeping the profile of gender equality high on the political agenda. It provided an excellent platform for Ministers to dialogue and share experiences on financing for gender equality.

Meeting topics

The main issues that were discussed are summarized below:

(1) Tracking the Money for Gender Equality

The aim of this session was to outline and identify the core mechanisms that are available for financing gender equality for development and democracy, and to assess the extent to which gender dimensions are addressed within these mechanisms. It highlighted the role of aid, gender responsive budgets, trade and microfinance and other innovative financing mechanisms. Three papers were presented which were followed by Ministerial roundtables with specific recommendations and a plenary discussion.

The first paper, WAMM(07)9 was presented by Debbie Budlender. At the outset she highlighted 2005 as a landmark year for development in view of specific events – the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness, the Gleneagles G8 meeting, Commission on Africa but also the overlooking of the 'missing' of the target for MDG 3. She examined the implications for gender of the 'new' aid modalities, and defined the key and potential importance of Gender Responsive Budgets in the context of the Paris Declaration and its emphasis on country owned systems, the current performance oriented approach to budgets and multi year budgeting. Recommendations of the paper focused on the importance of Finance Ministries taking the lead in Gender Responsive Budgets, the importance of linking women's machineries with national development plans and bringing coherence between these plans and National Gender Plans, monitoring the new aid modalities for gender equality and enhancing capacities for gender responsive budgets.

The next paper WAMM(07) 11 was presented by Jayanti Viswanathan, on behalf of Ramesh Arunachalam, the author of the paper. The presentation outlined the history of microfinance and its original importance to women, but emphasized the shift of focus to finance, and the need for it to regain some of its gender sensitive and gender responsive focus. There was a very comprehensive assessment using a life cycle approach of the unmet needs of women for credit.

of social oppression, but the presentation clearly questioned whether financial access had clearly meant control of assets for women, enhanced access to domestic and other resources and increased power for decision making. It also analysed the various challenges that are existing for micro finance – increasing outreach, dealing with poverty, participation in decision-making and examined other innovative private sector financing mechanisms such as DFID's Financial Deepening Challenge Fund. The paper recommended the establishment of a Global Gender Challenge Fund, Demonstration of Pilots on Financing Gender Equality, Adopting Gender sensitive practices in microfinance and undertaking more research in developing gender sensitive instruments for microfinance.

The last paper WAMM(07) 10 presented by Mariama Williams contextualized the various sources for financing gender equality – individual, government, private sector and external sources. She pointed out that the definition of trade had broadened to include services, trade related intellectual property rights and pointed out that import liberalization and export promotion had impacts on the meso and micro levels of the economy. These aspects impacted on employment, price and incomes. It was critical to understand how trade and trade related measures can offset or mitigate funds available to finance gender equality and important to draw attention to processes for engendering various capacity building measures and aid for trade initiatives. Recommendations included working towards engendering trade negotiations, understanding what the nature of outcomes from trade are likely to be and conditions required to enhance market entry for women entrepreneurs and also developing a framework for engendering trade related capacity building.

There were 4 Ministerial roundtables each chaired by a Minister. The specific and detailed recommendations of the Roundtables are attached.

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reference to the agricultural sector; and (3) participation in decision-making and public office. It aimed to demonstrate the outcomes of investing in women in these areas because (i) education and literacy offer both direct and indirect benefits to the family/ household – including reduced fertility rates and good nutrition – and to national economies through contributions to growth; (ii) capacity enhancement and facilitation of women’s access to and control of productive resources directly benefit development effectiveness through increased incomes at household level that women control and hence national economic growth; and (iii) women’s participation in public office, when they achieve a critical mass, would lead to benefits in their tendency to fight for legislation and programmes that benefit women, children and families and to shy away from corruption, thus encouraging good governance.

(3) Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality

The meeting examined financing for HIV/AIDS interventions to highlight the implications for achieving gender equality. It assessed the extent to which gender dimensions are addressed in national plans and programmes and in donor policy. It also identified their impact on women and demonstrated the manner in which the prevalence of gender inequalities will prevent the achievement of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6.

Dr Robert Carr presented a paper on Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality (WAMM(07)14). It examined the implications for gender equality of financing conditionalities for HIV and AIDS interventions. It also provided Ministers concrete strategies for ensuring that development aid for HIV incorporates gender equality to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international development commitments. It augmented the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 with particular reference to aid conditionalities and financing for programmes designed to achieve gender equality as set out in Section 3.IV of that document on gender and HIV and AIDS (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004).

(4) Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy

This Session reviewed issues related to investing in democracy, peace, and development. It looked at women’s political participation focusing on representative democratic government and sustainable development. In addition, it also explored the impact of conflict on women and girls within the conflict affected regions of the Commonwealth.

A background paper on ‘Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy’ was presented by Dr. Vasu Gouden on behalf of author, Dr. Khabele Matlosa. The paper focused on five main thematic areas: Democracy; Development; Peace; Gender equality; and Investing in gender equality

The paper discussed all the five issues within the global context and the specific setting of Commonwealth member countries. More importantly, it inquired into the challenges for financing gender equality with a view to achieving meaningful democracy, sustainable socio-economic development and durable peace. It should be noted from the outset that achieving democracy, development and peace, and in the process ensuring gender equality, requires resources. Prudent

strategies have to be put in place for the mobilisation of the requisite resources (both externally and internally) for the promotion of democracy, development and peace. Additionally, deliberate strategies have to be incorporated for investing in gender equality. In other words, resources need to be mobilised aimed specifically at promoting gender equality so that women make a meaningful contribution in democratic governance, development promotion and peace-building.

Outcomes

As highlighted in the attached Communiqué, Ministers acknowledged that increased investment towards gender equality should be a priority in order to ensure sustained economic growth.

They endorsed the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the PoA which provides a powerful tool with gender-sensitive indicators to assist member countries assess progress on women's empowerment and gender equality. It uniquely seeks to harmonise existing M&E Frameworks for measuring gender equality such as the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ministers also tasked the Secretariat to establish the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security to lead the implementation of PoA commitments in this area.

The messages of 8WAMM will be presented the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in November 2007, Kampala, Uganda.

Some Commonwealth countries are amongst those with the highest infant and maternal mortality rates.

8. The Meeting discussed the following agenda items:

Tracking the Money for Gender Equality
National Women's Machineries (NWMs) and Public Sector: Role in Financing Gender Equality
Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality
Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy.

Tracking the Money for Gender Equality

9. There were four Ministerial Roundtables on Aid Effectiveness; Gender Responsive Budgets (GRBs); Microfinance and Innovative Financing for Gender Equality; and Gender and Trade. Ministers' conclusions from the Roundtables included:

the importance of developing indicators for tracking the money that is being allocated by governments and donors for gender equality and women's empowerment;

the need to develop and enhance capacity for the implementation of GRBs. Finance Ministers must take the lead in implementing GRBs working closely with NWMs. Gender Audits and impact assessment must be undertaken by respective ministries;

the need to build women's capacity to access markets, develop products and create an enabling environment for women to scale up their businesses to enter global markets. It is imperative that women participate in trade policy formulation and negotiations; and

the critical role of micro-finance and innovative financing for women's empowerment and they called for the greater involvement of women in managing micro-finance. Given that there are good practices across the Commonwealth, they emphasised the sharing of lessons learned.

National Women's Machineries and Public Sector: Role in Financing Gender Equality

10. Ministers stressed that strong NWMs are needed to achieve gender equality and underpin the achievement of wider social and economic goals. NWMs need authority and resources to be effective.

11. Strong NWMs are important now, more than ever, to ensure that national development plans and new aid modalities reflect gender equality. Enhanced responsibility and accountability in the public and private sectors will ensure improved and equitable socio-economic outcomes.

Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality

12. Gender inequalities lie at the heart of the HIV epidemic. Ministers called for strengthened national programmes on prevention, treatment, care and support, including ARV treatment, female condoms, microbicides, and research on HIV vaccine.

13. Stigma, cultural and gender stereotyping contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence and decreases their ability to protect themselves and negotiate safer sex. This calls for a co-ordinated multisectoral response.

14. The increased feminisation of HIV and AIDS requires enhanced and broader access to gender sensitive sexual and reproductive health services as well as dialogue between women and men, girls and boys.

15. Women and girls bear the disproportionate costs of care yet lack rights to resources such as access to land, finance and information. Ministers emphasised the need to implement policies and commitments to address gender inequality in HIV and AIDS funding and programming.

Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy

16. Ministers recognised the uneven and slow progress in achieving the minimum 30 per cent target of women in leadership and decision-making at all levels, and urged governments to provide and implement appropriate laws and policies through constitutional and legislative reforms to achieve gender balance.

17. They highlighted the critical importance of providing financing and voter education, in particular, for women, in order to promote and achieve inclusive democracy and good governance.

18. Acknowledging the negative consequences and impact of conflicts on women and girls, Ministers strongly urge governments to provide resources to address the challenges in conflict and post-conflict situations, including Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR).

19. Ministers noted that since women and girls bear the brunt of

Other Priority Issues

21. Ministers raised other issues of concern which hinder the full and equal participation of women and impede the socio-economic development of Commonwealth countries. These include:

Maternal mortality

Ministers noted that it is within the grasp of Commonwealth countries to make major strides to reduce persistently high maternal mortality rates.

Education of Girls

Ministers highlighted the critical importance in investing in girls' education.

Violence against women and girls

Ministers recognised that the on-going level of gender-based violence, most pronounced by male violence against women in Commonwealth countries, is both a shameful abuse of human rights and a significant barrier to positive economic and social outcomes.

Partnership with Men

Ministers noted that changing attitudes and mindsets, and working in partnership with men and boys is critical.

Dialogue with Partners

22. Ministers acknowledged the substantive contributions of Commonwealth intergovernmental bodies, associations and civil society organisations who met under the auspices of the Partners Forum from 8-10 June at the same venue.

23. Ministers further recognised that the challenge of prioritising gender equality can only be addressed effectively through coordinated action and genuine partnership with civil society. Ministers underscored the critical importance of empowering youth and providing resources to build their capacity to participate at all levels.

24. Ministers viewed partners as a valuable source of human, financial and technical capability. They reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate with partners to improve co-ordination.

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8WAMM
Tracking the Money for Gender Equality Session
IV
Ministerial Roundtables

OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Roundtable 1: Aid Effectiveness

Recommendations

1. Using a gender lens in monitoring the impact of the implementation of aid modalities is critical to aid and development effectiveness. It is necessary to track the money that is being used by donors and governments for gender equality and women's empowerment. For donors, the *GECD* DAC's mechanism (Gender Equality Marker) for reviewing aid sector wise can be used, and at national level budgets.
2. Strengthening capacity and resources of NWMs in developed and developing countries. This will enable effective participation in consultations on National Development Strategies and new aid modalities such as General Budget Support. 3. Ministries of Finance must be sensitized to gender issues.
4. At the High Level Review of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008, there should be a Round Table for Gender Equality and Women's empowerment. We should use the principles of the declaration in our work so that we can review the extent to which the implementation of the Paris declaration is being used towards the achievement of MDG 3.
5. Strengthen civil society pro-actively to enhance accountability

Roundtable 2: Gender Responsive Budgets

Participants observed that:

1. There is no recipe in GRBs, and countries clearly need to adapt according to country contexts and specificities.
2. GRB is a continuous process that cannot happen immediately, but needs to be built steadily over time.
3. Gender disaggregated data is available, but simply difficult to find. Stakeholders must be proactive in finding, improving and utilizing effectively.

Recommendations:

1. Finance Ministries must play a lead role in GRB, and Women's Ministry to play support role.

2. Create another fund for those who have been successful and are ready to graduate to establish small and medium enterprises.
3. Women should have greater role in management of these funds at all levels.
4. Commonwealth should lobby with other institutions to provide funding for the countries that need money to establish this fund.
5. Existing funding mechanism can be made more gender sensitive.
6. Capacity building of women: enterprise skill, confidence building, also in the capacity to take risk.
7. Involvement of women in designing product and delivery mechanisms should be ensured.
8. Documentation of good practices, experiences, models; creation of a database; publications as well as other forms of documentation
9. Establishment of an Exchange programme: Commonwealth can establish this and also lobby with other agencies to invest in this
10. Promoting Public - Private partnership in providing financial services to low-income women.
11. Need to distinguish between production loans from consumption and emergency loans (to finance family needs). Social protection strategies to be linked up with micro financing strategies.
12. Establishing a global gender innovation challenge fund to help micro-finance industry and private sector to innovate and develop models, methodologies, products for financial intermediation (?).