

**Women's Major Group Statement**  
**UNCSD Bureau Informal Dialogue with Major Groups**  
**27 March 2012**  
**United Nations ECOSOC Chamber, New York**

Good morning. I am Nicole Bidegain from Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

In our view the Rio+20 text is imbalanced across the three pillars of sustainable development. The social pillar seems to be only about poverty eradication – without sufficient attention to inequalities, including gender-based disparities or women's human rights. The economic pillar does not address the systemic issues such as the reform and coherence of international monetary, financial and trading systems. And the environmental pillar fails to tackle patterns of over-consumption and production.

Let me share a few proposals:

On financing:

The full realization of sustainable development requires massive public investments. The emphasis in the text on microcredit for women (para 102 alt bis c) and farmers (para 64 ter) is just too limited. There is mixed evidence on the success of microcredit as it can create a cycle of indebtedness. Women and small farmers need access to financial and other support services, which enable their economic empowerment and autonomy.

Also new resources must be generated through various means including progressive tax reforms, the financial transaction tax and increasing ODA. For example, it is possible to design tax structures in a way that reduces social discrimination and also can reduce the wage and income gaps between men and women.

Regarding ODA (para 112), we call for more grants rather than loans so not to increase the debt burden.

On trade (paras 124, pre 124 quat, 95):

Trade liberalization does not guarantee economic growth and even less fair exchange between countries. In order to contribute to gender equality and poverty eradication, countries need to diversify their productive structure to generate employment and tackle gender discrimination in the labour markets. We must also ensure that the WTO or any bilateral trade agreements do not supersede Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

Let me close with the hope that we can address the imbalance that I mentioned at the beginning. To this end, we hope to see progress in establishing a commission on financing for development within ECOSOC. This would strengthen the economic pillar, which is critical to achieving sustainable development and gender equality.

Thank you.