



# DAWN INFORMS

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

## The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: New aid modalities and their implications for gender equality

*Excerpts from a Report by Mariama Williams of DAWN/IGTN to the NGO Forum - Commonwealth Foundation, Eighth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, Kampala, Uganda, June, 10, 2007. The full report which links aid reform, trade liberalization/trade reform and emerging formalized coherence between the IFIs, and the World Trade Organization, can be accessed on the DAWN website*

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Since the 1980s, there have been widespread criticisms of structural adjustment programs, the premier form of multilateral development assistance flow. This combined with disenchantment with the lackluster performance of traditional bilateral aid flows led to the search for a new appealing framework for international developmental assistance. Such a framework, and its resulting operational mechanisms and processes, is now constituted under the auspice of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The Paris Declaration of 2005 is the umbrella that pulls together a number of elements in the process since the late 1990s into one consolidating new architecture on development financing. Implementation of the Paris Declaration is closely linked and attuned to the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which, grounded in the framework of poverty reduction, has become something of a blueprint or a sort of 'international development plan' in the present global political economy. The singular appeal of the Paris Declaration-MDG nexus is the focus on poverty reduction in the context of aid harmonization and alignment among donors and between donors and developing country partner governments.

Poverty reduction as the *sine qua non* of development, or as 'development', raises a number of fundamental issues, conceptual, operational and political. But the most pressing issues from the point of view of gender equality would seem to be threefold: 1) What are the likely impacts of the implementation of the Paris Declaration on the process of economic development, including the issues of democracy and participation? 2) How will it impact the financing of both targeted and non-targeted gender equality interventions designed to promote the overall economic and social empowerment of women, and, 3) What

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role can civil society play in ensuring that the implementation of the Paris Declaration serves the interests of gender equality, development and democracy?

In order to answer these questions it is important to first have a clear understanding of the conceptual and operational framework of the new aid architecture that is nested under the Paris Declaration. Secondly, it is necessary to examine the specific new modalities of aid, in the context of modalities of development, to see what opportunities, challenges and constraints they pose for the issues that are critical to gender equality and women's empowerment.

#### **The new aid architecture: Conceptual and operational frameworks**

The conceptual framework underpinning the Paris Declaration has developed over time, in response to a set of priorities that emerged out of the failing experience of the old aid regime. That aid regime, set in place since the early post war period, reached its zenith in the mid to late 1970s<sup>48</sup> and began a slow and sometimes acrimonious descent in the mid to late 1980s.<sup>49</sup> In 1991-92, ODA was \$60 billion and had reached its high water mark; after that it fell by 30%. Since the 2000s there have been consistent efforts to increase aid flow resulting in a record high flow of \$106.8 billion from OECD-DAC members in 2005 (OECD-DAC 'Final ODA data for 2005'). Unfortunately, much of the increase in ODA flow was due to financing the war on terror and security related issues from Afghanistan to Iraq as well as the tsunami in South East Asia. This rising aid flow has been associated with emerging emphasis on new aid elements and new architecture for aid.

The new regime had to fulfill at least four explicit needs or priority areas. First, the new aid architecture attempts to present a coherent framework for dealing with the issues of aid fragmentation and the high transactions costs of the old donor managed project-driven regime.<sup>50</sup> Second, the new architecture would seem to have mechanisms (or modalities) that seek to exert significant control and a high degree of accountability between donors and recipient (now partner) governments. This accountability process seems geared to avoid the unattractive confrontations surrounding the conditionalities of the previous era. These conditionalities, particularly those associated with the IMF and the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes, had generated a high level of resentment and contestations over national sovereignty, democracy and governance. More importantly, SAPs and the associated conditionalities resulted in high economic, ecological and social costs in developing countries (Klingelbeil et al, 2005:4).

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As a consequence, the new or revised control lever of the new aid modalities had to be such that it would enable donors to somewhat relax their grip on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) process, encourage their citizens out of the aid fatigue, which had come to engulf many taxpayers in some OECD countries, and

generate a sense of good faith among citizens and governments in partner countries. At the same time, donors needed a process to manage their fiduciary responsibility to their citizens by ensuring sufficient participation in the disbursement and monitoring of ODA flows.

Third, the new aid architecture had to enable the achievement of poverty reduction, within

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the context of the framework already in place for managing the international debt problems set in place in the international political economy since the emergence of the debt crisis. And, fourth it had to enable the growth and development, over time, of mechanisms that would allow for developing country economies to have maximum absorption of the projected new aid flows.

Needless to say, these needs and priorities engendered much academic and policy debates around the issue of the problematic relationship between official development assistance and development. In the policy and academic literature, this became part of the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of aid and the link between aid, growth and poverty. At the policy level, individual donor government such as the UK, on their own, began introducing and experimenting with different aid delivery mechanisms in their ODA strategies. So that by the end of the 1990s, there were clearly identifiable elements indicative of a shift towards a new aid paradigm.

### Conceptual framework

The conceptual foundation of the emerging aid regime was articulated in number of documents, frameworks and programs by the late 1990s. These foundational pillars include a 1996 OECD paper ('Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'), the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs, World Bank) and Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF, IMF) which under gird the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and the Millennium Declaration of 2000.

Ultimately, the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework

(CDF) was the conceptual frame for setting benchmarks for the development of policy dialogue which presently under girds the Paris Declaration. The PRSP eventually became the model for the operation of new multilateral aid flows. In 2000, the Millennium Summit, articulated the MDG goals and set targets for achieving the eight MDG goals. Then in 2001, the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the United States led to the introduction of another kind of element into the framework: security as a key variable in development financing (as distinct from the broader approach of human security under discussion in the United Nations in the 1990s). Building on these different elements, the high level forum on aid (the Rome Forum, 2003) crafted and combined these elements into the recipe for a new aid architecture. This was further concretized by the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (February 2004). These principles and action strategies were affirmed and packaged into the Paris 2005 Declaration on aid effectiveness. The Paris Declaration cemented the hitherto disparate elements and multi-florous consensuses (from the Millennium Declaration, to the Monterrey Consensus, to the Rome Forum) under one clearly defined architecture based on the principles of harmonization and alignment-in search of aid effectiveness and poverty reduction.

According to Tan (2005), the conceptual underpinnings of the new aid architecture rest on three planks: 1) poverty reduction, 2) country ownership of development priorities and 3) strategies and participation of stakeholders in national planning processes. Poverty reduction underscores the new development ethos of the International

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Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the MDGs. This had been in place through the poverty reduction strategy papers in highly indebted developing countries (HIPC) as well as in national poverty reduction programs in other developed countries. Today, the focus is on achieving the MDG targets by 2015

The Paris Declaration, itself, is based on principles, commitments, indicators and associated targets, mechanisms and instruments to improve aid effectiveness as well as criteria to promote harmonization and alignment in the context of developing country partners exercising ownership of national development policies and strategies. Harmonization and alignment are linked to programmatic approaches which are result-based. Harmonization, in principle, is expected to weigh more heavily among donors (multilateral, bilateral development institutions including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). These donors are committed to coordinate and harmonise their programs and policies in order to improve the effectiveness of development assistance towards meeting the MDG goals. Donors are also expected to seek to 'simplify and harmonise requirements, documentation, reviews and reporting, ...and streamline conditionalities'. Eventually, overtime there will also occur harmonization between 'donors' and 'partners' around public financial management,<sup>10</sup> fiscal discipline and the efficient allocation of resources to priority areas, environmental policies and procedures.

**A**lignment is in reference to the coordination of donor policies and procedures with national development priorities and systems including budget,

program and project planning cycles, public expenditure and financial management systems. This is all meant to occur within the context of demand-driven technical cooperation and 'proper macroeconomic management'.

Country ownership of development is an attempt to deal with the criticisms of the structural adjustment programme era in which aid flows and conditionalities imposed donors' and IFIs' priorities on developing countries without regard for those countries' nationally determined social and development priorities. Strategies for the participation of stakeholders is meant to take care of two birds in one step: 1) it seeks to address the issue of the democratic deficit in the management of aid flows, and, 2) it also cemented a process for donors to safeguard their vested interests in the formulation and implementation of wide ranging domestic policies that impacted directly and indirectly the aid stream.

In order for the new architecture to work well it needed an operational framework with strategies, tactics and a versatile tool kit that will ensure the successful achievement of the different priorities and needs articulated within the scope of the conceptual framework.

### Operational framework

**T**he operational framework of the aid effectiveness regime consists of mechanisms and instruments designed to improve effectiveness as well as strategies and tactics to promote harmonization and alignment. The blueprint for the strategic interventions enabled in the operational framework was set in the late 1990s with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit (PRSC). The strategies are seemingly twofold: 1)

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scale up aid and 2) support the absorption of increase aid flows in support of poverty alleviation. Under the new framework of harmonization and alignment for aid effectiveness, other tactical interventions include a process towards the registration of official development assistance (ODA), increasing decentralization of decision-making at the local offices of donor, that would be more sensitized to local conditions, and increase harmonization of procurement rules. However, the main tool kit consists of a mix of traditional approaches, primarily project-based tied aid, that are expected to be progressively phased out, and a set of tools focused on programmatic and budget-based untied support, the harbinger of a class of so-called new aid modalities.

#### New modalities

The new modalities of aid can be divided into two broad strands: a) programme aid (for example, food aid) and, b) financial programme aid which includes direct budget support (DBS) and balance of payment support such as debt relief and import support (IDD report 2005). Today, according to Tan (2005), there are at least five 'new' modalities associated with the management of development financing. These aid modalities are: General budget support (GBS includes PRSCs), 2) sector-wide approach (SWAPs), 3) multilateralised policy assessment-based financing, such as PRSPs, 4) Community Driven Development projects (CDD) and 5) Output-based Aid (OBA). Modalities 1, 2 and 3 are strongly associated with programme aid or program lending. Tan argues that these modalities are indicative of the trend towards

'policy coherence' at both the donor and country level. At the donor level the aim is to avoid the duplication of funded projects and programs as well as minimize transactions costs for partner countries. At the country level, the aim is to engender cross-sectoral assessments.

**W**hat is new in the current framework is the linking of individual project support within the framework of policy dialogue-based programmatic policy reform. Budget support has been used in development assistance for over twenty years. They were part and parcel of SAPs but have become more pervasive in bilateral aid flow, especially those originating from the European Union.

Modalities 4 and 5 are focused on reinforcing the process of privatisation and de-centralisation, especially with regard to the provision of essential public services (Tan 2005).

There is some confusion about the newness of the modalities. Some modalities such as sector-wide and social funds type mechanisms have been in use in development aid

financing for some time now, possibly starting with early 1990s and before that<sup>10</sup>. What is new in the current framework is the linking of individual project support within the framework of policy dialogue-based programmatic policy reform. Budget support has been used in development assistance for over twenty years. They were part and parcel of SAPs but have become more pervasive in bilateral aid flow, especially those originating from the European Union. Community development and output-based assessments are mechanisms that facilitate the by-passing of central government. Funds are transferred directly to community groups, the private sector and international consortia.

Today, these and other newly emerging modalities co-exist with the dominant traditional forms of project aid. As noted by many aid watchers, there is a systematic tendency to complement project aid with allocated budget aid or programme aid and global budget aid, all in the context of promoting good governance and good macroeconomic fundamentals along the lines of the neo-liberal agenda and structural

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adjustment framework. This should not be surprising as many of these instruments have their roots in the international debt management strategies utilized by Paris Club, the IMF and the Bank, especially under the HIPC initiative of 1996. Starting with the PRSP/PRSC, which streamlined and strengthened the use of conditionality, most of the so-called new modalities have the seal of approval of the IMF, and the indelible fingerprint of the World Bank.

While these 'new' aid modalities and the framework in which they are operationalised are focusing on increasing the effectiveness of aid, nonetheless they must interact with and influence the overall context of economic development and the development trajectories of poor, low and middle income developing countries. As specific mechanisms and approaches for disbursing aid, they individually and jointly impact developmental priorities and choices and hence have implications for the long term growth dynamics of developing countries. Independent of their technical applications, these mechanisms are not technically neutral as they are deployed in a complex framework that is suffused with the underlying politics of development including the issues of redefinition of development, development priorities and development modalities. As such, these aid modalities can be systematically characterized and assessed in terms of their potential impacts on economic and social development, gender equality and women's empowerment, democracy and participation.

The rest of this paper considers the impacts of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's empowerment.

### New aid modalities: Gender and social equality considerations

It cannot be automatically assumed that donors' concerns with good governance and financial accountability will have a benign impact on social goods and gender equality. In fact, the new modalities, in and of themselves, are not gender-neutral or socially friendly, and have to be en-gendered. There are two specific issues here. The first is the extent to which new modalities enable the provision of affordable and good quality public services in the forms of essential services such as health, education, access to water, energy and sanitation. These issues directly impact on issue of women's social and economic empowerment and have gender equality impacts. Then there is the issue of targeted gender equality interventions and the extent to which the new modalities can be used to increase financing of these interventions.

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Tan (2005) provides quite a thorough assessment of the impacts of new aid modalities on essential public services. First, she notes the high dependence on public services financing on aid flows in poor and low income countries." Secondly, she argues that aid modalities such as GBS, SWAPs, community-driven development and output-based assessment have contradictory effects on the delivery of public services to the poor. In the first case, the content of policy dialogue underlying both mechanisms is focused on privatization of services such as water and health care. These measures are expected to improve and increase the delivery of health care to the poor. However, the historical experience with such efforts under SAPs shows that they tend to result in the imposition of cost recovery or user fees for long terms sustainability which may make such service

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less available to the poor. The World Bank 2003 notes the 'failure of markets in providing public services (WDR 2003). Secondly, these mechanisms tend to preclude comprehensive national strategy for universal access as well as prevent cross-sectoral subsidy as would be in the case in national budgets.

**G**iven the central importance of access to public services for women's health and morbidity as well as their social reproduction work, it is clear that gender advocates need to be proactive about developing assessment tools and instruments for increasing the gender-sensitive development outcomes in the framework of the new harmonization regime.

It is clear that there are inherent dangers of shrinking space and under-represented voices in the consolidation of aid through mechanisms of direct general budget support and SWAPs. But there is also scope for creatively introducing mechanisms to promote gender equality outcomes. These range from ensuring gender machinery and, or gender expertise that are available in adviserial and monitoring capacity to the various harmonization implementation vehicles in countries. There should also be advocacy on sector-wide allocation for targeted gender equality interventions. Many such examples may arise in other Commonwealth countries.

Gender advocates in Kenya, a country where the government has a preference for direct budget support, have argued that there is a shrinking of the spaces for gender equality. Thus, gender advocates in Kenya, as elsewhere in the Commonwealth, will need to work hard to ensure the voice, representation

and continued visibility of gender equality work in the various national instruments created to foster the implementation of the new aid regime. For example, in Kenya a Harmonization, Alignment and Coordination (HAC) group comprising donors and the government was created to produce a Joint Assistance Strategy. The JAS could potentially replace individual agencies, including the national women's machinery, thereby leading to a reduction of the voice of women in the formulation of aid strategies and plans. As a result, gender advocates must work proactively to ensure the attachment of a gender adviser to the HAC. This example from Kenya is likely to be repeated in many other countries. Elsewhere, in the Commonwealth, gender advocates have argued for gender equality issues to be maintained through basket funds such as a 'gender governance programme basket fund' (also in Kenya). In Ghana, a working group, the Gender Equality Standing Team is to spearhead the efforts to harmonize and approach to gender equality (UNIFEM 2006a).

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#### **Community Driven Development**

In the case of Community Driven Development (CDD), which are really sophisticated forms of social funds, pervasive under SAPs in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s, they can in fact undermine national budget planning. This is

because CDD would prevent the state from exercising a redistribution policy (Tan 2005). In principle, CDD type activities shift aid to local government, the community and the private sectors. But, it may also block cross-sectoral subsidy in national budgetary planning. The advantage is that with funds

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provided directly to communities and private organisations and corporations, ideally, citizens get to decide on what to fund. But the tension here is in terms of inadequate or no gender sensitization to ensure that interventions are targeted to promote gender equality and to support social reproduction and not just enhance market activities.

CDD poses two important limitations for sustainable services delivery to the poor:

- First, it can undermine the capacity of the state to plan and implement long term program service delivery,
- Second, it is generally associated with the imposition of cost recovery and user fees in order to ensure medium and long-term sustainability when the initial sources of foreign aid runs out.
- Third, there is no guarantee of universal coverage as would be with national planning and budgetary process. The World Bank, itself has recognized the hidden dangers of CDD. It warns that there are 'dangers associated with direct financing of frontline service providers and by-passing the central government, as partner governmental policy makers lose control of the expenditure. The OED of the World Bank also noted that in 2002, only 43% of social funds were sustainable. Most were over reliant on aid.

### Output-Based Aid

Like its sister modalities, GBS, SWAPs, CDD, output-based aid (OBA) financing also has advantages and draw-backs in terms of social and gender equality. In general, OBA, is the preferred mechanisms in cases of large

infrastructural projects, schools, water delivery, road and electricity. It differs from traditional project aid in that funds are now disbursed on the completion of project (in the context of performance criteria). OBA presents a number of social equity issues. The services are generally delivered outside of the ambit of government so there is no guarantee of consistency of service, quality of service and no provision for universal access. So, like

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CDD, OBA raises similar issues of sustainability and imposition of cost recovery fee which may have differential impact on men and women and different classes. So though OBA can help to contribute to the up scaling of public infrastructure and increased public investment, it is difficult to assess how it actual does

this.

In general, OBA supported-type activities tend to require large scale financing and actors with deep pockets to undertake the needed upfront financing of these activities. The disbursement lag between expenditures on OBA type activities may make such activities prohibitive to small scale producers/vendors.<sup>3</sup> This may engender a process of sub contracting to large firms (likely foreign firms), which may displace local service suppliers and/or block the growth of such providers in the long run.<sup>4</sup> This may be especially the case for women-owned small and micro businesses. With the right conditions, and with support for capitalization, training and upgrading, and the possibility of participating in joint venture opportunities, local micro and small service providers could evolve into capable service providers in the

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local economy. But unless the framework of OBAs explicitly includes such gender and other consideration this will not likely occur.

In sum, as noted in the introduction to this section, the new modalities are not inherently social or gender equality friendly. General budget support, sector-wide approaches are quite aggregative and will require creative forms of intervention in order to make them gender-sensitive and empowering tools for gender equality and women's empowerment. In theory, modalities such as community driven development (CDD) and output-based assessment (OBA) are more likely to be sensitive and open to the integration of social and gender equality concerns. But even this cannot be readily assumed. Hence, gender equality considerations must be explicitly built into OBA and CDD type activities. Such activities should include targeted gender equality interventions such as the provision of goods, services and infrastructure, that improve outcomes for women and girls. These include MDG3 specific programs dedicated to gender mainstreaming activities such as gender training and gender focal points in sector ministries. Examples of non-targeted gender equality interventions are the construction of feeder and rural roads, health clinics and water services."

Embedding gender and social considerations into the new aid modalities and making sure that these become critical cornerstones in thinking about aid effectiveness and aid absorption will require highly organized advocacy and lobbying on the part of

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gender advocates and civil society. This advocacy has to be both deeply sectoral (issue) and cross-sectoral and grounded in wider struggle to promote and deepen the participation of the poor and marginalised.

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# Also see notated references on pp 29-30 



# Human Rights Council: Opportunity to introduce feminist perspective to human rights agenda

Angela Collet<sup>1</sup>

Since March, DAWN has been following the Human Rights Council (HRC) more systematically. The Council has met in six sessions since it was established in March 2006. DAWN and other civil society organizations committed to integrating gender related matters within the Human Rights agenda<sup>2</sup> have been advocating to ensure that women's human rights and a gender perspective are regularly integrated throughout the Council's work.

## *From Commission of Human Rights to Human Rights Council: One-year review process*

UN General Assembly resolution 60/251 established the Human Rights Council, at a higher level within the UN structure than the former Commission (the Council is under the UN General Assembly; the Commission was under the ECOSOC). Although most of the UN member states voted for the HRC resolution<sup>3</sup>, the fact that key countries, such as the United States, voted against the adoption of the Council still represents a challenge in terms of establishing the Council as a fully legitimate international sphere of democratic debate and negotiation.

## *Institution building process*

On June 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 am on the very last day of the 5<sup>th</sup>

session, the HRC institution building "package" (HRC Res. 5/1) was approved by the Council, following much discussion and negotiation. As a result of an intense advocacy of various NGOs, the final text included a clear call for guaranteeing gender balance in the diverse mechanisms of the Council e.g. in the selection and appointment of mandate-holders, in elections and in the constitution of working groups (on Situations and Communication) and the introduction of a "gender perspective" as one of the Principals of the Council's agenda.

## *Universal Periodic Review (UPR)*

GA Res. 60/251, also decided that the Council shall "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each state of its human rights obligations and commitments (...)". The UPR process has already started. The countries and criteria were selected and defined during the first part of the 6<sup>th</sup> session (October, 2007) and the first UPR sessions will take place in 2008. Given that Resolution 5/1 calls for an active engagement of NGOs in the UPR mechanism - it states that the UPR shall "ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations

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<sup>1</sup> DTI 2003, research assistant at the Sexuality Policy Watch secretariat, DAWN partner for the follow up of the Human Rights Council.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these NGOs are: ARC-International/Switzerland-Canada; Center for Women's Global Leadership; International Alliance of Women; Sexual Rights Initiative (integrated by Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action/CREA, India; INCREASE/Nigeria; Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice/Netherlands; Positive Women's Network/South Africa; and Mulabi Argentina) Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD); Human Rights Watch, Youth Coalition; International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP), among others.

<sup>3</sup> The resolution 60/251 was adopted by the vote of 170 countries in favour; 4 against (United States, Israel, Marshall Islands and Palau); and 3 abstentions (Venezuela, Belarus and Iran).

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and national human rights institutions" - national NGOs should seize this opportunity to bring to light their concerns about national public policies and local realities, by sending reports to the Council, assessing the situation of their countries. For the list of countries and timetable for their UPR sessions, see website: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/>

### ***Special procedures: Opportunities to introduce feminist analysis in the council's work...***

A key mechanism of the HRC is the system of 'special procedures', the name given to the mechanisms established by the Commission on Human Rights and assumed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues. At the present time, there are 28 thematic mandates, which include crucial areas for gender justice and equality. Nevertheless, by scanning the reports presented this year in the HRC through a "gender lens", it's clear that only a few substantively include a gender analysis. The great majority still lack an assessment of how gender inequalities affect the issues in question. Another problem that can be observed by reading these reports, is that, most of the time women are seen and dealt with through a rather simplistic "victimization" approach, which doesn't properly take into account the complexity and specificities of their local settings, nor the role of agency, autonomy and empowerment in their lives and actions.

### ***Panel mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council***

Given the clear lack of understanding about gender and women's human rights (their

differences and possible application within the HRC work), a group of NGOs wrote a letter to Mr. Costea, President of the HRC, requesting, among other things, that the Council hold two substantive thematic discussions, one on gender perspective and another on the human rights of women. It was with great appreciation that we learned that the President had decided to schedule a panel discussion about gender for the first part of the sixth session, which took place in October, 2007. As a result of a coordinated effort of diverse NGOs and other actors similarly engaged in introducing this topic in the work of the Council (including some states, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the HRC President's office) the Council held a very productive and interactive Panel on

*'Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Work of the Human Rights Council, on September 20 and 21.*

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**T**he discussion aimed to create space for the newly formed Human Rights Council to reflect on lessons learned from the former commission and discuss ways of integrating gender throughout its work. It was the first time the Council had held a panel of this kind (with an open discussion

format and having an NGO representative as part of the panel). Charlotte Bunch, director of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, represented well the ideas and positions of the NGO group. Civil society organizations also made their voices heard by reading statements during the general debate. To accommodate the large number of states and civil society organizations interested in contributing to the debate, the panel, which was initially scheduled to last 3 hours (3-6pm on September 20,) was extended to the following morning (10am-1pm, September 21).

The panel session managed to sustain a high



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level discussion, from beginning to end. The panelists were very clear in their expositions and managed to lay a good foundation for the discussion that followed. The moderator, Maria Nzomo (Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office/Geneva), introduced the discussion by stating that despite the fact that gender and gender mainstreaming are "old" concepts, sometimes they are still misunderstood. She highlighted that "gender" was not just about "women", but about social relations between men and women, boys and girls, indeed, the whole of humanity. She called on the Council, in this present early stage of developing its work, to integrate gender concerns and the rights of all in a manner that is equitable and just. (UN Press release - Human Rights Council - Sept 20th 2007).

*Radhika Coomaraswamy*, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, called attention to pursuing a balance between the need to mainstreaming gender issues into the whole system and keeping the focus on specific issues. She pointed out violence against women as a core theme related to gender but, at the same time, reminded us of other areas of concern which should also be brought into the picture, such as women and girls in armed conflict situations; improved economic and social rights of women; and greater recognition of reproductive rights. (Ibid)

*Kyungwha Kang*, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that integrating women's rights and the gender dimension into the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was a key priority for the High Commissioner and the OHCHR. For her, this was particularly important as the

Council had finalized its institution-building exercise and embarked upon its next phase with much promise for strengthening the universality of human rights. With a new unit on women's rights and gender issues, OHCHR greatly looked forward to assisting in this endeavour. (ibid)

*Miloon Kothari*, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, stressed that applying gender perspectives did not simply imply focusing on women and girls, but, rather, to particularly examine situations where women, girls, men or boys experienced specific issues with respect to the enjoyment of their human rights on the basis of gender. He said that in working on his own mandate, he had found that a gender perspective was critical to a comprehensive understanding of the right to adequate housing and land. (ibid)

**C**harlotte Bunch, recalled that this discussion was not an academic exercise, that gender integration into human rights work could have a significant impact on the life and death of women and girls everyday in every part of the world. Moreover, she said that the effort to achieve universal access to the enjoyment of human rights by all required a consideration of the diversity of experiences that make up our lives. She highlighted that the Human Rights Council, as the United Nations' premier human rights body, was in an unparalleled position to address this both by building on the previous success of addressing gender and women's experience within the Commission, and by continuing to rectify a history of shortcomings regarding gender as well. (ibid)

*Charlotte Bunch, recalled that this discussion was not an academic exercise, that gender integration into human rights work could have a significant impact on the life and death of women and girls everyday in every part of the world.*

During the general debate, which followed the

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Panel, states, NGOs and observers made numerous remarks. The great majority welcomed the discussion. Some of the questions related to how Special Procedures might systematize gender perspectives in their work and/or how progress in gender equality issues might be monitored in the reporting for the Universal Periodic Review process. DAWN and others partner NGOs<sup>4</sup>, delivered a statement (read by Joana Chagas, DTI 2003, who attended the 6<sup>th</sup> session as a representative of the Youth Coalition) which welcomed the references made by the panelists and states to an intersectional approach, implying that a gender perspective also requires examining the intersection of multiple forms of inequalities and discrimination.

#### **Chilean Resolution**

Another highlight of the last session was the discussion around a resolution tabled by Chile - entitled *Integrating the human rights of women and a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council and throughout the United Nations system*. NGOs have been playing active role in the discussions around this resolution, which will be discussed during the second part of the 6<sup>th</sup> session, to take place from December 10-14, 2007.

#### **Human Rights Council: Opportunities to be further explored...**

It is still too soon to say what will happen with the Council. On the one hand, the resistance and objection of the U.S. to the work of the Council continues, and was clearly expressed recently with the public announcement of the U.S. decision to reduce its financial contribution to the HRC. On the other hand,

we have those state and non-state actors who strongly believe that, despite its heavy and complex agenda, the Council can and should work towards increasing its legitimacy as an international sphere of democratic debate and negotiation, as well as a mechanism capable of providing a bridge between international multilateral discussions and national public policies/local realities.

While we all know that the success of the Council's work depends on various factors - the global economic and geo-political scenario, the ongoing UN reform, the up coming U.S. elections, among others - there are reasons to

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believe that we should be positive and carry on the work. As far as I can see, there are at least three dimensions of the HRC which deserve our continued attention, effort and energy. One is that the HRC constitutes a good framework for applying an intersectional approach. It is an opportunity to look at how the diverse dimensions of human development ...

expressed by diverse themes carried out in the Human Rights agenda... are present, in an interlinked manner, in the daily life of people, and, therefore, require analysis and assessment that takes in such intersectionalities. This also presents an opportunity for NGOs and networks like DAWN and others which have been for a long time putting forward such approach, to contribute to the work of the Council - for instance, by looking at how gender related matters are present, or not, in the work and analysis of the various thematic and country specific HRC mandate holders.

Secondly, as highlighted by Radhika Coomaraswamy and other panelists and participants of the September 20 panel, "it is time to move beyond promises and turn to

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<sup>4</sup>Action Canada for Population and Development, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, and the International Alliance of Women.



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action"! The Council offers good mechanisms to meet this goal, such as the UPR (given its clear objective of "the improvement of the human rights situation on the ground") and the work of the special rapporteurs who, as part of their mandates, make country visits with the objective of bringing to the Council a proper analysis, rooted in the daily lives of people on the ground.

Finally, given that in previous UN processes, such as the UN Millennium Summit, there was a clear backlash in terms of NGO participation in the UN, the fact that the Human Rights Council has, so far, engaged in creating appropriate mechanisms for the effective contribution of NGOs to their work, we should acknowledge, further explore and do our best to retain this space!

Further information on the HRC agenda and the work of our partner NGOs can be found in the following websites:

ACPD -

<http://www.acpd.ca/acpd.cfm/en/section/hrc>

ARC International - <http://www.arc-international.net/>

CWGL - <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu>

IWRAW: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org>

CREA:

<http://web.creaworld.org/publiceducation.asp#reframing>

Human Rights Watch:

[http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=united\\_nations\\_hrc](http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=united_nations_hrc)

Youth Coalition:

<http://www.youthcoalition.org/>

*...Intervention by Joana Chagas, DTI graduate on behalf of Action Canada for Population and Development, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, DAWN, and the International Alliance of Women, Item 8, September 20, 2007*

It is my honor to deliver this intervention on behalf of Action Canada for Population and Development, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, the International Alliance of Women and a coalition of organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, working on gender issues.

*Finally, given that in previous UN processes, such as the UN Millennium Summit, there was a clear backlash in terms of NGO participation in the UN, the fact that the Human Rights Council has, so far, engaged in creating appropriate mechanisms for the effective contribution of NGOs to their work, we should acknowledge, further explore and do our best to retain this space!*

We welcome the realization of this panel and particularly the fact that it includes a representative from civil society, the distinguished feminist activist, Ms. Charlotte Bunch. Such panels, including civil society participation, set a valuable precedent for the future work of the Council.

We also appreciate the emphasis given by Mr. Miloon Kothari to the need for integrating a gender perspective in the work of the Special Procedures, and his personal effort in doing so within his mandate. We would like to further affirm that a gender perspective involves consideration of the full range of women's experiences, beyond violations of the human rights of women.

For us, a gender perspective involves examining the intersection of multiple forms of inequalities and discriminations. In all societies around the world, the experiences of

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\* The Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and the Sexual Rights Initiative, a coalition of organizations, including ACPD, Mulabi (Latin America), INCREASE (Nigeria), and CREA (India).



# Need for Feminist Conversations on Movement Building

Gigi Francisco, DAWN Regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia, attended the Fiesta Feminista on 16 June 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, where she delivered this address

I would like to begin my intervention in the debates by congratulating all of the feminists who were behind the successful launching of this particular articulation - this coming together of some activists and movements in Malaysia that are in the struggle against the forces of patriarchies, neo-liberal globalization, xenophobias and fundamentalisms as these play out in your local-national context. There is certainly a good feeling going around participants and organizers alike - a positive energy that is passed on from one to another. I would like to

imagine that this is coming from the fact that the F-word (in your case two F-words) has been projected in this conference by a significant section of the Malaysian women's movements as a powerful rallying call and legitimate site for bringing differentiated feminist and women's struggles and mobilizations to interact and interlink with one another. In this site, we are not just women, wanitas, perempuans, advocates, activists or comrades - we are feminists and we constitute a social movement! Truly there is a kind of

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human beings are also affected by their race, ethnicity, age, disabilities, socio-economic status, health status, migratory status, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, culture and other relevant conditions.

Thus, it is important to underline that women are not a single homogeneous group. The specificities of their diverse settings, as well as the root causes of the cases addressed should be examined. For example, women experience different forms of discrimination at different moments of their life cycle. The girl-child, adolescent girls, young women, adult women, older women, often experience different human rights violations.

*Thus, it is important to underline that women are not a single homogeneous group. The specificities of their diverse settings, as well as the root causes of the cases addressed should be examined.*

For this reason, it was especially interesting to hear Mr. Kothari mention the collaborative work of some special rapporteurs to address the intersections of mandates.

This reflects the intersected nature of human rights violations. We would like to see in the future work of Special Procedures more initiatives such as these. In addition, as one or two of the panellists mentioned, it is also important to identify and close protection gaps.

We would like to ask the panellists the following question: what concrete steps would they recommend to increase the capacity of some current and future Special Procedure mandate holders to integrate a gender perspective into their work, including the adoption of an intersectional approach? 🌞



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liberation felt in being able to self-define who we are.

In the last few years, the re-assertion of feminist identities, analyses, politics, and ethics that are distinct and autonomous from (but interacting / interlinked with) other progressive movements and political parties, has been taking place in many places and in various spheres national, regional and global. The Feminist *Encuentros* in Latin America and the coming together of autonomous women's groups in India as you rightly mentioned in your brochure are two predecessors. Since 2004, organizers of these two articulations have come together with other women's networks for a long-term political project of carving out a space for feminist debates within the World Social Forum and other sites of global and regional resistances and manifestations of social movements and their campaigns. This global project is called the Feminist Dialogues or the FD. A connected strategy is the initiation of the Inter-Movement Dialogues where feminists who are associated with the FD engage activists from other social movements in a debate on issues of inter-movement collaboration and tensions. Since then regional initiatives such as the European Feminist Forum and the African Feminist Forum have come to be. Everywhere I turn to in this forum I definitely feel the vibrant political spirit similar to that in the FDs. I feel like I am at home, in the bosom of feminist activists.

I realize that in the past there has been collaborations among women's organizations, groups, networks and NGOs not just in Malaysia or Southeast Asia but in

various other parts of the world. What then is new in the current articulation that is the Fiesta Feminista, the Feminist Dialogues and similarly constructed sites? I venture to state a few points.

Changes linked to globalization have provided us with a more complex situation where processes of fragmentation and consolidation are taking place simultaneously and with more rapidity. There is at the same time the retreat but also the strengthening of the state and its apparatuses; the rise of the new rich as well as of the new poor; a dispersion of families through migration and an explosion of sexual identities but also a glorification and renewed sanctification of the heterosexual family unit; a break-down of culture but also its consolidation in more politicized ways; the bankruptcy of some elites but also the amassing of wealth by other elites; the lack of legitimacy of the United Nations but also its momentary significance as the only venue that could be used to advance human rights and the interests of developing countries at the

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global level; the growing power of non-state actors over the lives of peoples; the democratic deficit that is all over the place including within some movements; the confusion in the Left and lack of real alternatives coming from progressives; the growing recognition of feminism as a theoretical and political body of ideas but also the institutionalization and de-politicization of the women's movements and many more. All of these happen as part of a complex dynamic arising from various socio-historical forces but which have been distorted, complexified and made more confusing by geo-politics... that is by the capture of Corporate America of globalization processes

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and its use of war to sustain its global empire. Amidst all of these changes the primacy of struggles at the local and national spheres remains undisputed. But globalization has also transformed the local into the "glocal", a situatedness of people and events in a particular local context that are at the same time linked or interacting with the regional and global through a host of communication and information networks that we weave in and out of in our life worlds.

Given this context, we are certainly more aware now of the need to inter-link issues and struggles and to do so from decidedly autonomous feminist analyses and politics in which the subjugation and emancipation of women is central in the analyses and alternatives. There is no more waiting for any grand narrative or a set of political programs from our male activists and comrades. The rapaciousness of global capitalism and its intrusion into our most private and intimate lives has turned us all into historical subjects. We are historical subjects and agents of change, visionaries of the future and activists in our own right. With this knowledge and claim, we link up with the men and women of other social movements, learning from, as well as debating with them, reaching unities or agreeing to disagree in our analyses, synchronizing actions and lending solidarities. For the longest time, women and feminists have taken on the struggle for democracy, human rights, land, food, housing, adequate health, and peace. Now we ask: where are the peasant movements, the trade unions, the anti-war movement when we launch actions to address women's issues, say, the right to abortion, or to seek justice for women victim survivors of rape, or demand the legalization of same sex unions?

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As we have become more aware of the need to link up with other social movements, we have also become more conscious of the need to handle differences and confront tensions among ourselves to be critical of privileges, hierarchies, exclusions, chauvinisms and authoritarianisms within the feminist movements. Our movements are no longer in a context where a neat political division between those of us who are revolutionary and those of us who are co-opted can easily be discerned. These and other similar political categories have shifted, taking on new meanings. As I have just outlined, our social and political realities are more complex - external to as well as internal in our movements. There are now new types of groups and networks that have emerged in our movements, there are new interests and claims around identities but also around distributional concerns, there are new forms of resistances and not all militant forms of resistances - we increasingly realize - are radical and progressive. But amidst the new are ongoing permanent tensions between feminists who are middle class professionals and feminists who are from or work with the poorer classes; between younger feminists and those advancing in age; between feminists from the cities and those from the countryside; between feminists who enter into critical collaboration with government and mainstream institutions and those who opt to struggle from the outside, between feminists from different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions and communities and many more. Finally there is the reality that the institutional environment at the state and inter-state spheres is not longer hospitable to human rights including women's rights, and feminist issues and resistance projects are no longer the flavor of the month among donors.

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# Listening to Each Other: A multigenerational dialogue on women's rights and activism

DAWN General Co-ordinator, Bene Madunagu, attended a Multigenerational Dialogue on Activism and Women's Rights, entitled, *Listening to Each Other*, at the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University, New Jersey, from September 30 to October 3, 2007, and co-organised by CREA, CWGL and Youth Coalition. Participants to the Dialogue came from 14 countries


The first session deliberated on how questions around age have been shaped in the movement. It started off with "Trigger Presentations" by three persons, one per age group (below 30; 31-60 and above 60) who told stories of their personal experiences in the movement. Amongst other things, the session highlighted the fact that numerical age is not pertinent to feminist activism and multigenerational dialogues and that rather, actions enhance activism. The second session addressed "Movements" and the issues/challenges regarding movement building. This discourse was again triggered by three persons across the three age ranges making short presentations with the aim of engaging constructively in movement building for stronger, more effective, multigenerational movements with a diverse range of experiences, age and ideas. The session also highlighted the need for welcoming and affirming new voices, changing leadership across the spectrum, addressing the challenge of language barriers, the drawbacks of specialisation, the need for coalitions for political action, and to reclaim feminism, and revitalise membership base.

A session on new approaches to revitalising the movement drew on DAWN's experience with the DAWN Training Institute (DTI) and Regional Training Institutes (RTIs). Bene and Anasuya Gupta (DTI 2003) participated in the

session, and shared how each age group saw their contribution, assets and potential. The need for mutual acknowledgement, more listening to one another and meaningful engagement (not just participation), as well as recognition that mentorship is multidimensional and that power exists in all

positions and is both formal and informal, were highlighted in the session.

Four groups were then formed to discuss in more depth four clusters of issues which had emerged from the earlier sessions: Moving on transition; Power relations; Mentoring (coaching, sharing)

and Harnessing knowledge; and Broadening and Renewing movements multigenerationally. Other group sessions focused on abuse of power, the language of feminism, What do the younger generation want from the older generation?, and Coming-in and changing roles. An evening session discussed the UN Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR), while the last session focused on Moving forward which was essentially about self-reflection and evaluation. Some of the participants later engaged in a roundtable discussion on "Global Sexualities and Women's Human Rights" with faculty members from Rutgers University. 

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## Introduction to SRHR advocacy work in Brazil- report of an internship at ABIA/DAWN

*Toronto law student, Keri Bennet, reports on her intense learning experience during a recent internship at ABIA, working closely with DAWN SRHR Coordinator, Sonia Corrêa, and Angela Collet (who represents DAWN in UN Human Rights Council engagements)*

**T**his summer, under the Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights Internship, I went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The structure of the internship was to spend half of the time with Sonia Corrêa, the S&R H&R Coordinator of DAWN who is located in ABIA and half with Advocaci, an NGO focused on public interest advocacy and litigation in protection of women criminally charged with abortion.

Due to funding difficulties, Advocaci had stopped functioning as a day-to-day organization. The director, Gleyde Selma da Hora had taken another job during the day and works on the cases at Advocaci in her spare time. She is currently the executive coordinator at CEDIM (Superintendencia de Direitos de Mulher), which is a government secretariat dedicated


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The result is that resources to support our activism are getting harder to come by. In the face of these challenges and dilemmas, the feminist movements are in search of new political ethics, new leadership and new strategies. We certainly cannot have more of the same but we also cannot simply discard everything of the past. The present is after all a product of the past but within the present there lies the capacity for discernment, a re-evaluation of the past and intentional action by conscious political subjects. Initiatives such as the Fiesta Feminista may possibly provide the venue and spirit for such critical debates to take place which are crucial in the continuing sustenance of our movements.

I end this short intervention by reiterating the dual tasks that in my view are needed as feminist activists confronting the forces of patriarchies, xenophobias and fundamentalisms in this period of neo-liberal globalization. First is the rebuilding of autonomous feminist movements with their new political ethics, leaderships, strategies and coordination; second, the articulation of the feminist movements with other progressive social movements to achieve convergences of political struggles. Both processes need to happen at the same time, simultaneously and in concert, with one informing the other incessantly and dynamically. We need to undertake this at all spheres—local-national, regional and are increasingly boundaries between what global have become is that the Fiesta beginning of a new in Malaysia. This, my act upon. I came to commit to your feminist decision is clearly yours. this conversation and

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global, keeping in mind that we “glocalized” subjects and the is local-national and regional-porous. In short what I am saying Fiesta Feminista promises to be a political project for the feminists friends, is for you to decide and provoke and to politically dreaming and scheming, but the Thank you for the privilege of good morning to everyone. 



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to women's rights. While I was able to assist Advocaci with one large case, I was not able to spend half of the week at the organization as intended. To make up for that, Gleyde involved me in several of the events sponsored by CEDIM.

The summer was an intense learning experience, on numerous levels. While I speak Spanish and had taken Portuguese lessons prior to my arrival, I found the day-to-day of spoken Brazilian Portuguese to be quite a challenge to follow. When moving to a Spanish speaking country I reached full fluency in a short period of time. After three months in Brazil, I will still have to study further if I am to reach full fluency in Portuguese.

The projects I worked on were extremely interesting, but challenging as well, both in terms of language and in terms of logistics. One of the projects involved assisting the Health Equity and Law clinic with a legal analysis of anencephalic abortion in Brazil. The researchers wanted to add a human element to the project and I therefore resourced and interviewed lawyers, a doctor, a judge and patients as well as other NGO researchers in the area and submitted reports on these interviews. I found it quite challenging to set up interviews in Rio and travelled to Sao Paulo for one week in order to complete the interviews. The project is currently being finalized and the LLM students who worked on it will be responsible for translating and disseminating it in Brazil.

I assisted Themis, an NGO in Porto Alegre, in research of violations of women's rights in Brazilian Superior and Supreme Court decisions. The intent of the project was to find decisions which could and should be brought

before international agencies such as the IACHR or CEDAW. I had assisted the HEAL clinic in the previous semester with analysis of, and translation of decisions on anencephalic abortion, however this project required much more in-depth knowledge of Brazilian law. I found an English speaking Brazilian lawyer who was looking to do a language exchange, to explain the Portuguese terminology and Brazilian legal procedure to me so that I could

complete the project.

The cases that I found will be analyzed by Themis to determine if the organization wishes to carry them forward to the international committees.

I assisted in background research in a case of

maternal mortality being brought before CEDAW by the Center for Reproductive Rights in New York and Advocaci. I was able to attend the meetings between the lawyers from the Center and Advocaci, as well as translating from Spanish to Portuguese during the client meeting. I visited the medical facility implicated in the case and created a legal memo for the Center lawyers in answer to specific questions. The memo will be used by the lawyers at the Center for Reproductive Rights in preparing their petition to the CEDAW committee. I am continuing to be involved in this case, and potentially will be able to work on it during the upcoming year as well.

While at ABIA I was able to assist with English editing for the many international projects and communications undertaken by Sonia Corrêa and Angela Collet for DAWN, ABIA and Sexuality Policy Watch. Likewise they provided essential support for me in terms of orientation, training and language.

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Finally, I was able to attend several conferences and seminars and make contact with numerous people working in the area of women's and human rights. And working on all of these projects provided essential practical skills in terms of research, Brazilian law and my Portuguese, even more important was the exposure to various movements in feminism in Brazil, both at a popular and at an academic levels and to current political and social thought.

In one example, I attended the Second Municipal and State Conferences of Politics for Women. The proposed intention of the conferences were to review and assess improvements, setbacks and changes for women, specifically in the areas of reproductive and sexual health, the workplace/inclusion in all levels of social and political life, inclusive, non-sexist, non-racist education and prevention of violence against women.

While the conference organizers highly praised the outcomes, one strong criticism came from the academic world, in that no real assessment or evaluation had taken place, that the second conferences merely repeated the originals and innumerable objectives were stated but no concrete progress was made or assessed. Being exposed to both sides of the experience was an invaluable look into the complexities of politics and social movements in Brazil.

One other such experience was CEDIM's involvement in a case of violence which occurred while I was there. One early morning, a young woman who worked in domestic service was attacked in an upper class neighbourhood by several young men. They justified the attack by saying they thought she was a prostitute. CEDIM held a

public debate, wrote a formal denouncement of the event and moved to activate the media and public opinion on the issue. The experience provided insight into strategies of mobilization of Brazilian society on a specific issue.

My supervisors and co-workers were extremely generous with their time, providing direction, information, insight and assistance

in negotiating within the culture.

For example, while contacts are essential in every country and culture (and Canadians talk a great deal about 'networking,') in Brazil, contacts are even more important. Many of the connections

*For example, while contacts are essential in every country and culture (and Canadians talk a great deal about 'networking,') in Brazil, contacts are even more important. Many of the connections I tried to make would not have been possible had not one of my supervisors introduced me directly or put me in touch with someone who could.*

I tried to make would not have been possible had not one of my supervisors introduced me directly or put me in touch with someone who could. Even something as simple as setting up an interview has a distinct cultural protocol. Additionally, through DAWN, ABIA and Sexuality Policy Watch I was exposed to current rigorous academic thought and policy building. Both Sonia Corrêa and Angela Collet went out of their way to explain and expose me to their essential work in this area.


I feel that for anyone who wants to work in women's rights, such an internship is invaluable. Given that my specific long term goal is to work in women's rights in Latin America, the internship was an essential part of my education.

In terms of advice for future students, I would state that it is essential to speak the language. I felt the limitations of my language skills and would have been able to learn much more from the conferences and seminars had I been completely fluent in Portuguese. I cannot imagine a student who does not speak the

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## QUOTABLE QUOTE

*"It is time for women to rule the world. Men have made a heck of a mess of things.... This revolution... is the last, best chance for making this globe hospitable to peace, to make this globe hospitable to compassion, hospitable to generosity and caring,"* 

..... Archbishop Desmond Tutu


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language at all being able to have a truly meaningful experience on an internship in this context.

Additionally, I want to provide a word of caution regarding visas to Brazil. My intention had been to stay for one year. Even if one only wishes to stay for three months, it is illegal in Brazil to volunteer on a tourist visa. There is a Temporary I visa which requires a certain amount of documentation and proof of funding from the university. Given my intention to stay for one year, I spent six months researching and preparing the documents the consulate informed me I would need for a one year visa. At the very last minute, my visa was denied. I was then informed by the visa officer that I would not be able to go to Brazil in any capacity, not even as a tourist, for the following year.

After the visa was denied, two of the Brazilian

LLM students went to the consulate with me and during the conversation, which took place in Portuguese, the visa officer indicated she knew the visa would be denied because the government is suspicious of individuals wanting to come to Brazil for a year to volunteer. Even though I had been to see her eight times to confirm the documentation necessary for my visa, she never once told me that the visa would likely be denied.

The RSH program wrote a letter taking responsibility for me and indicating that I would return to school in the fall and one of the LLM students offered her personal negotiation skills in order to get a short term visa for me. My advice to future students therefore is to make sure they have their visa completed and in hand at least one month before they intend to leave the country due to the potential for unforeseeable complications! 



# Spreading DAWN's analysis in the Pacific: Report from Loloata

DAWN Pacific Coordinator, Yvonne Underhill-Sem filed this report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> DAWN Pacific/FWRM Feminist Advocacy Training, Loloata Island, Papua New Guinea, 16-21 July, 2007

## Beginning and ending

**T**wenty-eight young women from Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu, PNG and Fiji cautiously began the workshop. Cautious because many were brave enough to overcome their own as well as their organizations' and families' fears of being in PNG (which gets pretty biased regional press and was in the midst of national elections, with counting happening during the week we were there). They were also brave enough to attend a 'feminist' workshop at least three participants said they purposely did not tell their employers and/or their partners that this was a 'feminist' workshop for fear of a backlash!!

Twenty-eight young women completed this workshop and already we have a Pacific Islands Young Feminist Network blogspot ([www.pacificfeminists.blogspot.com](http://www.pacificfeminists.blogspot.com)). From a very cautious beginning we ended as an enthusiastic, more knowledgeable group, with personal action plans and eight collaborative action plans that integrate the Loloata experience into current work plans.

## Participants' contributions

Our aims to introduce critical feminist analysis by focussing mostly on two of DAWN's research themes SRHR and PRST and introducing the other two were well met. We spent the first two days on process issues which at first seemed too much but ended up

being critical, as everyone learned about each other's work. The participants included two women from a rural women's peace group in a notorious tribal warfare area; a number of women also came from the regional violence against women network; two women from a rural literacy training group one from the Pacific women's disability network; women from the major feminist NGO's in Fiji, as well as two from country YWCAs.

*The two days also provided the trust necessary for participants to say for instance, that they thought "feminists were lesbians" and the point that some of them were a child abuse survivors. This was not easy, but it reflected the excellent group processes developed by the team of facilitators.*

We also learned about the very different backgrounds that ranged from recently graduated university students, including a number of young lawyers, to women who were subsistence gardeners and had to travel up to two hours on foot or un-powered canoe to get to road transport to attend the workshop. This in itself

was a challenge for all participants as they learned that a critical feminist analysis is not only something for urban educated elite women.

The two days also provided the trust necessary for participants to say for instance, that they thought "feminists were lesbians" and the point that some of them were a child abuse survivors. This was not easy, but it reflected the excellent group processes developed by the team of facilitators. We were also able to discuss at length, what a feminist looked like in a way similar to how DAWN Africa's RTI did.

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There were, many opportunities to learn from participants work and life experiences and to encourage a feminist critical analysis, such as the story of the tragic hostel fire in Tuvalu where 28 young women lost their lives because they had been locked in to prevent them liaising with boys. I had written an article on this in 2001 but few participants knew of it. Our Tuvalu participant retold the story and groups had to identify the SRHR issues in it. This provided a great exercise to help move participants away from the tragedy and into a deeper analysis of why it happened.

### Substantive discussions

On the first day I attempted a presentation of Sonia's 'long duree' power point from the Uruguay DTI as a way of showing the need to "understand historical continuities as well as the importance of various levels of critical feminist analysis which is what DAWN does". This was a key theme given the tensions in the region between local grassroots initiatives and more academic global analysis, as well as intergenerational issues. I also introduced the notion of DAWN's inter-linkage work. The sessions on SRHR were introductory. Anna Padarath of FWRM broke it down so clearly, explaining the move from reproductive health to rights and sexual rights. Anna also did a great introduction to PRST issues. Virisila Buadromo of FWRM did a similarly great job on the notion of citizenship and Tara Chetty (DTI 2003) rearticulated DAWN's notion of social contracts in a way that made me squirm, thinking of that which we need to complete.

I introduced PEAS, but more importantly also introduced participants to the range of women's livelihoods and environmental

issues in the Pacific; from working in tea plantations, to sago culture and small-scale urban-marketing. I also introduced the notion of contradictions and trade-offs in the WSSD Johannesburg meeting, drawing on Ewa Charkiewicz's analysis. Roshni Sami (of the Pacific Network in Globalisation - PANG) introduced participants to the notion of trade in the Pacific, which was a very good primer. With Tara's help we also did a value chain analysis of a can of tuna, drawing on the Barbie Doll analysis used at the DTI in Bangalore, which was really instructive for participants.

Many participants requested FWRM to extend their programme of training young women into their countries and locations and this was a real boost for FWRM's plans to become more regional. It also reaffirmed for me the importance of collaborating with NGOs like FWRM to strengthen their capacities in critical feminist analysis as this is how DAWN's analysis will most effectively be spread.

### Advocacy exercises

We developed some great advocacy exercises that really got participants working: talk-back radio sessions with the military commander of Fiji and the sole women MP in PNG; a formal submission to a national committee on water privatisation; a protest march against water privatisation (many participants had never been on a protest march) and an exercise to convince other local community groups (young men's environmental group; 'religious women's health group and local landowners interested in 'development') to support their awareness-raising campaign on a new resource development (one group did fisheries, the other mining).

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# Who is a Feminist?

Report by Tara Chetty of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> DAWN Pacific/FWRM Feminist Advocacy Training, Loloata Island, Papua New Guinea, 16-21 July 2007

"Who is a feminist?"

"What's the difference between a women's movement and a **feminist** women's movement?"



Participants at the FWRM/DAWN Pacific Young Feminist Advocacy Training, held on Loloata Island, Port Moresby.

These were just two of the questions raised at the second regional feminist advocacy training, organised by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) Pacific, held in Papua New Guinea, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July. As the week-long training began, many of the young women participants said they would never consider identifying as feminists, mainly because of the negative images the word evoked. One participant explained that this was why she was evasive when her partner asked about the training. However by the end of the week, feminism was de-mystified and most of the women who initially shied away

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## Facilitator Team

Once again, working with FWRM was invaluable. In addition to taking care of all the logistics, they contributed some great exercises and group process. Noeleen Nabulivou from Women's Action for Change also provided the critical framing of SRHR as well as excellent group processes. I provided substantive background for all the themes and supported each of the facilitators in undertaking to learn about the other DAWN themes sufficiently to introduce them. Readings primarily came from the DTI Reader and facilitators were encouraged to relate them to Pacific experiences. This was done particularly well by Noeleen with reference to the analysis of some Pacific poetry that covered violence, single motherhood and lesbian love something that

really required the young lawyers to admit was new to them.

## Learning about PNG

All participants from outside PNG had their knowledge of the country greatly enhanced and hence their fears gently subsided. I had been very aware of the security concerns of PNG and especially as it was in the middle of elections. However, it proved to be great timing - so much so that on our afternoon tour of Port Moresby, one bus managed to get inside the normally highly secure parliament grounds for a photo opportunity! Our choice of Loloata Island was also lucky as we mostly had the island to ourselves aside from a few divers and we had freedom to safely wander around the island during the day and at night. We had fun and many laughs as well a brief snorkelling trip, a re-imagining culture night, and we had local prawns on the menu almost every night!

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concept stood up and claimed their identity as feminists.

The training, which was held on Loloata Island, off Port Moresby, was about promoting gender equity and women's participation by enhancing analysis and advocacy skills around issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, political restructuring and social transformation, the political economy of globalisation, and political ecology and sustainability.

The day spent on sexual and reproductive health and rights got participants to start visualising their bodies and how they can be sites of resistance. In one of the day's exercises, participants analysed the tragic story of a group of Tuvaluan girls who were burned alive in their dormitory. The girls, many of whom were from far off villages and outer islands, were locked up every night in their barred dormitory in order to "protect" them from having sex, getting pregnant and "shaming" their families. There was also a strict 9pm lights-out policy, in contrast to the freedom of the boys' dormitory. The fire started when one girl, who was using a candle to study, fell asleep.

In the session on political restructuring, the group discussed the marketisation of governance. The roll back of the state, from the aims of providing for the people to the aims of facilitating business and investment, was clear

in the Pacific's experiences of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Many participants experienced SAPs in one form or the other in their Pacific Island homes. Their examples included the corporatisation of government services such as health, education and water. It angered many participants to see that their rights as citizens were being eroded and that greater power seems to lie in the hands of corporate bodies and intergovernmental organisations, like the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

*Then came the chance for the young women to get introduced to global trade and sustainable livelihoods. The participants had to examine a can of tuna, and draw a chart of where it came from which began with the tuna fish then fishing boats, canning, advertising and distribution.*

One participant explained how in her health clinic in PNG there was no doctor and many women have to travel long distances to get any medical attention. When the state is asked for assistance, the response is always, "no money". However, the state responds very differently to requests by financial institutions such as the World

Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other transnational organisations.

Then came the chance for the young women to get introduced to global trade and sustainable livelihoods. The participants had to examine a can of tuna, and draw a chart of where it came from which began with the tuna fish then fishing boats, canning, advertising and distribution. Many were astounded at the complex issues crammed into a single little can, such as sex workers and the fishing industry, the health and safety of women working in canning factories, and the huge

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#### Follow-up

We will follow-up each participant's personal action plan after three months as well as the group collaborative projects. Hopefully we can convince some funders to continue to support this. OXFAM NZ and Australia are playing an important role in the region sponsoring initiatives like small arms research, community-based health and livelihood programmes, and peace efforts in areas with tribal wars still raging. Hopefully these will all have a more explicit feminist analysis. 🌞



# Trade liberalization - impacts and implications for financing gender equality

*Summary of Mariama Williams' (DAWN Research Coordinator for PRST-Trade) contribution to a plenary on Tracking the Money for Gender Equality, Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy, at the 8<sup>th</sup> Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (8WAMM) Kampala, Uganda, 12 June, 2007*

The financing of gender equality interventions, that is the provision of goods, services and infrastructure, that improve outcomes for women and girls, must come from three sources: 1) individual household contribution (through payment for services such as health care and education), 2) government direct and sectoral allocations domestically mobilized resources, and 3) externally obtained resources, primarily through development cooperation (Grown 2006 and UNDP 2004). These sources of financing are all dependent on national economic performance as well as international and global dynamics in finance and trade.

Achieving gender equality requires that public resources are allocated for programs and projects that directly reduce gender inequality and empower women ('gender equality interventions') as well as those

projects and programs that are directed at improving social development but which have spill-over effects on gender equality, or non-targeted gender equality interventions, (UN Millennium Task Force and Grown et al 2006). Examples of the former include MDG3 specific programs dedicated to improving educational outcomes for girls and women and gender mainstreaming activities such as gender training and gender focal points in sector ministries. Examples of non-targeted gender equality interventions are the construction of feeder and rural roads, health clinics and water services.

Traditionally, the multilateral trading system (MTS) focused primarily on measures affecting the international trade of goods. Today, however, WTO trade agreements extend to trade in services. They also cover issues which are seen as trade-related, such as

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fisheries wealth of the Pacific region and how that plays out in the international trade arena.

"The 2007 Young Feminist Advocacy Training was highly successful. Using examples and experiences from their own lives, the participants came to a deeper understanding of feminist analysis of issues affecting women in the Pacific," said FWRM Executive Director, Virisila Buadromo, who was also one of the facilitators.

"This is not just a one-off experience for these young women, they have formed a network, and have also developed realistic action plans to carry their feminist analysis into their

everyday work."

The 28 participants came from PNG, Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. One of the facilitators, Noelene Nabulivou of Fiji's Women's Action for Change, is a graduate of the inaugural FWRM/DAWN Pacific young feminist advocacy training in Nadi in 2005. Two FWRM facilitators, Anna Padarath and Tara Chetty, are also graduates of the three-week DAWN global feminist training institute. FWRM and DAWN Pacific are grateful for the support of our partners, NZAID and Oxfam New Zealand. 🌞



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intellectual property rights. WTO trade agreements increasingly have implications for many domestic policies, such as environmental regulations, patent protection, and government procurement, so-called "behind the border" issues.

The pressure of trade agreements (negotiated bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally) has been to erode trade protection in favour of import liberalization on as wide a scope as possible. This has tended to mean the reduction and elimination of trade taxes (tariffs), quotas and licensing fees. But it is also accompanied by measures to expedite the flow of goods and service across border, including through custom reform and other aspects of trade facilitation. In terms of export expansion, the mechanisms here are threefold: fiscal incentives (such as tax exemptions, tax holidays), export financing support and trade promotion support. Both import liberalization and export promotion measures have direct and indirect aspects at the meso and micro levels of the economy with implications for poverty reduction as well as targeted and non targeted gender equality interventions.

The direct impacts of trade on financial resources for gender equality operate through the effect of trade on employment, income and prices in the economy. Trade expansion may increase the employment of men and women, yielding increased income to households and more foreign exchange reserves to the government. The removal of tariffs and other trade barriers will directly impact prices of goods and service available in the domestic market. Indirect impacts are those that work

their way through to the informal and household sectors through a long chain of causes and effects. For example, when government revenue decreases as a result of declining trade tax receipt, the government may attempt to make up for the shortfall by cutting social spending and/or by raising consumption and other excise taxes. These will impact household budgets, access to health care and education.

Trade agreements such as the agreement on agriculture, the general agreement on trade in services and the trade related intellectual property agreement also impact on the availability of food, health care and access to education to individuals and households. Thus these agreements have serious implications for enabling women's and girls' capability, functioning and overall sense of personal security. These agreements also have the potential to generate changes in the economy that may either increase or decrease women's access to economic and social resources such as land, technology and credit.

Ultimately, the challenges of the MTS to gender equality may be in terms of the extent to which trade and trade related measures and mechanisms offset or mitigate leakages of funds from the household, government and foreign aid resources available to finance gender equality interventions, both targeted and non-targeted. It would also be important to ascertain the extent to which leakages are countered by injection or inflow of funds into these same financing sources.

This points to further work on specifying the specific channels and pathways through which the MTS influences and impacts the financing

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of gender equality programs. It also should draw greater attention to instituting processes for engendering capacity building and aid for trade initiatives so as to stimulate new program areas that will promote gender equality as well as complement the financing of gender equality interventions.

Specific recommendations therefore are:

- Each country to develop a framework for engendering its trade related capacity building and aid for trade programs.
- Ensure that trade diagnostic studies

focusing on promoting trade readiness and market entry include gender analysis and pay specific attention to the needs of women-owned SMEs as well as to sectors in the economy most likely to be adversely impacted by changing trade policy.

Trade negotiation mandates proactively include a gender sensitive framework for each of the sectoral areas under negotiation.

Gender sensitive flanking measures to deal with the negative outcomes of trade reform underlying the implementation of trade agreements.

<sup>1</sup> The Millennium Declaration, adopted by United Nations member states in September 2000, articulated the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015 as: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2. Achieve universal primary education, 3. Promote gender equality and empower women, 4. Reduce child mortality, 5. Improve maternal health, 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7. Ensure environmental sustainability and 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

<sup>2</sup> Politically by the 1960s, aid flows had ceased to have the kind of effects that developing countries needed to propel their economic development strategies. As a result, and in the context of the availability of cheap money (loanable funds), many developing countries turned to the private capital markets and commercial banks for foreign capital financing in the form of loans. The ensuing high debt built up and associated debt servicing problems of the late 1970s culminating into the debt crisis of the 1980s is symbolic of the disenchantment with official aid flows. The debt crisis and its management by IMF, the Bank and the Paris Club, under the aegis of the ascendant neo-liberal paradigm, and its stranglehold on debtors' economy in the form of structural adjustment programmes led to an acrimonious and distrustful relationship between debtor-recipients and creditor-donors.

<sup>3</sup> Total net official inflows peaked at US\$43 per head in 1983 and fell to US\$30 by the end of the 1990s. This was in real terms a 50% drop. 1991-92, ODA was \$60 billion and reached the high water mark. After that in 1992, ODA fell by 30% in particularly affecting social programs and increasing government dependence on private sector initiatives (Commonwealth Secretariat 1999). Between 1995 and 2000, sub-Saharan Africa have received an annual average of US\$10 billion in official flows which was equivalent to three quarters of total inflows.

<sup>4</sup> As an example of the transaction costs of the old system, consider that in 2002, donors funded over 50,000 projects these involved over 1,000 annual missions to developing countries and about 2,400 quarterly reports. OECD/DAC 2002, p.47

<sup>5</sup> The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was initiated in 1999 as the basis for World Bank and the International Monetary Fund concessional lending for debt relief under the Enhanced HIPC initiative (World Bank 2003). PRSP along with a plethora of macroeconomic policy documents (Country Assistance Strategy, CAS, and Poverty Reduction Growth Facility, PRGF, and Poverty Reduction Credit Support, PRSC) has become intertwined in the micromanagement of developing countries' economies. The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative was introduced in 1999 and offered debt relief to bring to a sustainable level (no more than 200-250% of annual exports) the debt stock of 26 countries. In 1999, HIPC was re-enforced by the Enhanced HIPC; it combined with the resources of HIPC-I totalling \$28 billion and was expected to reduce the debt stock of 33 HIPCs by one half.

<sup>6</sup> "We reaffirm the commitments made at Rome to harmonise and align aid delivery." The Declaration's Partnership Commitments presented in Section II and II seek to measure progress against 12 specific indicators. It also set targets track and encourage progress at the global level among the countries and agencies that have agreed to this Declaration for the year 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Covering the preparation of budget, internal control, audit, procurement, disbursement, monitoring and reporting arrangements and external audits.


<sup>8</sup> Budget support and balance of payments support were widely used in Structural adjustment program in the 1980s and 1990s.

<sup>9</sup> Donor contribution to public health expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) averages about 53% of the health budget in Tanzania, 58% in Uganda and 79% in Mozambique (see Foster et al 2000 and Lethbridge 2002, p. 29). Tan (2005) cites three reasons for this



situation. First, the high dependence is due in part to the impact of high external debt services which consumes significant portions of domestic resources. This has been exacerbated by the focus of the international donor-creditor community on debt sustainability instead of significant reduction in debt or outright debt cancellation. As a result, heavily indebted countries have limited capacity to increase funds for financing public services. Secondly, this situation is compounded by the structural and macroeconomic structures of the International financial institutions (IFIs), which limits the capacity of countries to raise funds for the public sector, initially under SAPs and now under PRS. The IFIs programs pushes the privatisation of services delivery and trade liberalisation as conditions for loans. Trade liberalisation has inherently negative fiscal dimensions for governments whose budget have high dependence on trade taxes. Thirdly, the fiscal austerity requirement of IFIs program ( and the underlying policy dialogue of the new aid regime) which focus on low inflation also has impact on the capacity to finance public services. Low inflation targets, while it benefits, protects and enhances the profits of foreign investors, engenders a cap or ceiling on public expenditures, with particular implication for social sector spending ( for more on this see Rowden 2004, p.11 and Christian Aid 2006).

\* As noted in a recent Financial Times article, traditional donors of the west (in comparison to newer donors such as China) utilise budget support to government to encourage political as well as economic reforms. In addition, 'their companies have also gained market access and contracts in the process' (FT, p.2, May 19/20, 2007).

\*\* MDG sectors include: education, health, rural development, slum upgrading, water, sanitation and energy. Projects and programs in these areas will work for the achievement of the MDGs as a whole and while not directly aimed at gender equality will synergistic promote gender equality and MDG5. There should also be gender mainstreaming in interventions within and across sectors. 



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