

WOMEN'S WORKING GROUP ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT (WWG on FfD)*

WWG on FfD Intervention at Hearings of Civil Society on FfD

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June 2008

This set of proposals that substantively address women's inter-linking concerns in the Monterrey Consensus was discussed and adopted at a women's consultation meeting convened by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development in New York on June 16 and 17 2008. Thus, our proposals align with but also enhance several key recommendations found in the draft Civil Society Key Recommendations for the Doha Draft Outcome Document.

The women's consultation observed that much more needs to happen to address the national, international and systemic challenges of financing development spawned by an environment of intensified and unregulated trade and financial liberalization processes that often bear unpredictable negative consequences for productivity, growth, poverty eradication and income distribution goals. The current financial, food and climate change crises are stark realities in a volatile environment marked by runaway competition processes. A gender analysis raises further questions on the connection of these trends and volatilities to (a) women's wages, employment and unpaid labor, (b) state of social reproductive and social protection capacities, resources and services, and (c) intra-country and intra-household sharing of financial risks and shocks. Gender inequality is embedded in asymmetrical social structures and systemic processes that underpin the globalization and concentration of risks and economic disparities which are experienced most acutely by those most disadvantaged especially women. For example, empirical evidence show that women in developing countries who work for very low wages in the large informal sector also carry a disproportionate share of financial risks as household finance managers in a context where there is inadequate or non-existent publicly provided social welfare and protection for the poor.

We ended with a commitment to stay engaged in the FFD process, in particular with the hope that the FFD's multi-stakeholder approach and strong participation from civil society including women's rights organizations and networks may be replicated elsewhere in the UN system. Moreover, we urged all UN entities on gender equality and women's empowerment should strengthen their capacity to link with issues and areas not traditionally identified with gender equality. This will open up new thinking and strategies on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system.

*The WWG on FfD is coordinated by [Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era \(DAWN\)](#) and includes the following networks/organizations: [African Women's Development and Communication Network \(FEMNET\)](#), [Association for Women's Rights in Development \(AWID\)](#), [Feminist Task Force-Global Call to Action against Poverty \(FTF-GCAP\)](#), [Global Policy Forum \(GPF\)](#), [International Gender and Trade Network \(IGTN\)](#), [International Trade Union Confederation \(ITUC\)](#), [Network for Women's Rights in Ghana \(NETRIGHT\)](#), [Women's Environment and Development Organization \(WEDO\)](#) and [Women in Development-Europe \(WIDE\)](#).

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The full text of the recommendations and forward actions from the women's consultation will be formally submitted to the Co-Chairs. In consideration of the limited time allowed for intervention, allow me to focus on only a few highlights.

Under Chapter 1: Domestic Resource Mobilization, we recognize the fact that the Monterrey Consensus prioritized on domestic resource mobilization, both public and private, as the principal source of financing for development. It called for an enabling national environment where macroeconomic policies and regulatory frameworks that support growth, poverty eradication, redistribution, equality and human development coexist in interaction with participatory and accountable governance systems and processes. Central in this commitment is the issue of domestic policy space and how the international environment supports or undermines the capacity of national governments to achieve. Our recommendations in this area include:

1. Promoting participatory and gender responsive budget
2. Strengthening the national commitment to and enforcement of Decent Work and
3. Utilizing progressive and fair taxation schemes including tax rebates and tax relief for the poor and women

Under Chapter 2: Foreign Direct Investments and Private Capital Flows, our joint key recommendations are:

1. To convene within the United Nations and at the soonest possible time, an inter-governmental meeting that will address how governments can efficiently and effectively manage their competition for FDI and other capital flows; and
2. To strengthen at the national sphere the rule of law and citizen's access to information and the legal system in order to compel investors and traders to behave as "good citizens".

We support the effort by our colleagues in civil society in putting forward the call for a multilateral mechanism that would subject investors and transnational corporations to more lawfully binding international norms and standards. In the meantime, however, investor behavior continues to pose problems to governments that have difficulty dealing with the effects of wage competition and the global tax race to the bottom. In a situation of liberalized financial markets that continue to exhibit tendencies toward crisis, governments need to deal with an increasingly riskier environment as they seek opportunities for sourcing finances for development through private capital flows while ensuring stability of growth for their economies. The present financial turmoil showed that existing national regulatory mechanisms even in developed countries and international economic surveillance and information exchange systems are inadequate and unable to respond to the increased emergent risk-taking practices of banks and other non-bank financial institutions and to the growing speculative behavior of investors and traders in an environment of increasing volatility and risks. The time to talk is now.

Finally in Chapter 4: International Financial and Technical Cooperation, we agree with the worldwide recognition that aid flows are highly volatile and threatens the continuity of

development programs, for instance, on gender equality. It is in this light that we welcome the emergence of South-South Cooperation and other innovative sources of financing for development. This is a positive development to our concern on additionality and could enhance the predictability of aid flows in support of the internationally agreed development goals.

One key demand is to remove conditionalities on gender equality and others and instead strengthen mutual responsibility, accountability and transparency of donors and recipient countries. Instead, ODA should be a contribution that truly supports national economic and social development within a framework of a vibrant and robust democratic society and transparent and accountable governments propelled by their own empowered political actors. To ensure that the benefits of additional financing benefit gender equality, social justice, and inclusion, ODA processes must uphold the mutual responsibility and obligations of governments to fulfill the internationally agreed development norms, goals, targets and actions which have been identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, and other international agreements. Negotiations on ODA must country driven rather than donor driven, and should be democratic and inclusive in its processes and practices, as well as, subject to a multilateral and multi-stakeholder review forum such as the ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum.

In support of mutual responsibility and accountability for gender equality on the part of both donors and recipients, monitoring and evaluative tools and methodologies need to be developed to assess the extent to which aid allocations address or do not address the achievement of redistributive, social and gender goals. The categorization of gender, along with human rights and environmental sustainability, as cross cutting issues have led to difficulty in tracking outcomes within basket funds and sector-wide programming. The development of gender-informed tools and methodologies must be carried out in a participatory process and should involve both traditional and emerging donors and across several aid modalities. Moreover such exercise should take place across all levels, with resources being allocated to enable women's rights advocates meaningfully participate in national, regional and international processes. The United Nations system in particular its various agencies and entities charged with the promotion of women's rights and gender equality must be the location of this process at the multilateral sphere.

I would like to end here by once again saying that the full text of our intervention will be submitted to this body. Thank you.