

## **Doha 2008: Women's Rights & Gender Equality in Financing for Development**

- 1. We**, women from women's rights organisations and networks gathered in Doha before the official Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) to review the Monterrey Consensus, have been working to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are at the centre of the FfD process.
- 2. The** Doha FfD Conference is taking place at a time of financial, food and fuel crises. The combined negative effects of these crises on the real economy and prices exacerbate women's struggle for livelihoods, food security and improvements in their well-being and those of their families and communities. This is not a new phenomenon nor entirely unanticipated in a systemic order where structural inequalities and discrimination disproportionately affect women's share of burdens.
- 3. Women** constitute the majority of people working in flexible and informal sectors with often precarious working conditions. Thus, in times of crisis they struggle harder to maintain their jobs and income levels. At the same time, cuts in public service provision, including education and health, increase the burden of unpaid and invisible work done mainly by women. With the frequent fluctuations in prices, women are struggling to deal with increased financial stress within households. Women in conflict situations suffer more severely but are often left out of peace negotiation processes.
- 4. Past** experiences have shown that crises and neoliberal policies responses, such as structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have disproportionately affected women. Yet the very same misguided policies of market liberalization, deregulation and privatization now continue to be promoted as the solution.
- 5. This** reality demonstrates that macroeconomic policies are not gender-neutral. This means that any effort concerned with solving the crises or putting in place real commitments to financing for development must challenge and overcome gender injustice at all levels.
- 6. The** participation of women's networks and other civil society actors in the FfD review process has been consistent, focused and aimed at ensuring that its outcome strongly addresses the gaps in the Monterrey Consensus in ways that affirmed commitments to women's rights and gender equality. From early on in the process, we struggled against efforts by certain governments to reduce the scope of the review and to further erode the significance of the FfD and the United Nations in global economic governance. However, the rush to find solutions to the global financial meltdown produced an exclusionary process exemplified by the G20 Summit in Washington, DC. The result has pre-empted the FfD Review Conference limiting the policy options and actions that could correct long-term systemic imbalances.
- 7. We** believe that this Conference must build upon existing United Nations commitments to gender equality and women's human rights, based on the principle of mutual responsibility and the obligations of governments to fulfil internationally agreed development goals, targets and actions which have been identified primarily in the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the International Labour Organization Conventions.
- 8. In** this context, we welcome the recognition of gender equality as a fundamental human right and an issue of social justice essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and development effectiveness as is stated in the new paragraph 3bis (as of November 25, 2008 draft). However, we need not only a good preamble which acknowledges the need of gender mainstreaming, we need policy action.
- 9. We** strongly stress the importance of concrete steps to increase resources for gender equality as stated in paragraph 40bis (as of November 25, 2008 draft) to fulfil women's rights and empowerment. Also, in relation to mobilizing domestic financial resources for development, paragraph 9bis (as of November 25, 2008 draft) is a commitment to eliminate gender-based discrimination acknowledging women's full and equal access to

economic resources and the importance of gender responsive public management. However, we demand stronger gender equality policy commitments and actions throughout the document on development, trade, finance, debt, aid and systemic issues.

**10. We** reaffirm our commitment to keep fully engaged in all follow-up processes stressing the need to convene a major international conference under the UN auspices to undertake the structural issues that underpin international economy and financial governance. All follow-up mechanisms must be effective spaces for consistent and regular inputs on gender equality ensuring the participation of women's rights organizations and networks, and gender equality advocates.

**11. We** call on governments of UN member-states that are about to begin the meeting in Doha to: (a) insist on the primacy of the United Nations as the site for an open transparent and inclusive multi-stakeholder process providing institutional spaces for women's rights organizations and gender equality advocates in the follow-up to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus; (b) stress the continuing need for undertaking a full and gender sensitive analysis of the structural issues that underpin international economic and financial governance; (c) seriously move forward in the follow-up to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus the general commitment to gender equality, analysis and monitoring tools and indicators as proposed in the introductory section and found in selected paragraphs of the Doha Declaration.

#### *Signatories*

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