



**Statement on the 2010 UN ECOSOC High Level Meeting (HLM):
Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)¹
With references to the G-8 / G-20 Meeting Outcomes**

By

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We all understand that the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) underwent reforms and introduced the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) as a way to learn policy lessons from debates on macroeconomic issues that are important to member states of developing countries. This year the AMR's focus was on "*Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*". The theme is a welcome development but the question is the extent to which the National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) were able to illustrate how gender equality considerations can inform macroeconomic policymaking. By and large, the NVPs sounded like they were reports being made to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Without this differentiation, there would appear to be too strong an overlap between ECOSOC and the CSW that only confuses follow-up processes.

The 2nd Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) comprised the other segment of the ECOSOC HLM. The 2005 World Summit mandated the ECOSOC to convene a biennial high-level DCF to review trends and progress in international development cooperation. The DCF carries plenty of potential for discussing issues of a complex nature. It is qualitatively different from the processes of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness because the DCF can engage in meaningful debate over macroeconomic considerations attached to external financing flows. The DCF with its multi-stakeholder character can be a setting for an exchange of views where policy innovation may take place. This year, the discussions in the 2nd DCF centered on "*Development Cooperation in Times of Crises: New Commitments to Reach the MDGs.*"

Immediately prior to the ECOSOC HLM, announcements have been made by the G8 on new initiatives for maternal and child health. But we all know that 2/3 of maternal mortality issues are concentrated in 11 countries, of which 7 are fragile, post-conflict states and the rest is in South Asia and Indonesia. While these aid initiatives resolve a specific problem they also reinforce a situation where there are donor darlings and donor orphans.



As well, the most recent G-20 statement focused on fiscal consolidation in the midst of predictions on the possibility of the collapse of the Euro zone. These factors have clear implications on the ability to scale up resources and fulfill commitments. But even if the scaling up of resources were successful, some of the aid barely gets translated into spending due in large part to the practice of using aid monies for reserves management or for debt repayments. Hence, the expected improvements in achieving the internationally agreed development goals are at the very least delayed and at worst are not met.

Discussions are also needed on how to create global funds for liquidity and reserves management in order to free up monies for expenditures. A sovereign debt resolution mechanism will be helpful in this regard. The DCF could have discussed these in a reasoned manner and also look towards opportunities for designing exit strategies from aid.

Finally, processes in the General Assembly on Financing for Development and on follow-up to the UN Meeting on the Impact of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis continue to be highly relevant and must be linked to debates generated by the ECOSOC discussions.

All these considerations are important for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment for and beyond the UN Review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that will take place in September 2010. Greater policy coherence that is consistent with gender equality and women's rights will be achieved more effectively if systemic issues are brought to bear on discussions around development cooperation inside the United Nations System.

¹Based on interventions made by DAWN members Marina Durano & Gigi Francisco at side events held during the 2010 ECOSOC HLM, 29-30 June, New York

²DAWN is a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development. DAWN members, affiliates and training alumnae are dispersed but also interlinked across the regions of the economic South where many are recognized feminist activist researchers, movement leaders, competent heads and staff of non-governmental organizations and young feminists. DAWN currently coordinates the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development (WWG).