



DAWN Questions Global Reform and Review Processes on Gender Equality

The current conjuncture reflects an intensification of efforts to deepen harmonization and coherence between the various parts of international development cooperation on the one hand, and trade and financial liberalization on the other. Within these ongoing discussions, the location-position of women's empowerment and gender equality is unclear, particularly because it is often couched in mainstreaming or cross-cutting language.

What is alarming is that recent data shows women's empowerment and welfare indicators are the weakest among the MDG targets. Clearly, too, the policy convergence around the neo-liberal agenda of economic, financial and trade liberalization is serving to fuel the current financial, energy and food crises.

For DAWN, 2008 is a year of focused engagement with two important processes of inter-governmental negotiations taking place in the United Nations General Assembly, namely, on (1) System Wide Coherence, and the (2) Review of Financing for Development. In both these processes, DAWN supports the view that the UN retains its leadership role in the coordination of global economic and social policies, including trade, finance and macroeconomic policies, and in so doing, positions gender equality at the center of debates and negotiations.

Following these processes for DAWN are Gita Sen, Anita Nayar, Mariama Williams, Marina Durano and Gigi Francisco.

The UN Reform...

The System Wide Coherence or UN Reform involves discussions on the structural reform of the UN aimed at addressing issues of duplication of mandates and lack of coordination among the UN System's diverse development-related agencies, funds and programmes.

In relation to mechanisms and program on women's rights and gender equality, the High Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence recommended the consolidation of UNIFEM, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). Some governments have recommended that INSTRAW (the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) also be included in this consolidation.

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South's Disappointment with UNIFEM Appointment Process: UN Jobs for Sale?

Women's movements and CSOs worldwide made known their disappointment over how the UN decided on the appointment of the new UNIFEM Executive Director.

Concerns were raised over how the professional selection process resulted in a different candidate being recommended for appointment, and that this result was overridden by the Secretary-General because of pressure from Spain, UNIFEM's largest donor, to give the post to its national (UN elections Monitor, Issue 57, 29 June 2008: <http://www.unelections.org/?q=node/634>); International Herald Tribune 8 April 2008: <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/04/08/news>; Reuters 8 April 2008: <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN08391592>).

An article by Inner City Press (Lee, 18 April 2008) reported that "Spain was openly lobbying for the post in November 2007,

when Spain's Vice President Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega reaffirmed the government's desire for a Spaniard to be appointed as Director of the UN Development Fund for Women ("*le reitero el deseo del Gobierno de que sea una espanola la que presida el Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer*")."

Immediately after the appointment was announced, statements were sent to the UN from across regions.

African women's movements expressed their concern "that the process of the appointment lacked both the transparency and integrity expected of an institution such as the UN."

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DAWN Tells UNHRC: Don't Forget Marginalized Groups

Speaking on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Angela Colet of DAWN spoke to the unfulfilled aspirations of human rights for many marginalized groups that are often overlooked by the international community.

Colet mentioned in particular, women, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, dalits, Roma, persons with disabilities, children and elderly persons, prisoners, those living in poverty, people living with HIV/AIDS, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex persons, hijras, kothis, metis, along with many others.

"Many people or groups face deep levels of discrimination and stigma, because of characteristics at the very heart of their existence, identity or bodily integrity, sometimes to such an extent that their rights are not yet fully recognized as human rights. For example, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people must still struggle for recognition by some international human rights bodies that the grave and endemic abuses they face based on sexual orientation and gender identity demand equal attention and response. In addition, criminal laws sometimes penalize

people for exercising their bodily or sexual autonomy. In some cases, people are arrested simply for being HIV positive. The principle of universality requires that all people be entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights, without exception. Furthermore, there are cases when persons or groups are willing to engage in actions to promote and protect human rights but lack either the democratic environment or the economic, educational, informational, or political resources to do so," Colet said.

In strengthening the human rights regime, Colet noted that the Human Rights Council's success in fulfilling its mandate will depend on the extent to which its work is grounded in experienced realities at the local level, by those who are subject to human rights violations. She then raised the need for stronger local-global connections, in particular the link between the Human Rights Council and those facing violations in

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A statement from South Asian feminists strongly decried the "political pressure and maneuverings brought to bear on due process."

Southeast Asian and Pacific women's groups declared the "hijacking by big money politics" of a process that "started out as a careful and discerned search for a professional and competent woman."

"The process of the appointment [of the UNIFEM Executive Director] lacked both the transparency and integrity expected of an institution such as the UN."

~ African women's movements

"The appointment of someone with few links to transnational women's networking and little experience of the South raises questions about the UN's commitment to women's rights and empowerment and specifically to women in the South."

~ Caribbean women's organizations

DAWN and Isis at 52nd CSW Session

DAWN and Isis International-Manila held a side event on 25 February at the CSW 52nd session "What happened to financing for gender equality? A South critical view of FfD, Debt Relief, Aid Effectiveness and Aid for Trade." Chaired by Gita Sen, the panel included Mariama Williams, Aldo Caliarì and Gigi Francisco as presenters, with the special participation of Social Watch's Roberto Bissio.

Building on the BPFA, which had very clear provisions regarding the need to fund the various aspects of gender equality, development and peace, the panelists raised critical questions on the implication to gender equality of some of the financing schemes and mechanisms being discussed in the context of harmonizing trade, finance and development cooperation. ⚡

countries; more transparent and accessible processes and mechanisms including mass information sharing. Colet also called on individual states and the Council to ensure that there are resources and conditions for marginalized groups to bring human rights abuses to the Council's attention. ⚡

A statement issued by the Latin American Network on Popular Education (REPEM), noted in distress that "... lately, the UN has repeatedly proven to act in a unilateral and arbitrary way. The correlation between political forces and internal decisions shows agreement among the most powerful countries and those that have more resources. This does not allow any democratic participation of southern countries that are not only poorer but have no power within the present and obsolete UN structure."

Women's organizations from the Caribbean reminded the UN of UNIFEM's unique relationship with the women's movement: "UNIFEM owes its establishment to advocates for women's rights in the context of International Women's Year (IWY), 1975. Caribbean women like Gloria Scott and Lucille Mair (Jamaica), and Dame Nita Barrow (Barbados) have all contributed their leadership to strengthen the UN's role in the promotion of women's equality, and today there are many Caribbean women holding senior UN posts in this region. The appointment of someone with few links to transnational women's networking and little experience of the South raises questions about the UN's commitment to women's rights and empowerment and specifically to women in the South." ⚡

Women's Working Group on Financing for Development

Women Warn States on Use of Positive Conditionality in Development Cooperation

Gigi Francisco's Presentation at the Hearing with CSOs on Financing for Development, UN, 18 June 2008

This set of proposals that substantively address women's interlinking 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 16-17 June 2008. Our proposals align with but also enhance several key recommendations 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, employment, poverty eradication and income distribution goals. The current financial, food and climate change crises are stark realities in a volatile environment marked by confusing market competition processes. A gender analysis raises further questions on the connection of these trends and volatilities to

- Women's wages, employment and unpaid labor,
- State of social reproductive and social protection capacities, resources and services, and
- Within-country and within-household sharing of financial risks and shocks.

Gender inequality is embedded in asymmetrical social structures and systemic processes that underpin the uneven spread of financial risks and widening of 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.

Mr. Chair, our consultation 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 to strengthen their capacity to link with issues and areas not traditionally identified with gender equality. This will



Gigi Francisco (2nd from left) at the Hearing with CSOs on Financing for Development, United Nations, New York, 18 June 2008

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 in three areas.

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. Central in this commitment is the issue of domestic policy space and how the international institutional environment supports or undermines the capacity of national governments to achieve development goals. Our recommendations in this area include:

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

open up new thinking and strategies on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system. The full text of the recommendations

Women at the Consultation Meeting convened by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, New York, 16-17 June 2008.



Excerpts from the Women's Consultation on Financing for Development Formal Submission to the FfD Review Process

At the Church Center, New York, 16-17 June 2008

Staying Engaged for Gender Equality

The Women's Working Group on the FfD commits itself to keep fully engaged in all follow-up processes and to build bridges between commitments and actions on development, trade, finance, debt and systemic issues and women's rights and gender equality commitment and goals which are consistent with the holistic agenda of the Monterrey Consensus. Engendering the financing for development process cannot be realized without a holistic approach that looks at the inter-connections among trade and finance in all its different form – aid, investment, debt and domestic savings – and their systemic underpinnings.

Key Recommendations for Forward Actions

Domestic Resource Mobilization

- Promote Participatory and Gender Responsive Budgets
- Strengthen the national commitment to and enforcement of Decent Work
- Utilize progressive and fair taxation schemes including tax rebates and tax relief for the poor and women

Foreign Direct Investments and Private Capital Flows

- Convene within the United Nations and at the soonest possible time, an inter-governmental meeting to address how governments can efficiently and in an effective way manage their competition for FDI and other capital flows
- 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"

Trade

- Actively apply special and differential treatment and less-than-full reciprocity as principles for trade negotiations
- Support and strengthen women's meaningful involvement in multi-stakeholder oversight processes and mechanisms related to trade agreements and reforms at all levels

International Financial and Technical Cooperation

- Ensure additionality and predictability of aid flows
- Remove conditionalities and strengthen mutual responsibility, accountability and transparency of donors and recipient countries
- Develop gender-sensitive indicators, tools and methodologies for the evaluation of the quality and development effectiveness of aid

Debt

- Undertake a more critical round of review and redefinition of the Debt Sustainability Framework that should involve not only national governments but also civil society including women's rights organizations
- Loans and debt cancellation must be de-linked from conditionalities

- In the UN, a political dialogue must be initiated to deal with the question of odious / illegitimate debts

Systemic Issues

- Continue to ensure that FFD follow-up mechanisms, consultative processes, and opportunities for technical inputs in all of its multi-stakeholder arenas are effective spaces for consistent and regular inputs on gender equality by women's rights organizations and networks and gender equality experts

Emerging Issues

- Financing to address the food and climate crises should not be in the form of loans

List of Endorsers

Arab NGO Network for Development
 African Women's Economic Policy Network
 Agribusiness Accountability Initiative–Asia
 Asia Pacific Women Law and Development
 Association of Women's Rights in Development
 Center of Concern
 Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
 Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
 ENLACE – Education and Networking for Latina Cooperation and Empowerment
 Feminist Task Force – Global Campaign Against Poverty
 FEMNET – African Women's Development and Communication Network
 Gender and Trade Network–Africa
 Institute for Economic and Social Studies
 International Council on Adult Education
 International Federation of University Women
 International Gender and Trade Network–Asia
 International Institute for Cooperation amongst Peoples
 International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation
 International Trade Union Confederation
 International Women's Anthropology Conference
 International Women's Tribune Center
 Latin America Gender and Trade Network
 Medical Mission Sisters
 Population Action International
 Public Services International
 Servicios Ecumenicos Para Reconciliacion y Reconstruccion SIGLO XXIII
 US Gender and Trade Network
 Women and Gender Institute – Gender, Development & Economic Globalization Program
 Women Environment and Development Organization
 Women in Development Europe
 Women of Color Policy Network
 Women's Resource and Advocacy Centre
 World Council of Churches – Poverty, Wealth & Ecology Project

Excerpts from Statement on UN Gender Equality Architecture Reform

A Stronger UN Entity for Women

For the past three decades, the UN has been a galvanizing force in efforts to define a comprehensive global agenda for peace and security, human rights, gender equality, women's empowerment, poverty eradication and sustainable development. As a result, there have been significant advances for women, including through the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Summit, and various UN agencies have done important work on specific aspects of gender equality.

The UN, however, still lacks an effective mechanism to deliver many essential commitments. It has several small under-resourced agencies focused exclusively on women's issues, and while other larger agencies make critical contributions, women's human rights and gender equality are but usually a small part of their mandate, and often receive low priority.

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform therefore calls on member states of the UN, with the support of the women's movement, to act now to create a stronger UN entity for women.

- An Undersecretary General should head this entity for women to ensure the necessary status required for representation and decision-making at the highest levels both in policy-development and program operations at the global and country levels. The new Undersecretary General

post would provide higher level leadership than at present to more effectively drive the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda.

- Extensive field presences and a strong policy and programmatic mandate is essential for a strengthened UN entity for women to effectively improve the lives of women on the ground.
- Substantial and predictable resources to ensure that the new entity for women has the capacity to meet expectations and deliver results at all levels. It must be funded initially at a minimum level of US\$500 million to US\$1 billion with increases over time.
- Accountability within the new entity for women, at both national and international levels, including through meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations for women.
- The new entity should also promote gender mainstreaming by the integration of gender equality and women's human rights throughout the UN and especially in the UN Country Pilots and in all UN reform processes.

Statement submitted on behalf of the global campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform in the United Nations by Amnesty International, Asia Pacific Women's Watch, Association for Women's Rights In Development, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, African Women's Development & Communication Network, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Women's Environment and Development Organization, WIDE - Globalising Gender Equality and Social Justice non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, January 2008.

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In accompanying this process, DAWN joined hands with the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) as global focal points for a campaign dubbed the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign. The campaign seeks a high-level UN entity for women that will have strong normative and operational functions.

DAWN is particularly concerned about securing increased funding for the new gender architecture, with most of the funds going to country-level work in developing countries. In an email message to the global GEAR Campaign list, DAWN noted that "... while a number of Northern governments have been vocally supporting a new gender architecture, even tentative financial commitments have been absent." DAWN also questioned "the extent to which the highest level of the UN is genuinely committed to moving the gender equality agenda forward..." (23 April 2008).


For DAWN, a highly-placed gender entity whose principal function will be limited to acting as a watchdog for gender mainstreaming and which will have very limited capacity to undertake projects on its own will not close the existing gap between official rhetoric and action on gender equality and women's empowerment. (*See statement above.*)

The Doha Review...

With the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus being held 29 November–02 December 2008 in Doha, Qatar, the FfD consultative process is now in full swing. The Review of Financing for Development or FfD Review is meant to assess progress made, take stock of lessons learned, and identify new challenges and emerging issues related to implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

Women's rights and economic justice advocates are working to ensure the Doha outcome builds upon the Monterrey agreements while addressing global inequities contributing to feminized poverty,

women's human rights violations, environmental crises and global economic instabilities more so than governments and financial institutions did in Monterrey in 2002. Women's rights advocates are also calling for increased financing for gender equality and women's empowerment from the Doha review process.

The Women's Working Group (WWG) on the FfD is a network of women's rights advocates in the FfD process, and is coordinated by a core group comprised of Association for Women's Rights and Development (AWID), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Feminist Task Force-Global Call to Action against Poverty (FTF-GCAP), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), and the Women in Development Europe (WIDE). The WWG informs and facilitates women's rights advocates in the FfD process, while linking these advocacy efforts to other related processes such as the UNCSW, UNCTAD 12 and the OECD 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. (*See excerpts of Statement on page 4.*) 

Gita Sen: Walk the Talk on Fe

Excerpts from Gita Sen's speech at the international seminar "Women in motion for the right to education" in June 2008 in Montevideo, Uruguay, organized by the Gender and Education Office of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE).

What is Advocacy?

In my basic and very simple understanding of advocacy, it is simply the art of friendly persuasion. You are just persuading people, and I use the word "friendly" because if it's not friendly, it's not advocacy—it is combat, it is war.

You may disagree, but you have to get the person who you are trying to persuade to feel that it is worthwhile to move in a certain direction. Now if you read the ICAE report that Denise spoke about earlier, there's a very interesting piece by Gina Vargas in it in which she asks whether we should be speaking about advocacy or about counterpower?"

I believe that we are speaking about *both* things, it's not an either/or. And in the world that we live in, counterpower by itself is not enough. Persuasion is necessary as well because we have to get people to come onto our side. And this is what the art and the politics of advocacy is all about.

Lessons from DAWN's Experience

From DAWN's experience with advocacy over close to 25 years—mostly at the global level but also at the national and regional levels—we've learned some critical things which I hope we can come back to in our discussion.

1. Being prepared. To be a good advocate, homework is absolutely critical. The importance of preparation cannot be stressed too much. You cannot do advocacy unless you are prepared. And given that most of us as feminists are in a position of subordinate power where we are actually trying to counter dominant discourse, dominant practices and so on, unless we are well prepared, nobody listens to us, nobody even cares. And that's simply hard and sometimes boring work but it means that it does require that somebody has to be sitting and doing this work ahead of time. Thorough preparation is absolutely essential for our credibility.

2. Credibility. Credibility is the most fundamental requirement to be a good

advocate. That is, people believe you when you say something. That actually takes time to build up. In the beginning, people will not believe you. They will not want to believe you, because you're saying things that are counter to the dominant discourse, very often, to the dominant power relationships and so on.

I would say credibility is *the* absolutely most important thing to have with you, with us, as we go forward as advocates. And I think many of us in all the different spaces where we are engaged, know that.

We also know how much damage a false step can do to credibility. And that means that to nurture credibility, one has to be able to say when you don't know, not pretend that we know when we don't know because that is very easy to find out and then people say "don't listen to her, she just talks through her hat, she doesn't really know what she is talking about."

3. Admit mistakes. It is very important, if a mistake is made, to immediately acknowledge it, to say "I made a mistake, sorry!" People are willing to forgive mistakes, everyone makes mistakes. As Sonia Correa said in the REPEM meeting: the right to make mistakes is a very important human right!

But the problem is when we don't acknowledge the mistake. We make the mistake and we cover it up. In situations of advocacy, our mistakes can have huge impact on others. So it's not just ourselves but a whole lot of other people that get affected by our mistakes, so if we

don't recognize them, acknowledge them and say "Oops, let's step back, figure out what we did here" we can make a mess not just for ourselves, but for a lot of other people.

4. Responsibility. The other contribution to credibility is a sense of responsibility which comes from the fact that in fact we are responsible.

We do what we do as public citizens and for a reason. Not because we are privately paid to do this work in civil society. Although, of course as we know, people get paid, they have jobs and so on. But making money is not our primary motivation. But it's very important to have that sense of responsibility, to be sure that in fact, you don't go into advocacy lightly. This is very important; I've been in many situations where people—women and I suppose men too—come to the advocacy environment, such as a meeting, and then go out shopping. And whether the work is done or not done, when everybody shows up, there is nobody to particularly point and say, "Where were you? Now we are not ready, what happened?"

Because there is no collective responsibility, there is only individual responsibility. But that is crucial because if we don't exercise that individual responsibility, we can take the easy way out, because there is nobody to ask us "What did



minist Advocacy

you do? Where were you? What happened to you at the critical moment when the governments were deciding on something and we needed this information? You had it, you were not there, and you were nowhere to be found." Nobody really asks these questions. We all know how polite we are to each other. Sometimes, if it's really bad, people will yell and scream at each other, but in the end it's a sense of responsibility that has to come from within ourselves, from within our organizations. Yet, it is an absolute requirement as well for credibility. If you are known to be irresponsible, people will say "that person says she will do something; don't believe it will get done." And that's, again, for an advocate, a real problem.

5. Being flexible. The other aspect of advocacy which I love to speak about is the importance of flexibility, because the art of friendly persuasion is exactly this. You cannot be like that pillar: immovable: "I have this position, I will not move." Well, you have to be able to move, and it is what in DAWN we now call the "Zen" of advocacy, based on the old Zen principle, "Bend, and you shall not break."

We have to know as advocates when to make a compromise. Advocacy is also about making compromises. You push as hard as you can and then, ok. But when we do that, of course, the real art of Zen is not letting the other side know what your bottom line is. Because if they know how far they can push you, then they will push you there immediately. You have to always pretend, "Oh, no, we are never going to agree to go below this level." But maybe your actual bottom line may be somewhere lower that you will not give up on.

The business of being able to be flexible is also a very important thing because we are really, as feminist advocates, in this for the long haul. I do not expect in my lifetime, to see the kind of feminist utopian world that we would all love to see. Some of you might, but I don't expect that I will!

The art of being flexible is also so that we can say, "Ok, let us back off a bit at this point so that we come back again." You don't give up, but you don't also fight to the point that you are destroyed at every moment. Again, I think that good advocates at whatever level know this quite well in their work: when to retreat, when to step backwards a little bit.

A more militaristic analogy than Zen is guerrilla warfare: take two steps forward, one step back, you move this side, if you can't do here, you go there, you go around, you do whatever needs to be done. The art of advocacy is really to be making and creating constantly those channels through which and from which one can in fact figure out the spaces for moving forward.

6. Integrity and basic principles. There are a couple of other issues which I hope to speak of at the end, which is something that we've learned at DAWN—the importance of integrity and basic principles. And I am saying that right after talking about flexibility because we cannot be flexible to the point where we have no basic principles left whatsoever; where we just do anything. Knowing what those principles are and having the integrity to maintain them, and I will speak about this a little bit later, is extremely important.

7. Building alliances. Another issue that is extremely important is building alliances. Advocacy is not something that we can do by ourselves as feminists; at least not in this world as yet. We don't have enough power as the feminist movement to be able to make the changes that we want without alliances. We should, because as women we know what proportion of the human race we are! But as feminists we are a much, much smaller group. And so building effective alliances is essential.

These are just some general principles that have come from DAWN's advocacy practice over the years.



Political and Economic Context

I now want to address the current political economic context and what kind of space it is opening or closing for us as feminist advocates. I am going to speak more about global spaces, although what happens at the global level has implications at the other levels.

However, we need to recognize that what is happening at the national and regional level and what is going on the global level need not always be synchronized. You can have much better (or worse) spaces at national or regional than at the global level. So just because the global looks one way, it doesn't mean that therefore it's the same in the others. But this absence of synchronicity or synchronization does not mean that there are no links. There are always linkages and those linkages are what we have to try and understand and act on while always recognizing the differences that may exist in our different contexts.

A participant from Lebanon already asked this question: "What do we do in contexts where the situation for women is very different, were it doesn't look like Uruguay, it looks like something else?" It is clear this is a very important question. I hope we can come back to this in the discussion.

Let us look however at broad commonalities. I am not going to speak about what we all know are the challenges of the global political environment and economy in terms of globalization, the inequality, the transformations taking place in the economy and politics, the difficulties in the political situations, militarization, the risks and dangers caused by the decline of American hegemony. Falling imperial power is always dangerous, and that is why we are now in a very dangerous international situation.

 *Walk the Talk / Next page*

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Challenges for the Feminist Movement

1. Tension between Economic Justice and Gender Justice. From the perspective of women's rights as human rights, one of the most central challenges that we face at the global level at this point is something that in DAWN we identified some time ago as the tension between economic justice on the one side and gender justice on the other. By gender justice I don't mean that there is no economic justice as part of gender justice, but I am referring here to all of those aspects of women's human rights that are outside the economic sphere such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women, anti-women cultural values, norms and practices.

The recognition of this tension for us came from our practice of advocacy. As we went to the conferences of the 90's as advocates, this tension was very evident. As DAWN is a Southern network, we were sitting right in the middle of this dilemma. On the one hand you had all of the North, (the European, the North Americans (pre Bush), the Australians, and so on) all pushing in conference after conference of the 1990's, for women's rights, gender equality, and so on. Whether it was the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, through Cairo, through Copenhagen, through Beijing, through Habitat, through all of them, they were the strongest, most vocal and articulate supporters for women's rights and equality.

But they were very intransigent when it came to economic justice issues. You would get perennially the stand off between the G77 on the one side, arguing the right to development, the right to a level playing field in trade, the right to adequate financial provisions, effective reforms of the financial system, the importance of ensuring food, removing poverty, inequality...All of these issues would be raised by the South. And often, what we started finding is that the women's rights agenda would fall between these two. It would be exactly the point at which the two sides would be struggling. Because the G77 would take hard-line positions on women's rights and gender

equality (although there are plenty of countries within the G77 including in Latin America that are very progressive on women's rights but they would speak for a long time under the umbrella of the G77), simply because they could find no other space to effectively confront the North except on the issue of gender equality and justice. This became a huge challenge and a tension that has existed for many years.

Now, of course this challenge has evolved over time. Some of the countries of the South evolved mechanisms to start breaking up this very hard tension, particularly countries of Latin America breaking off and saying to others in G77, "No, no, we won't go with you when it comes to reproductive rights, we have a different position." The G77 began more and more to speak as one on the economic issues but as individual countries or as other groupings on gender equality and women's rights. Although this started happening, every time there was an intergovernmental negotiation, there was always the risk that it would go back to the same hard tension.

On the other side, the problem was that, although the G77 was no longer such a solid block on the gender equality issues, there was no corresponding softening on the other side. There was nobody on the Northern side that broke up the Northern hard-line on issues like the right to development, aid, how aid is structured, financial issues, trade issues... The North remained and has continued as a solid bloc(k) against global economic justice, and this has posed for us Southern feminists a huge and continuing problem. If anything, the North has gotten even more consolidated. They are far more consolidated now than they have been in the past. This is a kind of asymmetry that has happened in the evolution of this tension which I think affects our advocacy space quite seriously.

2. Tensions with Development NGOs. Now, how do development NGOs view gender? Although this has slowly improved over time, the speed of progress we are making here is still at a snail's pace. To get development NGOs in general to start taking gender seriously has been a very hard


process—and this is true for even the most progressive NGOs, in the traditional sense. Many tend to be not progressive at all when it comes to taking gender seriously.

And this is an important tension because we, as women feminists, tend to be progressive on the broad development issues but many male development workers and organizations do not reciprocate. They don't include us, meaning they don't include our issues, and they don't ensure their organizations are fair or equal in gender terms, and we have to fight the same fight over and over again.

3. Tensions within Women's NGOs. A third tension is within women's NGOs. There is a problem, because many feminists tend to run away from the larger development issues, from economic issues, because they can be boring and confusing and also very technical.

As a movement we cannot afford to do this any more, or else we end up talking about poverty without knowing what is really going on. We end up not talking at all about finance when it's probably one of THE most central issues in the world today, especially given the nature of the financial crisis. And as the women's movement, if we pick up some issues and not the others, we then don't have a movement that has a possibility of moving across these spaces in a credible manner.

Toward an Accountability Benchmark

The proof lies not in the talking, but in the walking. So I would argue that, as we move forward as advocates, we need to develop what in DAWN we are now calling an "Accountability Benchmark," which basically is about how we as feminist organizations ought to be working with, allying ourselves with other actors, whether it is governments or others. This applies especially to those who claim to be our friends, more than anybody else. We know what to do with those who don't claim to be our friends; the problem is we don't know what to do with our friends. And that is, I believe, the importance of advocating always from a critical stance. It is the most important bottom line to avoid cooptation. 

Women Warn States / P3

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

- 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
- 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 join in 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 developing country 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 within developed countries as well as 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 related to gender equality and other so-called "positive conditionalities" and instead strengthen mutual responsibility, accountability and transparency of donors and recipient countries. 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 be 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.

Mr. Chair, I would like to end here by once again saying that the full text of our intervention will be submitted to this body and reiterating that engendering the financing for development process cannot be realized without a holistic approach that looks at the inter-connections among trade and finance in all its different forms—aid, investment, debt and domestic savings. Thank you. ✂

African Women's Struggles for Free Expression of Sexual Rights

Excerpts of UNHRC intervention by DAWN General Coordinator Bene E. Madunagu

What is known globally is that African women are vulnerable to numerous dimensions of violations of their sexuality and sexual rights. What is not popularized is that before, during and after colonialism, there have been historical and contemporary struggles and resistances against various forms of sexual exploitation by African women.

As an African feminist who since 1986 has been engaged in the DAWN process of research and analysis in the thematic research area of Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights and in consultations with women in the communities and learning from them, our analysis of their perceptions, outbursts, resistances and struggles clearly identify what they understand as sexual rights in Africa. Sexual rights in their/our context hinge on the inter-linkage between the enjoyment / denial of sexual rights with political, economic and social power/disempowerment.

The content and context of the expressions of sexual rights in different societies are crucial, since singular overarching definitions alone may limit the diversities through which these rights are expressed. Such understanding could provide the required information that could guide policy formulation and implementation. The dynamism of human development processes provides a clear indication that no single definition will fit all people, for all times and for all societies nor address all the dimensions including emerging ones in our changing world. Through their struggles, African women have much to say about what for them are sexual and reproductive rights.

Current African Women's Struggles

Presently in Africa, there is an African Feminist Forum which is linked with national feminist forums and AMANITARE, a partnership for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of African women and girls. In addition, women in rural communities in diverse economic, cultural, religious and social engagements form pressure/advocacy groups and are actively engaged in getting their voices

heard and resisting violations of their rights. These organizations and networks are continuing the struggles for the realization of African women's economic, political and social rights in all sectors of development which they see as a guarantee to the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights. No longer is the issue of differentiated sexual identities and expressions kept in the closet. Many women with men allies including young women and men are mobilizing within and between countries for the free expression of their sexuality and sexual rights irrespective of threats from very repressive and homophobic environments across the African continent.

For instance during the International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Rights in Africa (ICASA), women, men and youth representing members of largely minority sexual identities openly demonstrated for the recognition of their sexual rights to protect them from sexual exploitation and the attendant HIV/AIDS challenge.


Recently, the Chair of the Nigerian Senate Committee on Women and Youth tried to introduce a bill calling for a dress code for girls and women, claiming that it is the way women dress that provoked ills in the society. Nigerian women and men vigorously opposed the bill through mass mobilizations that included a press statement issued by the Nigerian Feminist Forum (NFF). The bill was eventually sidelined due to the strong opposition.

Virginity testing also became widespread. One private religious-based educational institution was reported to be forcing young girls to undergo pregnancy, virginity and HIV/AIDS tests. The practice was fought by diverse groups using strategies such as legal action to stop this violation of young women's sexual rights.

It must be recalled that on 26 October 2005 the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, also called the Maputo Protocol, and constituting a part of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, entered into force having been ratified by the required 15 member states. It covers a broad range of women's rights, including the elimination of discrimination against women, the right to dignity, the right to life, the integrity and security of the person, the right to education and training, economic and social welfare rights and health and reproductive rights. In particular, Article 5 of the protocol requires that all forms of female genital mutilation be condemned and prohibited. Feminists joined by other progressive groups continue to promote and expand the legal provisions and overall spirit of the Maputo Protocol / African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

The Role of DAWN

The role of DAWN has been in the research, analysis and advocacy for alternative policy paradigms that focus on human well-being. The inter-linkages lens use lessons from women as agents for social development, survivors of increasing poverty, and strugglers in conflicts and resistances against various forms of fundamentalisms. DAWN has provided clear analysis on the links between the effects on the rights to achieve the free expression of sexuality of a web of forces - market oriented macro-economic policies, unequal and gendered trade relations, under-representation/exclusion of women in decision making, politics and governance, different forms of fundamentalisms, and other sexist dimensions of development.


As well, DAWN has instituted regular Training Institutes for young women from the south both at the global level and at the regional levels. The DAWN Training Institutes (DTIs) and Regional Training Institutes (RTIs), are designed to provide research and feminist analytical tools and build the capacity of younger feminists of the global South in advocacy for political restructuring and social transformation towards gender and social justice. 

DAWN's SRHR Global Research Program: Interlinking ICPD with MDGs in the South

In the next three years DAWN will invest in evidence-based advocacy efforts on the connection between the ICPD agenda and the MDG agenda, to be carried out initially in India, Mexico and Nigeria. The objective of the global research is to verify the connections between sexual and reproductive health and rights policy and policy frameworks for reducing / eradicating poverty. The project, funded by the MacArthur Foundation is being led by Sonia Correa, DAWN's Global Research Coordinator for SRHR.

The DAWN coordinator, her assistant Alessandra Chacham, and researchers Asha George (India) and Erika Troncoso (Mexico) met in Rio in March 2008 to discuss the research framework and reach preliminary agreements on research methods, steps and guidelines. Ngkwase Surma was identified as research coordinator for Nigeria and an Indian research team was formed, composed of Ranjani Murthy and Renu Kama.

Country research plans have been designed and revised and a review of existing literature and relevant policy documents is in full swing. The research questions: are (a) what are the main trends observed in the political, social, economic, cultural and religious landscape in the three countries under examination? (b) to what extent do these trends affect positively or negatively the implementation of both the MDG and the SRHR


policy agenda? (c) what are the main actors engaged in these two policy processes? (d) to what extent the MDG policy agenda or poverty reduction strategies underway favor or not the full adoption of SRHR and rights policies or, at least, enhance pre-existing SRHR policy initiatives? (e) what factors and forces explain positive synergies or disjunctions? (f) if tensions, disjunctions and disconnections do exist between the MDG policy agenda and SRHR policies, what are they? And (g) in case positive synergy do exists, what is the scope and reach of relevant SRHR policy initiatives being implemented in connection with the MDG agenda or poverty reduction strategies being implemented at country level? DAWN Informs will keep you posted on further developments of this new research effort! 

Sexual Rights Advance in Americas

In the framework of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Charter of the Organization of American States, the 38th General Assembly of the OAS approved by consensus on June 03, 2008 the resolution AG/RES-2435(XXXVIII-O/08) "Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Human Rights" presented by the Brazilian delegation.

The resolution expresses concern about acts of violence and human rights violations committed against individuals because of sexual orientation and gender identity, and requests the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) to include in its agenda before the 39th regular session of the General Assembly the topic of "Human rights, sexual orientation, and gender identity." It further requests the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its 39th regular session on the implementation of this resolution, the execution of which shall be subject to resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

This is a historic advance in the Inter-American system, where for the first time the words sexual orientation and gender identity appear on an official document approved by consensus by 34 countries of the Americas, including Caribbean countries whose legislation still criminalize sexual conducts between adult individuals of the same sex. The unprecedented resolution represents a step forward in the working process for the approval of an Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, whose negotiation will continue next year. The current draft already includes sexual orientation and gender identity and expression as protected categories.


These achievements are the results of a collective working process started at the end of 2006 by Global Rights, Mulabi—Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos and IGLHRC—Latin America and the Caribbean (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission), aiming at strengthening the participation of the regional LGBTTTI movement as component of the civil society within the OAS. 

More on South's Disappointment: Global South Young Women Activists Call on UN to Abide by Principles of Transparency and Integrity

As young women activists from the global South, we are deeply distressed by the manner in which the Executive Director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been chosen.

We believe that any professional appointment within the UN system should occur with transparency and integrity; indeed, we look to the UN to lead the world in demonstrating the utmost rigour and accountability in such a process. Unfortunately, however, the selection process for the Executive Director of UNIFEM has taken over seven months, and culminated in the announcement last Monday (April 7), of a candidate who was clearly not chosen on the basis of merit: the UNDP Selection Committee had unanimously voted for a candidate from the global South, as being the best from over a hundred candidates.

We are dismayed both by the disrespect this demonstrates to an internal UN process of appointment, as well as to the image of the UN more globally. As an international institution based on principles of justice and equality, we expect the UN to abide by, and be accountable for, the highest standards of adherence to these principles.

We are particularly concerned about the implications of this selection process for the UN's commitment to gender equality, and UNIFEM's future leadership on issues of women's rights and empowerment. We envision an engagement with the UN system that is respectful and responsive; current events, however, have left us disappointed and disillusioned. As citizens and young feminists from the South, we strongly believe that our voices and concerns should be heard and represented at the UN. 

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