

Civil society recommendations for the Agreed Conclusion
of the 52nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
25 February – 07 March 2008
on the theme “Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”*

I. Mobilizing domestic resources

Taxation

Strengthening tax administrations and tax collection systems for gender equality through focusing on progressive direct taxation on wealth and capital assets, rather than value-added tax which “can put a greater burden on poor women because women tend to consume goods and services that benefit family health, education and nutrition” (SG Report pp 8 para 27).

Gender budgets

Adopt Gender Responsive Budgets (GRB) as a framework in national development plans, to ensure that adequate resources, whether from domestic revenue or aid allocated budget support, are channeled towards fulfilling international and national gender equality and human rights commitments.

Increased funding and a strengthened mandate for national women’s machineries to build capacities, undertake GRB initiatives, monitor and evaluate gender equality outcomes, and implement local level gender equality projects.

Decent work

Implement Temporary special measure to support women’s income and economic empowerment by removing barriers to market access for women’s small-scale production and full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Statistics to Account for unremunerated work

Use methods, such as time-use surveys, assumed by National Statistic Offices, to measure women's un-paid work and it's contribution to the national economy and make visible women’s actual economic contribution and gender-sensitive poverty measure in the National Accounts System. (ECLAC Quito Consensus 2007)

II. Mobilizing international resources

Provide public affirmation for strengthened global and domestic regulatory frameworks to ensure that business practices and foreign direct investment by the private sector are responsible and accountable to international and national standards on labor rights, gender equality and environmental protection.

Make private flows, including foreign direct investments and remittances, work for the poor by adopting domestic policies and programs that will ensure that the vagaries of the market do not undermine whatever gain is achieved through these channels.

III. International trade

Ensure that trade works for sustainable development by demonstrating through hard evidence, provided by sex aggregated data and gender impact reviews and assessments, that trade policies contribute to both poverty eradication and equitable economic growth in ways that benefit poor women's economic rights and empowerment.

Strengthen UN mechanisms and processes to enable the application of a normative framework for international and bi-lateral trade which ensures policy coherence between trade and international and national commitments on development, human and labor rights and gender equality.

IV. Aid and technical cooperation

Allocate sufficient resources to programmes that empower and facilitate the advancement of women should receive much more attention (2007 Summary of the President of the GA of the HLD on FfD, Para 44), starting by scaling-up the share of ODA for women's empowerment and gender equality to reach 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2015 of all ODA (CSW Experts Group Meeting on Financing for Gender Equality, September 2007).

Support the UN to lead in the effort to review the criteria for aid allocation, including those of the IFIs and the OECD, and consider new mechanisms to support poverty eradication and broader development efforts (2007 Report of the Secretary-General on FfD, para 93), and support a stronger role and leadership of the UN in aid effectiveness processes, that promotes genuine partnerships between donor and recipients, which would require that these processes avoid using donor-designed templates and indicators exclusively; and an inclusive perspective of democratic ownership as a key criteria to aid decision-making.

Use baselines as well as input and output performance indicators of gender impacts in budgetary reporting to improve the gender equality component in the current Aid monitoring systems, and specify gender targets, inputs and outputs in national budgets and ODA.

Ensure that existing and new ODA management review and performance assessment tools and measures reflect a results-based monitoring and evaluation component with a special focus on how gender equality and women's empowerment targets are being met, in both donor and developing countries, and that the operational development strategies established by developing countries for 2010, related workplans and the monitoring system of the Paris Declaration implementation, fully integrate gender equality targets and indicators.

V. External debt

Affirm 100% debt cancellation is both necessary and overdue, given that current debt-restructuring approaches have not liberated resources for development and in HIPC countries poverty is an epidemic affecting the majority of its people, most acutely women and children.

Initiate a new and genuine policy space on debt to enable countries to overcome debt distress as current policy space is conditioned by current debt relief mechanisms which do not recognize past failures of HIPC. (2007 Report of the Secretary-General on FfD, paras 97-102).

Ensure the resources resulting from debt cancellation can be diverted to financing for gender equality and women's empowerment, to ensure debt cancellation is beneficial to women. (SG Report pp 13 para 52)

VI. Systemic issues

Support stronger institutional arrangements at the UN to enable governments and the UN system to better achieve their commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights, through the establishment of a consolidated, stronger and fully funded UN entity for women led by an Under Secretary-General that combines normative and operational functions to effectively deliver on the ground, including a strong gender equality presence at country level, as well as promoting more effective gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system and through national policies, and also including meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular women's non-governmental organizations, in all its functions.

*** Prepared by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development: Association for Women's Rights in Development, Bahá'í International Community, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Global Call to Action against Poverty – Feminist Task Force (GCAP-FTF), MADRE, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Women in Development Europe (WIDE)**

Contact: Rosa Lizarde (rosaencasa@aol.com) or Nadia Johnson (nadia@wedo.org).