



Owning Development Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships

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Embedding Gender Equality in the MDGs

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Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished speakers,

I am very pleased indeed to have been invited to take part in this important UNIFEM — EU sponsored conference on “Owning Development and Promoting Gender Equality.”

I would like to talk about how we in Cambodia, Embedded Gender Equality into the MDGs and how we are continuing this work. I know that you are aware of the recent history of my country and I will not repeat that story. However, it has meant that we really only started serious gender mainstreaming work in the year 2000. We had been making slow but steady progress on mainstreaming gender since the first major national plan, the SEDP 1995-1999, which was not in any way gender responsive. The SEDP II (2000-2004) had a chapter on gender and by 2003 the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NSDP) included not only a Chapter on Gender but also some targets and indicators for gender in some of the sectors. The work on localising the MDGs that started in 2003 gave us a new opportunity for gender mainstreaming and for working on accountability tools for gender equality.

We had learned some important lessons from the past, we were better prepared and we had a wider base of technical assistance from donors. In particular, UNIFEM funded two full-time gender consultants to work with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to ensure that all the Goals had gender targets and indicators. (See PowerPoint slide.) We succeeded in having a number of indicators added to Goal 2: on education (4), Goal 4 on child mortality (6), Goal 5: on Maternal mortality (8), and Goal 6: on HIV/AIDS (5). In addition, we added to Goal 3 on Promoting Gender Equality, nineteen new indicators addressing secondary education, wage employment, female participation in decision-making and violence against women. However, Goal 1 on poverty and Goal 7 on the environment and resources were not engendered so there is still work to be done.

What has been our progress to-date on the CMDGs? (See PowerPoint slide.)

It is five years since the Millennium Summit and of course this is one of the milestone years. I will just give you a few highlights:

Goal 1: Around 28% of the population is below the poverty line which is a significant decrease from 39% in 1993. The economy has been growing at an average of 6% over the past decade but there is a very

uneven distribution of the benefits of this growth with urban areas benefiting most. Inequality between rich and poor is increasing while the numbers of working children and unpaid female family workers has changed little and we are not meeting our targets for reducing child malnutrition.

Goal 2: The ratio of girls to boys in primary schools has increased (from 87% in 2001 to 89% in 2005) and also in lower secondary schools (from 63% in 2001 to 72% in 2005). However this is below the CMDG targets. In addition, many children still do not attend school (nearly 22%) and the survival rate to Grade 9 is low (at 29%) especially for girls.

Goal 3: The gender ratio at upper secondary level has increased (from 48% in 2001 to 57% in 2005) and at tertiary level it has also increased (from 38% to 45.6% over the same period) but we have not reached our targets (of 59% and 50% respectively). The ratio of literate females to males in the age group 15-24 years (at 94%) has dramatically exceeded the target of 85% and women's share of waged employment in agriculture and industry are 53% and 54% compared with targets of 50% in both cases. On the other hand, women's share of waged employment in services in 2005 is 27% compared with the target of 30%. There has also been some improvement in the number of women in parliament where 17.5% of the seats are held by women thus our target has been met. In Cambodia, we added indicators for domestic violence to the CMDGs and I'm very happy to say that the Law for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims was passed by the parliament this month. We are now working on the regulations to implement it, together with a Prevention Plan, a training and dissemination programme, and the means to gather reliable data and to monitor the implementation of the Law.

Goals 4 and 5: Currently, there is debate in Cambodia about the trends in child and maternal mortality and I would rather wait until we have the most reliable data next year with the Demographic and Health Survey. Let me just say that these are issues of great concern because the rates are amongst the highest in the region. I can report however that the targets for immunization (DPT3 and measles) have been surpassed, as has the target for breast-feeding the newborn child within one hour of birth. The total fertility rate has declined (from 4 in 1998 to 3.3 in 2005) surpassing our target (of 3.8). The use of modern methods of birth-spacing and ante-natal care with skilled personnel has increased though they are well short of the targets.

Goal 6: Cambodia has made significant progress in meeting its targets to combat HIV/AIDS where the prevalence rate among adults ages 15-49 has sharply declined from 3.0% in 1997 to 1.9% in 2005 surpassing the target of 2.3% set for 2005. However, I am worried about the increase in incidence in married women and their children at the same time that the incidence in other population groups is declining.

Further work to engender the CMDGs (See PowerPoint slide.)

This year we have been working to get gender into more of the CMDGs especially Goal 1 on Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger:

- A UNIFEM and UNDP Gender and MDGs project is focusing on a study of the impact of trade reform on women garment workers.
- UNDP is planning a project to monitor the effects of accession to the WTO on Cambodia which is an initiative we welcome and believe will be of interest to many other countries, as well as economists and academics in many institutions.
- We are working with another UNIFEM project on Gender and Labour Migration with a focus on safe migration for women workers including government-to-government agreements.
- ADB is piloting a project with a local Cambodian NGO, to provide social support to women garment workers. The government has also recently signed an MOU with ADB, the Garment Manufacturers Association, and the ILO to provide training to garment workers through the Garment Training Centre.

Training women to become skilled employees and supervisors in garment factories is already underway.

- The Government is strongly committed to generating alternative employment, including by diversifying Cambodia's economic base, and the Ministry of Commerce is working to support SMEs including those run by women to understand local markets and better match skills to market demand. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is at the beginning of a process of converting its existing eight Women in Development Centres into enterprise centres for women with micro and small businesses and will build four more centres.
- The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Women's Affairs are currently working with ILO and other agencies to develop a national employment and training strategy and this will include a Gender Strategy supported by technical assistance from UNIFEM.

National Strategic Development Plan (See PowerPoint slide.)

Perhaps most important for "Embedding Gender Equality" into our national policies including the CMDGs is the work we have been doing this year on the National Strategic Development Plan for 2006-2010. Instead of having three national planning documents — SEDP, NPRS and CMDGs — we will have only one — the NSDP. This means that the CMDGs will become truly institutionalised and have the hope of being adequately resourced through the national budget and via donor support. The NSDP will be completed by the end of this month. So far, we can see that we are being effective in mainstreaming gender in this Plan even though there were many comments from other ministries' representatives that there was too much on gender and even that we were "extremists"!

Accountability Mechanisms (See PowerPoint slide.)

I have been asked to speak about the accountability mechanisms we have development to keep this work on track. Of course we have the regular Government Mechanisms of reporting to the United Nations and the progress report I gave above is taken from *Cambodia — Plus Five* which has just been completed though not yet launched. The CEDAW report is prepared by an inter ministerial committee — the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW).

I would like in particular to mention the series of 18 Technical Working Groups (TWGs) established under the Consultative Group process, one of which is the TWG on Gender which I chair. Unlike most of the other TWGs, this one on Gender has membership from all of the following stakeholders: the Government, donors, NGOs and the private sector. Our Action Plan incorporates the Gender Targets and Indicators from the CMDGs and we have to report our progress at meetings held at the national level every quarter. This has really imposed a discipline on our work and as you can see we are making progress. We find the TWG-G an excellent platform to promote gender mainstreaming across the whole of the bureaucracy. We have moved from having gender focal points to establishing Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) chaired at a senior level in each ministry. The TWGG is also a forum at which we can prompt donors to lend their support to the GMAGs in the ministries where they are already working on sectoral issues and even to expand their commitment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have concentrated on the broad context of national policy-making to show how the CMDGs are being incorporated and institutionalized in Cambodia. We firmly believe that this has to happen to ensure their acceptance and to ensure that the actions towards achieving them are resourced. We cannot have the CMDGs put in a box to one side, anymore than we can have gender put in a box and marginalised.

My conclusion is that achieving change in national policy development is possible with the right strategies geared to the specific situations. Our approach has been, I think, innovative, systematic and consistent, at the same time as taking a medium-term view. We have seen that incremental change can be achieved, both in policy making and its implementation.

However, if Cambodia is to achieve the CMDGs, greater financial inflows through aid, reduced debt servicing and increased account inflows are critical to bridge the recourse gaps and to foster the country's growth. There are strong justifications for this since the amount of official development assistance to Cambodia is low compared to that received by many other least developed countries. As the director General of the United Nations said at the Millennium Summit in New York in September, the world has the resources to achieve the MDGs. I am asking, does the developed world have the will to put geopolitics aside and provide the resources needed to help the poorest of the poor?

I thank you for your attention.