



Owning Development Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships

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The National Development Policy Process: Opportunities for Engagement

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to track to what extent women are addressed within global and national efforts to eradicate poverty and bring about development. How can poverty be eradicated if women are systematically excluded from developmental policy formulation and decision making processes, as well as participating in all other processes that govern their lives, from protection against abuse and violence?

The paper traces the different development paradigms, the recently adopted development policies such as Poverty Reduction Strategies Paper (PRSP), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other National Development Policy Process such as MKUKUTA¹ in Tanzania and the process that lead to the adoption of such policies. To what extent these policies are discussed with a more opportunities for engagement approach in the formulation, design, and implementation and monitoring. Questions like what resources are devoted to addressing the inequalities women face? What mechanisms are in place to make sure women are heard, their problems identified, and programmes designed to ensure they are fully included in development actions intended in eradicating poverty?

In due course, the paper address the issue of the imprecise policies related to development and the implications of such policies to women in particular. The endorsement of financial liberalization, free market policies, liberalization of the government control over public services and institutions, the sustainable economic growth at the expense of poor women is a matter of the concern.

The questioned posed here related to the extent to which the above development policies, PRSP and MDGs take into account the crucial and critical issues of gender equality. The part also deals with forward-looking strategies to ensure more opportunities for engagement to address development issues in the world particularly in Africa. The alternative response to the arising contradiction in the development policies is discussed in the last part of this paper together with the conclusion.

¹MKUKUTA in English known as National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty is home gown strategy for poverty eradication. It is said to be developed from a wide consultation of the people in al levels.

2.0 The current Development Policy Process: Context and Formulations

2.1 *The right to development: Development Strategies and Initiatives*

The Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 41/128 of 4 December, 1986 which states as follows:

“1. The right to development is an unalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

.... 3. States have the right and the duty to **formulate appropriate national development policies** that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, **on the bases of their active, free and meaningful participation in the development** and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting there from.”

In realizing the right to development by the world Governments, the United Nations took a number of measures includes formulating different development policies and strategies.

We all remember in 1995 when the governments of the World in the *World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) held in Copenhagen, Denmark*, had solemnly and public committed themselves to eradicate poverty, achieve gender equality and attain social development in the world².

They also called for action to reduce inequality and economic disparity³. All these issues were recaptured during the revision process of the Social Summit at Geneva +5⁴. The Geneva Summit also stressed the need for collective action to anticipate and offset the negative social and economic consequences of globalization and to maximize its benefits for all members of the society including women.

It should also be remembered, at *the Millennium Summit in 2000*, 189 nations adopted and signed the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, under which an agreement was reached on an agenda for international development, expressed in a set of eight Millennium Development Goals, 16 global targets with 48 indicators, targeted for 2015. The MDGs are now widely accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. For our case the declaration is very important as it recognize the importance of advancing *human rights of women's* especially in *gender equality*, in combating all forms of violence against women and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The declaration also recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an effective way of combating poverty, hunger and diseases and for stimulating truly sustainable development⁵.

²The heads of state and governments made a pledge to reduce inequalities, increase opportunity and access to resources and income and to remove any political, legal, economic and social factors and constraints that foster and sustain inequality.

³Governments were urged not to just analyze policies and programs with regards to the impact on inequality and poverty-including those related to microeconomic stability, structural adjustment programs, taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy as well as their gender implications, but also to adjust them to promote a more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services.

⁴At Geneva +5 during Special Session of the General Assembly it was pointed out that the growing inequality between and among nations is a major setback in social development since the summit. The impact of the current pattern of globalization on the increased inequality and the worsening of terms of international trade and inflows of financial resources for developing countries were highlighted. We all know that when it come to the negative impact of globalization, we all suffer but some suffers more within the families and these are women.

⁵ Pathway to Gender Equality, CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGS, United Nations Development Fund For Women (UNIFEM)

More important the Millennium Declaration reconfirms the central role of gender equality from the perspective of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) and other major world conferences⁶

The above picture is a clear indication that development is the number one priority in today world and that's why there are many initiatives and strategies designed to address development in the World.

2.2 Strategies/Policy Formulations: Opportunities for Engagement

Critically analyzing the above development strategies and initiatives one will find the truth that all development strategies have fallen short of a conceptual framework to enable a critical analysis of the fundamental factors of underdevelopment and its vulnerability. Development Strategies and initiatives supposed to take on board issues and needs of women in the formulation of the development policies, different local strategies and analysis so as to ensure women opportunities for engagement, involvement and ownership of the development policy process. Nevertheless all development policies did not take fundamental issues on board.

The failure of adopting gender oriented frameworks and participatory approaches in the conceptualization of development strategies and policies has been resulting in the adoption of development focused policies, strategies and programmes that fail to improve the lives of millions of women in the world.

The new introduced development rules, regulations and policies extend and protect political and economic interest of the rich nations which in turn they re - defined and reconstructed poverty, gender relations and class of the intensification of the classes between the poor and the rich. All these have the big effects in good strategies and policies such as Beijing Platform of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The worst part of these contradictory good and bad policies is that they all dominate the United Nations System right now and one can find that the strategies such as MDGs are undermining other good strategies such as BPfA. For instance the BPfA takes into account the deep inequalities within and across countries while the MDGs ignore the structural nature of poverty as well as the structural nature of gender inequality. There is also a central contradiction within the MDGs process that asks governments to invest in pro-poor policies while at the same time employing neo-liberal economic policies that only serves to increase the impoverishment of marginalized women and men.

Within the MDGs framework there also lack of recognition of the role of the neo-liberal macro-economic policy framework in creating and perpetuating the very problems the MDGs aim to overcome. MDGs do not address the structural problems within the existing macroeconomic policy framework nor adequately addressing global trade imbalances, which to a greater extent affect the countries economies⁷.

It was noted by many women's human rights advocates that gender equality, as a cross-cutting concern for the achievement of the MDGs, is not well reflected in the global targets and indicators⁸. There is concern that the more far-reaching obligations and commitments embodied in CEDAW, the Beijing

⁶such as the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the Vienna Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements (1996)⁶. These world conferences organized by the UN in the 1990s provided the impetus for the international community to come together at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to agree on steps needed to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, and the Millennium Declaration renewed the commitments made by all member states at these conferences

⁷For the matter of fact Millennium Development Goals were never about revolution, the MDGs make no efforts to challenge the Neo Liberal orthodoxies of the trade policies or debt and aid conditionality, but instead seek to modify some of their deleterious effects. Even though the goals arguably address the disease of poverty rather than its causes, they are currently the biggest show in towns.

⁸ Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice, 2004

Platform for Action and other globally and regional agreed documents have been poorly represented. Advocates are taking up this challenge by calling for the *inclusion of a broader range of gender-sensitive targets and indicators* at the national level and more importantly-beyond the questions of measurement and reporting-it is clear the actual strategies that will be adopted to achieve MDGs must incorporate strong gender equality initiatives if they are to be successful. As the 2003 Human Development Report has stressed, "gender equality is at the core of whether the Goals will be achieved- from improving health and fighting disease, to reduce poverty and mitigating hunger, to expand education and lowering child mortality, to increase access to safe water, to ensuring environmental sustainability"⁹

Africa and particularly my country Tanzania can represent different challenges facing the MDGs, for instance in gender equality. One of the biggest challenges concerning gender equality is the patriarchy system and the negative attitudes towards women. This has been a culture in Africa for centuries and centuries. Historians believed in order to change a custom of a certain society it requires certain centuries. Looking at the MDGs framework, the framework seeks to solve critical problems with measurable targets but without adequately addressing the root causes of the problems¹⁰

Gender relationship need to be contextualized within global strategies and initiatives to bring about development. This conceptualization must not be simply as a function of material possession but more outstandingly reflecting the role of institutions and ideologies in positioning women in global development.

Opportunities for Engagement of women in the formulation, formations, implementations, evaluation and analysis of different development strategies are very crucial especially in the deconstructing of the said strategies.

Giving women opportunities for engagement approach is very crucial in the analysis especially in emphasizing the role to be played by women in analyzing, developing and formulating different development strategies, initiatives and policies. Working directly with women is a critical strategy that will facilitate recognizing the limitations of the current development policies, initiatives and strategies. This will also help in developing approaches that will take the needs and interest of women on board¹¹.

We all remember that historically the *Poverty Eradication Strategies Paper*, was simply introduced by World Bank and International Monetary Fund to reduce criticism of the harsher Structural Adjustment Programmes which were responsible for the increase of poverty and misery in the world and particularly in African countries. I am also with the view that PRSP is another name of the SAPs as SAP and PRSP were both located within the World Bank and IMF macro economic policy framework with the main purposes of exploiting nations, which are weak economically. These two programmes have had a disparate impact on women, which has resulted into the unacceptable "feminization of poverty" in many countries with economies in transition¹².

⁹ UNDP, 2003

¹⁰Problems such as few numbers of women in decisions making bodies are contributed much by customs and traditions. In health for instance, the MDGs framework conceptualize health as a disease (HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, and measles), etc and there is a notable absence of any substantial discussion of non-disease elements of health, including issues related to women's health, such as sexual and reproductive rights. Gender based violence is another aspect not included in the MDGs neither as health nor as gender issues. Again the notions of power and unequal power relations are not present in the discourse; therefore the questions of how to ensure the political commitment to fundamental change in the society that would be central to women's empowerment are not addressed. Given the existing patriarchy system in Tanzania and other African countries, there are a lot of harmful and discriminatory customs and traditions that affect women in many ways.

¹¹ This means that integrating gender as a category of analysis in international, national and local debates on development and in the construction, formulation and initiations of appropriate economic, political and social policies and programmes concerning development is the important form of giving women the opportunities for engagement.

¹² Sedasivam, Bharati, "The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women: A Governance and Human Rights Agenda", 19 HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY, (1997) at page 630. The disproportionate cost of

Following this context, we also find that PRSP and SAP were imposed from outside to African countries. These ignore all local developed development strategies, initiatives and policies. It does not also represent the interest and needs of the African women because women were also not given opportunity to engage themselves in the design and formation of these strategies¹³.

Development strategies and initiatives can only be successfully if a gender dimension is integrated in all related programmes, that is, to have an equitable and gender responsive development. A society enmeshed in abject poverty cannot achieve its target of protecting and promoting human rights of women because poverty itself is the greatest violation of human rights of women. In poverty women suffers more than men. We as developing nations need first of all to address the question of poverty reduction seriously so as to give meaning to the enjoyment of human rights of women.

3.0 Opportunities and Engagement in Development Policy Process

3.1 Towards Participatory Approach to Gender Responsive Development

The effective institutionalization of “gender mainstreaming” in all development processes, policies and programmes at all levels is very important for the gender responsive development to occur. According to the agreed conclusions (1997) of the UN Economic and Social Council, *“mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area at all levels”*

Gender mainstreaming must be the strategy for making the concerns of both women and men and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally in order to avoid inequality. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality¹⁴.

Dear participants, we all have to remember, in addressing the problem arise from different development strategies and initiatives; we need first to recognize that, denying women and other poor people the opportunities for engagement in the formulation, construction of different development paradigms, policies and initiatives is the denial of their basic rights to humanity as well as development guaranteed in different nations and international conventions.

What are needed now are not simply forums, discussions and workshops on development strategies and how they are ignoring women’s basic rights to development but serious collective strategies based on mutual public debates and active participation of women in the formulation, implementations, monitoring and evaluations of the development strategies. I believe it is through these collective strategies and public

adjustment borne by women violates their rights to development guaranteed in national and international conventions and makes these economic reforms unsustainable in the long run. Approaches utilizing good governance and human rights principles to achieve gender justice and equality in economic restructuring have not yet had intended impact of alleviating poverty particularly among the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable members of the society such as women, children and the youth

¹³ PRSP were not developed with a conceptual framework that recognizes the gendered nature/dynamics of poverty and development.¹³ In this way, PRSPs do not in a major way, address or involve the needs of the majority of the poor women and men in their communities¹³. The lack of the meaningful participation of the key stakeholders’ i.e. communities in analyzing issues related to poverty and settings of strategies for its eradication calls for broader democracy approaches in tackling the issues of poverty in Africa

¹⁴ However, this strategy appears to be frequently misunderstood. Rather than being presented as strategy to achieve gender equality, at different times it is presented as an objective in itself.

debates that people can recognize the current development strategies and initiatives cannot guarantee a gender based development/gender responsive development¹⁵.

Mainstreaming gender equality into governments' budgets is very crucial for gender based development; this does not mean "adding on women" or presenting a separate budget for women rather than a gender budget looks beyond the resource used specifically targeting women to disaggregating all votes in the budget and assessing their likely and actual impact on women and men. A gender budget track both the expenditure and the revenue side of the ordinary budget, from the appropriation to the actual use of funds (delivered services or income transfers) and from the raised funds (taxation, user charges etc) to actual incidence of payment¹⁶. This exercise reveals the amount of government spends on its declared policies of gender equality, as well as whether the way government raises that money supports gender equality¹⁷. By making use of previous years findings from gender budgets, future government budget should be adjusted, designed and implemented in a way that improves gender equality and supports both women's and men's priorities¹⁸.

The impact of government budget on individuals' lives is very big and therefore mainstreaming of gender equality into budgets is an important gender equality issue¹⁹.

For the changes to happen, construction of alternative paradigms for gender-based development is necessary. All women rights activists need raise their conceptual clarity on issues relating to different development strategies and initiatives. It is important for the women activists to analyze the gender based development and challenge all forms of development frameworks and ideology including the externally oriented such as globalization policies, PRSP and MDGs which are based on a monopoly of power and social exclusion especially in a gendered way.

Conclusion

This paper has stressed on the importance of giving women opportunities for engaging themselves in the formulation of development strategies. The paper calls for more gender oriented development strategies that take into account the needs and interest of women. In particular, the paper calls for creation of an effective space for women to express and participating in addressing development issues in the world. As concluding remarks the following are imperatives for the gender-based development.

- Construction of an alternative gender based paradigm with a clear conceptual framework that contextualizes challenge to gender based development such as inequalities perpetuated through macro economic policies. This paradigm also should be ready to challenge the exploitative and

¹⁵ From these public forums and debate we will get information and new ideas which emerged from the popular groups including the perspectives of women in developing alternative paradigm to address development in the world. It is within this context that women will effective participate in the designing of development paradigm which is gender focused. This will guarantee the "ownership of the development policies by women in a gender way". For this case, we are all responsible to make our governments need to take active role in questioning and confronting the dominant development discourse which are gender insensitive. We need for example, to stand together so as to ensure participatory, democratic and more transformative approaches which put on board the development needs and interest of women are adopted in the world.

¹⁶ Sida, Workshop on Mainstreaming a Gender Equality Perspective into Governance Budgets. (Prepared for SIDA, Secretariat for Policy and Corporate Development, by Charlotta Adelstal, 1998)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Social justice (in terms of equal access to social services) is an important objective in its own right. Formulating policies on the basis of an analysis which considers all peoples needs ensures a more efficient management of resources and improves the effectiveness of macroeconomic policy in achieving wider objectives for society: Since gender budgets involve follow up of governments declared, planned and delivered services, it also support accountability and good governance.

patriarchal values (including gender inequalities) perpetuated through governance and financial institutions and structures at international, national and local levels.

- Critical examination of the fundamental change in the world and individual countries in the structure and institutional imbalances of economic policies, laws, development programmes and processes, patterns of resource ownership, access to factors of production (education, land, capital and credit); political and decision making structures that are currently unequal and biased against the majority of women.
- Foreign development strategies must be incorporated in the local development strategies so that they can be implemented together for instance in Tanzania we have the famous MKUKUTA (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction Poverty) NSGRP which incorporated the MDG framework, which has broader and more ambitious targets and believed to focus on people.

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