



Design: Benny Gommers

*Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality  
in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*

Conference sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for  
Women (UNIFEM) and the European Commission (EC)

9-11 November 2005

Brussels, Belgium

**FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT**

15 February 2006

## Preface

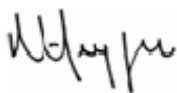
We are pleased to present the summary report from the UNIFEM/EC conference, *Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*, held in Brussels, 9-11 November 2005. The meeting was a landmark, providing the first inclusive dialogue on the new aid modalities and their implications for promoting gender equality.

The meeting was also a landmark in providing substantive collaboration between UNIFEM, the European Commission, governments and civil society, from both North and South. The strategies that emerged will help to accelerate, improve and adapt policies and programming for gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation.

The European Commission followed up its commitment to integrate the outcomes of the conference into a series of new initiatives. In December the European Union adopted a new development policy, entitled The European Consensus, which includes a strong commitment to gender equality. The EU has also developed guidelines on gender equality for the programming process which will be discussed in a series of regional consultations in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In addition, the European Commission is working on methodologies that will help ensure that the new aid modalities contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

UNIFEM has set up a core task team to support and maintain the networks of gender equality experts in new aid modalities formed at the conference, both between the North and the South and within specific countries and regions. The goal is to ensure that all the dialogue gets rooted at the ground – where the urgency and action and changing is taking place. This group is developing a more substantive position paper for broad circulation.

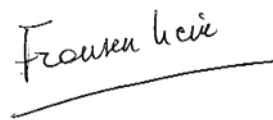
A great many people contributed in different ways to making this conference a reality, both at UNIFEM and at EC. But the success of the conference depended fundamentally on the participation and contributions from all of you. In moving forward, we hope you will continue to partner with us in ensuring that gender equality is an integral part of development cooperation.



Noeleen Heyzer  
Executive Director  
United Nations  
Development Fund for Women  
(UNIFEM)



Mirjam van Reisen  
Director  
Europe External Policy  
Advisors (EEPA)



Lieve Fransen MD, Ph.D  
Head of Human and Social  
Development in  
DG Development,  
European Commission

## Summary Report

A conference entitled "Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships," initiated by the European Commission and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and organized in cooperation with Europe External Policy Advisers (EEPA), was held in Brussels, Belgium 9-11 November 2005. The meeting brought together representatives from UN and European Union Member States and institutions, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) as well as gender specialists and women's rights advocates to discuss how to accelerate progress on gender equality and development cooperation in the context of the new aid modalities. Designed as a follow-up to the year's landmark events, including the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, the adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the 2005 World Summit, the conference sought to build networks and partnerships to strengthen the architecture and financing of gender equality in this context. As such, it provided a critical space for women from developing countries to engage in the debate on "partnership for development" with the European Commission and other donors, and highlighted agreed-on entry points for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the new aid architecture.

### *New Political Commitments: 2005 World Summit and the Paris Declaration*

At the 2005 World Summit in September, world leaders reaffirmed the Millennium Declaration and its development goals and provided political support to renewed efforts to achieve them. Women's advocates and civil society organizations successfully mobilized to ensure the outcome recognized human development and human security as interlinked goals and the importance of gender equality as essential to meeting the Millennium Development Goals as well as a critical part of Poverty Reduction Strategies.

As efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) intensify following the Summit so do the challenges to make development assistance more effective. Following a series of meetings, 90 developing and developed countries and 27 aid agencies agreed on a set of aid reforms that forges a partnership between donor and recipient countries, aligns development assistance with national development priorities and ensures a focus on poverty reduction. The reforms are outlined in The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, issued in March 2005 and endorsed at the highest political level at the 2005 World Summit. The new approach is based on five principles, namely: 1) **ownership** by recipient governments of the design and implementation of national development plans; 2) **alignment** of aid with national development priorities and poverty reduction strategies to ensure holistic support and minimize competing or contradictory programmes; 3) **harmonization** of aid flows to increase effectiveness and predictability; 4) **performance** focused management of aid; and 5) **accountability**, through systems, procedures and capacities to monitor performance within donor and recipient countries.

The Paris Declaration makes clear that development aid must be driven by the concept of partnership between donors and recipient countries, and ownership of the development process by recipients. This conceptual shift is mirrored in the preferred mechanisms through which aid is increasingly allocated, namely, Budget Support and Sector Wide Approaches

(SWAPs), as opposed to support for individual projects. Instruments such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) are also used more frequently.

#### **Budget Support**

Budget Support covers financial assistance as a contribution to the overall budget. Within this category, funds may be nominally accounted for against certain sectors, but there is no formal limitation on where funds may actually be spent.

#### **Sector Wide Approach (SWAP)**

Sector Wide Approaches involve donor support to the development of an entire sector in a given country, such as health, education or agriculture.

#### **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)**

PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as a prerequisite for borrowing by its poorest and most indebted country clients. They are intended to outline the country's main problems relating to poverty and its strategy to overcome them. PRSPs are meant to be drafted by the recipient government in consultation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Following on the Paris Declaration, the EU has crafted a new Development Consensus and an EU Strategy on Africa, emphasizing gender equality as an important aspect of both.\*<sup>1</sup> In its new policy document "The European Consensus" the European Union stated :

*"Some issues require more than just specific measures and policies; they also require a mainstreaming approach because they touch on general principles applicable to all initiatives and demand a multisectoral response. This is true, for example for gender equality. (...) The Commission will relaunch this approach, making systematic and strategic use of all resources at its disposal. For instance it will intensify the dialogue with its partners and set up networks of expertise and technical support" (p. 23.)*

The European Union's Africa strategy also emphasizes the importance of promoting gender equality in the context of its commitment to the aid effectiveness agenda. It states:

*"The EU should ensure that gender equality is fully taken into account in all partnerships and in national development strategies including in poverty reduction strategies" (p. 25.)*

Aid effectiveness is essentially about *development* effectiveness and is meaningful only if it enhances the role of all development actors in the process. Women are critical agents in development, not only because they are citizens with equal rights and responsibilities as men but also because they are located differently in economies and societies and therefore bring a different perspective to the economic and political challenges facing countries and

---

\* Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African Pact to accelerate Africa's development {SEC(2005)1255}, Brussels, 12.10.2005, COM (2005)489 final; Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, EU, Proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy "The European Consensus" {SEC(2005)929}, Brussels, 13.7.2005, COM(2005)311 final.

communities in a global world. Yet in development cooperation, women are still generally regarded not as change agents but as ‘vulnerable groups.’ If aid effectiveness is about ownership, how can women be part of the process of development planning?

In order to meet the objective of enhancing ownership, the new aid modalities crucially require accountability, especially that of recipient governments to their constituents. This makes it critical that national parliaments and civil society participate in ensuring delivery on nationally-agreed development plans, including adequate resource allocations. Women, as citizens and stakeholders in their country’s development, as half the population and over half of the poorest in many cases, have a keen interest in seeing that their needs are addressed in national development planning. Gender equality is now accepted as critical to efforts to eradicate poverty, enhance democratic governance and achieve sustainable development – and is therefore an element and goal of development planning. While there is no set formula for developing a rights-based approach to achieving gender equality, policies and procedures for development planning, law enforcement, education, and resource allocation must be prioritized with clearly stated principles of gender equality.

The new aid architecture presents an opportunity to promote ownership, make development assistance more effective and advance the gender equality/poverty eradication agenda. To date, however, analyses of Sector Wide Approaches and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers indicate that gender analysis is generally inadequate if not missing altogether. Currently, the integration of a gender perspective at the national level is not sufficiently reflected in institutional arrangements, national development strategies, development programmes, budgets, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue rather than a separate sector, and gender mainstreaming (when used as a strategy across sectors) is usually poorly implemented, usually poorly implemented, contributing to the gap between commitment and action.

The challenges and opportunities of making these links, which are both political and technical, and of embedding gender equality firmly into national development planning and the aid effectiveness agenda engaged over 130 participants for two and a half days, including panel presentations and discussions as well as strategic working groups.

Discussion focused on 5 interrelated themes, as follows:

#### *1. Country ownership, gender equality and country development planning*

The importance of country ownership in the new aid architecture raises the issue of which constituencies will be regarded as fundamental stakeholders in the national planning process by which ownership will be established and legitimated. Gender equality advocates joined government counterparts in asserting the need to ensure that ownership be broad-based and inclusive, embracing representatives of women’s rights and social justice organizations as well as the dominant interests in the political arena. Gender equality advocates must also recognize the importance of engaging in these processes. To date, they have invested heavily in working with governments to develop national gender action plans and CEDAW reporting. The new aid modalities position country ownership of development processes, including PRSPs, SWAPs, etc. as central for partnerships and related resources from donors. This makes it imperative to ensure that commitments to gender equality, as expressed in national gender action plans and reported under CEDAW, become an integral part of these processes.

While emphasizing the importance of engaging with national development frameworks, some speakers were concerned that national ownership processes would tighten the focus on engagement with ministries of planning and finance and could exclude gender machinery and advocates from planning and resource allocation processes. They also cautioned that not all frameworks equally addressed development priorities and poverty eradication or made space for the objectives of gender quality. Strategies to support gender equality in country processes must not overlook or minimize the difficulties of promoting gender equality in what may be a limited or inadequate process (PRSPs were cited in this context) and must include broader strategies and alternatives.

Panelists and participants pointed out that it is also important to situate the Paris Declaration in the context of globalization, trade agreements and other processes that impact gender, poverty and employment. These processes, largely beyond the control of poor nations, can limit the extent to which ownership can ever be truly national.

## *2. Participation and negotiation*

National ownership, to be genuine, requires a process of broad-based participation and room for negotiation within the policy and planning process. Aid modalities such as PRSPs typically require evidence of consultations and participation by different groups. Panelists noted, however, that often these are *pro forma* exercises that fail to reach beyond a few constituencies, and when they do, do not guarantee that the concerns and recommendations that come out of the consultation process will inform the policy and planning document.

Ensuring broad-based ownership and integrating gender equality into the new aid modalities means that civil society organizations, including women's organizations, need to demand the political space for this to happen – and that governments and donor countries have to create it. As the policy guidelines and instruments for implementing the Paris Declaration are rolled out, it is important to ensure that participation is genuine, and that participants can negotiate the selection of indicators and benchmarks. The lead up process for the next High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, planned for 2008 in Ghana, provides a critical entry point in the process, where gender equality advocates can negotiate to ensure gender equality is integrated in the guidelines and indicators for implementing the Paris Declaration.

## *3. Partnership*

Together with national ownership, the bedrock concept of the new aid agenda is that of partnership between the recipient and donor governments. Donor support is not meant to replace country level processes, but rather to enhance the ownership of policies by the recipient countries. Donors must transfer policy and implementation responsibility to the partner country. The need for a new type of donor-recipient partnership was effectively illustrated through examples of the very high number of missions from donors to recipient countries, each imposing time and transactions costs on recipient country governments. The need for more harmonized and simplified approaches, however, must not reduce the space for gender equality in the interests of so-called “effectiveness.” The Minister of Women's Affairs in Cambodia very effectively described the limitations of the present situation and challenged the donors to improve not just streamline their approaches.

However, throughout the conference, participants noted that advancing gender equality requires multiple forms of partnerships, which must be institutionalized in the new

modalities within countries at different levels and with different branches of government. Partnerships must be built from the ground up rather than the top down, and include civil society participation both in donor and international fora. Such partnerships are particularly needed with male-dominated institutions and governance structures. Gender equality advocates were very clear about the limitations of strategies to influence an inadequate framework and the need for fresh thinking on their north/south alliances. Without this approach to partnerships, the aid modalities risk furthering centralized national and donor processes, offering only “choice-less” spaces for women/gender advocates to engage.

Many participants spoke to the need to increase the political leverage of gender equality advocates and to ensure that civil society organizations (especially gender equality organizations) have independent access to funding to enable them to participate in the implementation of the new aid modalities at the national level.

#### *4. Accountability and mutual accountability*

Strategies for achieving gender equality have centered on developing normative standards and related accountability mechanisms to make public authorities answer to their commitments to gender equality goals. Accountability/mutual accountability of donor and aid recipient governments is a key principle of the new aid modalities. Presentations explored effective accountability mechanisms, stressing that consultative processes and dialogue are not substitutes for accountability systems that enable citizens to demand answers of public authorities. The need for citizen engagement in accountability processes, and for transparency in aid planning and spending decisions, was stressed.

In addition to country level accountability systems, speakers and participants all emphasized the importance of donor accountability.

Last year, UNIFEM commissioned a study of gender equality and development assistance called “Accountability Upside Down: Gender Equality in a Partnership for Poverty Eradication” which tracked gender equality commitments through all stages of development assistance programming. The study, published by Eurostep and Social Watch and carried out by Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA), traced policy evaporation in the step-by-step transition from legal and policy frameworks, to budget allocations, to implementation, evaluation and impact, and found a widening gap between commitment and implementation at each stage. It concluded that implementation and accountability cannot be limited to recipients of development aid; to deliver for women, development partners must equally stress accountability. Presentations also emphasized the importance of engaging the governance structures of international and development institutions in accountability systems, not just development officials.

The new challenges to advancing gender equality from this new architecture continue to place a premium on sex-disaggregated data and the development of gender-sensitive indicators as budget support becomes the preferred vehicle in the new modalities. Several participants stressed the opportunity for gender equality experts to take advantage of the growing donor demand for gender-sensitive indicators for budget support.

Gender budgets were also seen as critical to the process of monitoring and accountability of the aid effectiveness agenda. The example of Morocco was cited, where the Ministry of

Finance has included a gender annex in its 2006 budget and is incorporating gender-sensitive indicators in its performance-based budgeting.

As the implementation guidelines for the new aid architecture are rolled out at the country level, gender sensitivity must be included in accountability mechanisms and accountability must be monitored with gender-sensitive indicators. The accountability role of different actors: government, regional economic communities, development agencies, international institutions, civil society and the private sector, must be clarified. International human rights agreements (e.g. CEDAW) must be included in measures of accountability and in monitoring mechanisms.

#### *5. Knowledge and communication*

Women and gender equality advocates want to be able to engage with the new aid modalities with knowledge from the ground, as well as technical and political knowledge. Communication about the new aid architecture and the national development planning process must inform citizens in concrete terms of the benefits they may expect from development policy, the resources earmarked for particular services, and the means by which they may demand redress for non-delivery. Gender advocates must make their objectives, analyses, and proposals accessible to and applied by policy-makers. Co-ordination must be sought between ministries of planning, finance, statistical services, and women's machineries in order to ensure effective gender planning and programming, including gender budgeting and implementation, which are central to the roll-out of the new aid modalities. The European Commission addressed this with the development of a ToolKit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC development co-operation and issued specific guidelines for the programming process on gender equality. However, donors acknowledged that further and more specific criteria are needed to ensure that gender equality is taken into account in General Budget Support and Sectoral Programmes.

#### ***Moving Forward: Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness***

In the coming years, the European Commission aims to provide 50 per cent of its development assistance through Budget Support, highlighting the need to ensure that gender equality is an integral part of national development planning. Drawing on the priorities and recommendations expressed at the conference, the European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in development cooperation in several important ways, including:

- Adopting implementation methodologies and accountability mechanisms for strengthening gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in development cooperation;
- Carrying out gender-equality assessments on a systematic basis, including in relation to budget and sectoral aid;
- Conducting consultations with women's organizations in country programming processes and ensuring their outcome informs policy and programming;
- Issuing improved guidelines for gender equality in country programming in order to help country and geographic desk officers;

- Co-operating with EU Member States, UN partners and women's rights organizations to ensure gender mainstreaming in budget support and Sector Wide Approaches and gender-sensitive PRSPs.

The EU also committed itself to issuing a strong new policy on gender equality in development cooperation in 2006.

## Conference Proceedings

The programme was carefully designed to ground discussion on existing gender experiences and strategies at the national level. Plenary sessions were structured sequentially to: 1) lay out the big picture, especially the new trends in aid effectiveness and the follow up to the 2005 World Summit; 2) integrate into the national ownership debate the success stories and challenges from embedding gender equality in national processes; and 3) draw on experiences of integrating gender in to development cooperation frameworks and aid modalities, and provide a framework for thinking about new forms of accountability. Two final interactive panels, structured on the key constituencies of donor agencies and women activists from the South, added perspectives and provided an opportunity to engage with the information emerging from the conference itself and the directions it suggested for next steps.

In addition to the plenary sessions and interactive panels, which are summarized below, a series of working groups were interspersed throughout the two and a half days. Proceedings were conducted with English as the official language and simultaneous translation available in French, Spanish and Russian.

### **Welcome and Conference Objectives**

Chairs: Barbara Adams and Micheline Ravololonarisoa, UNIFEM

Speakers: Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM; Dr. Lieve Fransen, European Commission, DG Development, Head of Unit for Social and Human Development and Gender Equality, DG Development, European Commission; Ms. Glenys Kinnock, Member, European Parliament; Ms. Rehema Kerefu-Sameji, Organization Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC), Tanzania; Jane Sanyu Mpagi, Director, Gender and Community Development, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda.

The first three speakers laid out the conference goals and elaborated on the five main principles of the Paris Declaration. They stressed that ownership must include all women, and not just an "elite" constituency. If development is to be effective, it must be grounded in the lives of ordinary people. They observed that the conference was serving to link worlds that are not necessarily connected, building on CEDAW and the outcomes of Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing, the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit. The review of the EU Development Policy Statement, which is the political framework for development co-operation, was identified as an opportunity to look at ownership and harmonization.

While there is no set formula for developing a rights-based approach to the promotion of gender equality, it was agreed that policy planning, law enforcement, education and resource allocation must be grounded in principles of gender equality.

The experiences of Uganda and Tanzania were highlighted to address opportunities for engagement in the national development policy process. It was observed that the first ‘Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)’ in Uganda, for example, was “gender blind” but the second was developed in consultation with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), who were able to insert a gender perspective. While engaging with the PEAP is crucial since the PEAP guides resource allocation, it was noted that often gender experts do not have skills in microeconomic and macroeconomic analysis. The concept of gender mainstreaming faces the challenges of clarity and capacity building. The approach should not be “one size fits all.”

In Tanzania, it was noted that policies are also being developed without the input of women during the planning and implementation stages. Additionally, the MDG framework threatens to undermine other strategies that have been developed for the implementation of agreements such as the Beijing Platform and CEDAW. At the same time, however, the MDG framework provided opportunities for civil society organizations to work with the Tanzanian Government and offer recommendations that addressed the PRSPs and obstacles to women’s access to health and education. The Government took approximately 60 per cent of the recommendations, which are now reflected in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty.

This session also emphasized the importance of regional and sub-regional organizations in complementing the opportunities for engagement at the national level. Regional organizations can promote policy coherence, share best practices, and enable greater leverage at the local level so that women gain market access and control over resources.

Also emphasized was the central importance of an accountable governance system, which necessitates a representative parliament with women’s rights advocates involved throughout the policy process, a gender sensitive budget, and a gender sensitive accountability framework.

### **Opening Session**

Chair: Barbara Adams, UNIFEM

Speakers: Dr. Lieve Fransen, European Commission, DG Development, Head of Unit for Social and Human Development and Gender Equality, DG Development, European Commission; Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM.

In the opening session, speakers emphasized the growing awareness that gender equality is essential to human rights and human security. The commitment of the EC to gender equality was reiterated, and attention was drawn to the existing tools, strategies and international covenants that the Commission has engaged in towards this end. It was noted that the conference would offer an opportunity to develop concrete strategies for the EC/EU to improve and adapt the current tools for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in development cooperation and to discuss how to best embed gender in country level budgets and programming. Both speakers noted that indicators for the gender

equality goal of the MDGs do not include aspects of women's empowerment apart from health and education, such as equal inheritance and property rights, equal access to decent work, and freedom from all forms of violence against women. The Beijing Platform for Action made clear that gender equality and women's empowerment must be linked. Moving ahead, women's voices and decisions need to shape the new aid architecture.

### **Plenary 1: Gender Equality in Development Co-operation: Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair: H.E. Ms. Judith Mbula Bahemuka, UN Permanent Representative, Kenya

Speakers: Mr. Richard Carey, Deputy Director, Development Assistance Committee, OECD; Ms. Helen Wangusa, Millennium Campaign, Kenya; Dr. Lieve Franssen, Head of Unit for Social and Human Development and Gender Equality, DG Development, European Commission

The first plenary outlined the challenges and opportunities for gender equality in the new development cooperation agenda, as identified by speakers from government, the donor community and the EU. Addressing *aid effectiveness and gender equality*, it was noted that the scaling up of aid has dramatic effects on donor and partner countries' performance and accountability, with many opportunities and challenges for integrating gender into the new modalities. The challenge is to turn scaled up aid into development and development into peace and security for all women and men. New levels of dialogue in programme and budget support, harmonization via joint analytical work, and maintaining performance and accountability as key operational principles are the methods through which recipient countries gain ownership and women's voices form an integral part of aid management.

However, attention was drawn to the disconnect between the development discourse and the reality of the household and care economy. In Africa, a multitude of concepts and frameworks exist with very little capacity to implement and transform them into meaningful and practical development on the ground. Despite the discourse on development effectiveness and commitments to achieving the MDGs, resources are being allocated towards global priorities such as terrorism. Challenges identified include leveraging statistics to demonstrate that gender equality is crucial in the global context and requires the full implementation of the agreed upon covenants; increasing political participation of women; and firmly committing to building capacity at ground level.

Looking at *gender equality and development cooperation: country ownership and donor partnership*, it was pointed out that donor support is not meant to replace country level processes and progress, but rather meant to enhance the ownership of policies by the recipient countries which can only happen in the context of good governance. Collaboration at the international and country levels must be based on concrete and like-minded agendas between the partners. Ownership and partnership in the new aid architecture are crucial and make it important for donors to transfer policy and implementation responsibility to the partner country. Progress is possible only if both the donor and the recipient are committed and determined to move in the same direction.

### **Plenary 2: Gender Equality in National Development: Achievements and Challenges**

Chair: Professor Savitri Goonesekere, Centre for Women's Research, Sri Lanka

Speakers: H.E. Ms. Marcela Suazo, Minister of Women's Affairs, Honduras; Mr. Saif Senouci, Ministry of Finance and Privatization, Morocco; H.E. Ms. Patricia Espinosa, President, National Institute for Women, Mexico; H.E. Dr. Ing Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Cambodia; Ms. Jeanne Makoutode, Social Alert, Rifonga, Benin.

The second plenary highlighted country-level experiences in inserting gender equality objectives into national development processes. It was noted that in Mexico, for example, gender mainstreaming has allowed for gender machineries to successfully work through government and make it possible to promote women's human rights. In Honduras, gender advocates have worked on a policy for women that became official in 2002; a success that has been attributed to lobbying departments within the government and Court of Justice, as well as with academia. The next step is for the policy to be included in the country's national plans—and for adequate resources to be allocated.

Drawing on lessons from efforts to incorporate gender equality objectives into the identification of national MDGs, the creation of 19 new indicators in Cambodia to address gender equality and secondary education, wage employment, female participation in decision-making and violence against women, was cited as a success story. The Cambodian MDGs have now been institutionalized at the national level through their inclusion into the Cambodian National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010.

Morocco's experience with *gender-responsive budgets* was also cited as a successful example of embedding gender equality in national development. The strategy for integrating gender in the budget, introduced through the Ministry of Finance, focuses on increased budgetary allocation to social sectors, gender mainstreaming, and gender equality training for staff in ministries such as Health, Education, Finance, Planning, and Agriculture. The strategy has already yielded considerable results to date and the integration of gender in the budgetary process is thought to be an irreversible process.

Challenges noted include socio-cultural traditions that lead to inequalities between women and men, large gaps in primary education, and under-representation of women in decision-making bodies. Concerns were also expressed about marginalization of gender ministries.

### **Working Groups: Gender Equality Questions in National Development Policies**

Several working groups addressed the topic, *Key Gender Equality questions in the National Development Policies*. The report-back emphasized the following:

The approach to development cooperation is increasingly becoming entrepreneurial, emphasizing efficiency and economic growth rather than values, human rights, social justice, and empowerment.

Institutional structures and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming exist, but are inadequate:

- Civil society and NGO participation is limited and the national women's machineries are often marginalized and lacking capacity;
- There are limited gains to be made from trying to engage and influence processes that are themselves faulty, and fail to address root causes of poverty and gender equality;
- The lack of gender-sensitive statistics continues to be an obstacle to carry out the relevant analysis that will inform policy.

### **Plenary III: Strategies for Gender Equality in the New Aid Modalities: Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair: Nomcebo Manzini, Regional Program Director, Southern Africa, UNIFEM

Speakers: Ms. Mirjam van Reisen, Director, Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA); Ms. Zo Randriamaro, Association for Women's Rights in Development, Senegal; Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Regional Programme Director, East and Horn of Africa Regional Office, UNIFEM; Ms. Anne Marie Goetz, Chief Adviser, Governance, Peace and Security, UNIFEM; Mr. Bernard Petit, European Commission, DG Development, Director, Policy and Sectoral Directorate.

The third plenary examined the role of gender equality in the central modalities of the new aid architecture, specifically PRSPs and budget support, and emphasized the importance of strengthening accountability mechanisms, for donors as well as recipients.

The report, *Accountability Upside Down*, tracked commitments by donors to gender equality (including the European Commission) in the policy process, moving from legal and political commitments to sector budget allocation, programming and implementation, and evaluation and impact. The report concludes that despite many strong commitments to gender equality in the initial policy phase, gender equality almost disappears the further one moves down the policy process and is only barely visible in the implementation and evaluation stages. With the move towards budget support accompanied by the increasing importance of concepts such as ownership and partnership, the need to strengthen accountability mechanisms for gender equality in the recipient countries as well as in relation to donors to close the so-called "implementation gap" was stressed.

PRSPs are widely used; they strongly engage the donor community and many are in their second iteration. Experience with them merited a close look for lessons learned for advancing gender equality in national development frameworks. In a discussion on *Gender and PRSPs in Africa*, it was noted that they are first and foremost an instrument for debt-relief, and it is important to contrast the benefits of debt relief with the trade-offs required by it, including cross-conditionality regarding privatization of public services and trade liberalization. Concerns were raised that there is only scarce evidence of systematic integration of gender in PRSPs in Africa and that, rather than decreasing, evidence suggests that poverty will increase in Africa by 2015. The importance of strengthening accountability mechanisms by widening space for dialogue between civil society and governments and by ensuring mutual accountability by donors was highlighted.

The conference looked at a case study of the interplay of the new modalities and gender equality, *Budget support and basket funding: the case of Kenya*. Direct budget support in Kenya has a number of advantages such as a reduction of fragmentation of government policy planning and implementation, potential higher levels of government ownership and control, and greater aid effectiveness. A basket fund for gender and governance programmes is in place and has the potential to lead to greater effectiveness, greater leveraging of funds, greater national coverage, more targeted funds, and assurance of funds for a comfortable programming period. The drawback is that there may eventually be less flexibility and variety in the patterns of funding civil society organizations. Another concern with direct

budget support is the potential for governments being left in higher levels of aid shock should funding be withdrawn.

A discussion about accountability systems recognized that the concept is often confused with participation, consultation, or reporting. Accountability systems require mechanisms to hold public actors to account, including appropriate mandates, incentives, reporting systems, and sanctions in the case of non-delivery. In order to strengthen vertical systems, it must be ensured that women use the channels of voting, interest aggregation and public opinion more effectively in order to hold their states to account. To strengthen horizontal systems, adequate scrutiny of government from a gender perspective is necessary, and women must have access to information about government spending through public audits. Contemporary reforms to governance systems such as public sector reform, results-based management systems can integrate gender-sensitive accountability systems as well as revised incentive systems for professionals that provide good services to women. Finally, within the judicial system, there must be adequate prosecution for violations of women's rights. If consultation is to lead to genuine accountability, citizens must have access to official information, rights of access and presence in accountability institutions, and the right to issue dissenting reports to other public bodies. Accountability is not just about demanding explanations, but about sanctions and redress for mistakes.

The European Commission is a strong supporter of budget support: 20% of aid is channeled through this mechanism, and this will grow to 50%. Addressing *Gender Equality in Sector-Wide Support and Budget Support*, the greatest challenge for the EC is to select indicators that capture gender equality issues in sectors relating to civil rights, decision-making, and so on.

PRSPs offer a good opportunity to promote gender equality and the EC is trying, through its dialogue with governments, to ensure that more and more governments include gender equality concerns adequately in their PRSPs. It was acknowledged that gender equality is currently not adequately taken into account in most PRSPs. Although the integration of gender equality in budget support is a very political, complex, and technical process which takes time, the EC is convinced of its importance and will continue to improve strategies and mechanisms to ensure its realization.

### **Working Group Report: Key Strategies for Next Steps**

Drawing from plenary sessions and working groups, the following key strategies were generated for next steps:

1. *Knowledge Base.* Women and gender equality advocates want to be able to engage with the new aid modalities with knowledge from the ground, as well as technical and political knowledge.
2. *Participation and Negotiation.* Many participatory approaches are “choice-less”, so there is a need to ensure that policy choices can be shaped through participation.
3. *Political Space.* Space for women must be created, so they are able to make real decisions and not only participate in consultations. In order to strengthen political leverage, linkages between gender advocates in the North and the South are important.

4. *Accountability.* Ensuring gender sensitivity in accountability mechanisms requires gender-sensitive indicators. The accountability role of different actors: government, regional economic communities, development agencies, international institutions, civil society and the private sector, must be clarified.

5. *De-mystify jargon and develop tools.* Development communication must inform citizens of concrete benefits they may expect from development policy, the resources earmarked for particular services, and the means by which they may demand redress for non-delivery. Gender advocates must make their objectives, analyses, and proposals accessible to and applicable by policy-makers.

It was recommended that the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness scheduled for 2008 in Ghana and the process leading up to it provides a strategic opportunity to develop technical expertise and ensure that it is integrated into the roll-out of the guidelines and indicators of the Paris Declaration.

### **Interactive Panel: Implementing Gender Equality in the New Aid Modalities**

Chair: Ms. Florence Butegwa, Regional Programme Director, English-Speaking West Africa Office, UNIFEM.

Panelists: Ms. Mayra Buvinic, Sector Director, Gender and Development, World Bank; Ms. Brigitte Holzner, Austrian Development Agency; Ms Nava San Miguel Abad, Secretariat of State for International Cooperation, Spain, Ms. Patti O’Neal, Network on Gender Equality, Development Assistance Committee, OECD; Ms. Daniela Rofi, European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office..

Several donor agencies contributed to a discussion on how to insert Gender Equality in the New Aid Modalities. An intervention from the World Bank described how the institution’s lending has undergone several shifts: from project mode to programme funding, from single intervention to full interventions, from programmes and actions to processes, from external control to having the government in the driver’s seat. Benefits include country ownership and harmonization. Risks include loss of focus, loss of attribution, increased demands on government, and the risk of gender losing out. Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIAs) are mandatory within the organization; policy reforms must have a distributional impact on poverty, ethnicity and gender (there are 30-40 PSIAs to date). Poverty Expenditure Reviews – perform benefit incident analysis in order to see how public expenditures have a distributional impact in terms of income and gender.

The European Commission’s EuropeAid Co-operation Office has developed tools, including the Tool Kit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC development cooperation. The Tool Kit, supported by training, is designed not just for gender experts, but also as guidance for management on how to introduce a gender perspective into daily work. Other initiatives include support for UNIFEM work on gender-responsive budgeting initiatives.

Entry points for implementing gender equality in the new aid modalities were identified, including the precautionary or “no harm” principle. In addition to the continued implementation of CEDAW and Beijing, an emphasis was placed on continued lobbying of governments and advocacy by women’s organizations, especially in the economic sphere. An added benefit of CSO engagement is being more effective in placing emphasis firmly on local agendas. Lobbying of World Bank Board of Directors was also encouraged, as it

represents all members of the bank and has an informal network of gender-concerned members. The World Bank is “looking for business” due to competition from other lenders, so the Board is a good entry point.

An exclusive focus on economic growth can result in the neglect of the development of women’s economic and political opportunities, or the fight against violence against women. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is predicted to increase from \$US 80 billion to \$US 130 billion by 2010. An OECD-DAC study on *Aid to support gender equality, 1999-2003* (March 2005) identified only \$US 3.1 billion out of \$US 17.2 billion in bilateral ODA focused on gender equality. The difficulty has been in trying to earmark funds for gender equality, although once tools become available, this will become easier.

A discussion on mutual accountability identified difficulties and challenges with the concept. There must be consistency and coherence in development policies, especially between trade and development. At the ground level, there is a lack of coherence and clarity with organizations, including multi-laterals and UN organizations.

Some donor agencies grapple with mutual accountability and are experimenting with mechanisms to address it – their primary responsibility is to their own respective taxpayers. Another difficulty faced by donors is that they are often said to have too much influence, but are at the same time relied upon to bring the issues of gender and women’s human rights to light.

### **Interactive Panel: Promoting Gender Equality – Women’s Voices from the South**

Chair: Ms. Jacinta Muteshi, Chairperson, National Commission on Gender and Development, Kenya.

Panelists: Ms. Elizabeth Eilor, Coordinator, African Women’s Economic Policy Network (AWEPON); Ms. Rukmini Rao, South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE); Ms. Gina Vargas, Flora Tristan, Peru.

Speakers addressed the need to demystify economics so that women’s advocacy and interventions on the ground are both strategically and critically informed. In Africa particularly, where many of the PRSPs will be rolled out, women’s advocacy skills need to be strengthened with technical cooperation and long term support.

They also noted that in the context of new aid modalities, it is important to engage with the existing international and regional frameworks – WTO, NEPAD, AU, COMESA - in order to inform women’s advocacy and to evaluate what the new architecture means at the national/regional level.

It was stressed that development is not about giving a country money, and economic growth per se will not promote gender equality. For example, India has had growth and democracy, but 15 million women are ‘missing’ due to extreme gender inequities. Real change can only come about through political processes with a firm commitment to the gender equality agenda and that recognizes and respects the knowledge and skills of women. The productive capacities of women can be realized through the generation of fair/decent employment opportunities, equal access to natural resources, the development of local markets and increased regional cooperation.

Finally, governments can be more accountable to women if the Beijing Platform for Action provides the political driving force and meaning behind the MDGs, and when women's organizations are strengthened at the local and national level.

## Conclusions

Speakers: Mr. Koos Richelle, Director-General, DG EuropeAid Cooperation Office, European Commission; Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive-Director, UNIFEM.

The conference concluded with statements from the Director-General of EuropeAid-EC and the Executive Director of UNIFEM. Mr. Koos Richelle affirmed that gender equality is being dealt with at the highest level at the European Commission, not only in "soft" areas such as health and education, but in all sectors. He recognized that while some increase has taken place in the share of women in the non-agricultural paid labour force, trade liberalization has resulted in their entry primarily into poorly paid jobs with no form of employment benefits or social protection. He also acknowledged that while the MDGs represent an important step forward, and provide clear targets to work towards, they are not comprehensive and are not attuned to all country situations. Much work is needed on women's right to health, decent work, and preventing violence against women. He noted that the Cambodian national MDG report demonstrates that national plans incorporating gender issues *can* be institutionalized at the national level, while the experience with gender budgeting in Morocco demonstrates that governments can be held accountable to commitments on gender equality.

Richelle emphasized three critical points for the European Commission in moving forward:

- Women's issues matter at all levels of society, and the European Commission believes that gender equality through development cooperation requires complementary actions through gender mainstreaming.
- The process of engaging in real conversation throughout the conference had given participants the opportunity to get a feeling of ownership and emphasized the breadth of partnership development needed.
- The identification of areas for next steps would allow for follow-up in a serious way –through guidelines on programming and a Communication on Gender Equality in the context of the new Aid Modalities.

Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, in closing the conference, thanked UNIFEM's partners in the European Commission, Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA) and all participants, adding that she was pleased to see the recognition of the need for gender sensitive indicators and the demand for technical expertise on gender in the delivery of aid. She then outlined several areas in which UNIFEM would provide follow-up:

- Maintaining and supporting a network of gender equality experts in the new aid modalities to provide technical assistance, training, and capacity development as well as opportunities for information exchange and access to global forums. Building on the contacts and alliances made at the conference, the network

would link gender equality advocates in both the North and South to global and regional forums for trade negotiations and finance for development planning processes as well as to the social sectors and women's ministries.

- Advocating and partnering to ensure that implementation and technical capacity is rooted at the ground—beginning by identifying a number of pilot countries and bringing together multilateral organizations, civil society and donors in PRPSs, national development plans.
- Continuing to work on enhancing mutual accountability. This can be centered on the process leading up to the 2008 High-level Forum to ensure that expertise on gender equality and aid effectiveness is strong on the ground and is incorporated into national consultation processes.

---

Special thanks to Ciara Goldstein, EC, Heather Tilbury, UNIFEM and Maxi Ussar, EEPA for transcribing and drafting the conference proceedings.

*Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality  
In New Aid Modalities and Partnerships*

**PROGRAMME**

**9 November 2005**

**1.00 Lunch and Registration**

**14.00-15.30 Introduction:** Barbara Adams, Micheline Ravololonarisoa, Chairs

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM

Lieve Fransen MD, Ph.D, Head of Social and Human Development in  
DG Development, EC

**Presentations:**

Glenys Kinnock, MEP, *Centralizing MDGs in National Development  
Planning*

Rehema Kerefu-Sameji, Women's Legal Aid Center, Tanzania

Jane Sanyu Mpagi, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development,  
Uganda

**16.00-18.00 Working Groups I: Gender Equality in National Development Policies**

**19.30 Welcome dinner**

**10 November 2005**

**9.30-1.00 Opening Addresses**

*Promoting Gender Equality & Poverty Reduction in the New  
Development Strategy*

Lieve Fransen MD, Ph.D, Head of Social and Human Development in  
DG Development, EC

*The 2005 World Summit – Gender Equality in the International  
Development Agenda*

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM

**Break**

**11:30-13.00 PLENARY I: Gender Equality in Development Cooperation:  
Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair: H.E. Ms. Judith Mbula Bahemuka, UN Permanent  
Representative, Kenya

*Effectiveness of Aid and Gender Equality*

Richard Carey, Deputy Director, DAC. OECD

*Gender Equality in the New Aid Architecture: National Ownership*  
Hellen Wangusa, Millennium Campaign

*Gender Equality and Development Cooperation: National Ownership & Donor Partnership*

Lieve Franssen MD, Ph.D, Head of Social and Human Development in DG Development, EC

**12:30-14.00 Lunch**

**14:00-16.00 PLENARY II: Gender Equality in National Development: Achievements and Challenges**

Chair: Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), Sri Lanka

*Embedding Gender Equality in National Development Planning*  
H.E. Ms. Marcela Suazo, Minister of Women's Affairs, Honduras

*Gender Responsive Budget-Country Experience*  
Saif Eddine Senouci, Ministry of Finance and Privatization, Morocco

*Measuring Progress in Gender Equality*  
H.E. Ms. Patricia Espinosa, President, National Institute for Women, Mexico

*Embedding Gender Equality in the MDGs*  
H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Cambodia

*Creating Accountability in National Policy Processes*  
Jeanne Makoutode, Social Alert, Rifonga, Benin

**Break**

**16.30–18.00 Working Groups II: Monitoring Accountability to Gender Equality in Aid Modalities & Partnerships**

**11 November 2005**

**9.00–10.30 PLENARY III: Strategies for Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities: Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair: Nomcebo Manzini, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director, Southern Africa

*Monitoring Accountability to Gender Equality*  
Mirjam van Reisen, Director, Europe Policy Advisors (EEPA)

*Gender and PRSPs in Africa*  
Zo Randriamaro, Gender & Economic Reforms in Africa, Ghana

*Budget Support and Basket Funding: The Case of Kenya*  
Linet Miriti, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director, East/Horn of Africa

*Gender, Governance and Accountability*  
Anne Marie Goetz, Chief Adviser, Governance, Peace & Security, UNIFEM

*Gender Equality in Sector-Wide Support and Budget Support*  
Bernard Petit, Director, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, EC

**Break**

**11.00-12.30 Working Groups III: Good Practices for Strengthening gender equality in New Aid Partnerships**

**12.30–14.00 Lunch**

**14.00–15.00 INTERACTIVE PANEL I: Implementing gender equality in the new aid modalities**

Chair: Florence Butegwa, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director, West Africa

Mayra Buvinic, Sector Director, Gender and Development, World Bank

Patti O’Neal, Gendernet, Development Assistance Committee, OECD

Brigitte Holzner, Austrian Development Agency

Nava San Miguel Abad, Secretariat of State for International Cooperation, Spain

Daniela Rofi, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, European Commission

**Break**

**15.30–16.30 INTERACTIVE PANEL II: Promoting Gender Equal: Women’s Voices from the South**

Chair: Jacinta Muteshi, National Commission on Gender & Development, Kenya

Elisabeth Eilor, Co-ordinator, African Women’s Economic Policy Network

Rukmini Rao, South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)  
Gina Vargas, Flora Tristan Organization, Peru

**16.30–17.15 Conclusions and Closing**

Koos Richelle, Director-General, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, EC  
Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM