



United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development

Joint Statement

In 2009, it is now apparent that the spread of the financial sector crisis to developing markets has led to major setbacks in delivering on the global commitments made in the Millennium Declaration in 2000. The crisis has differentiated impacts on women and men due to pre-existing gender inequalities, levels of poverty and discrimination in the society. Impact has been felt with regards to employment, family incomes and food intake (MDG1), girls education (MDG2 and 3), gender equality (MDG3), and children's and maternal health, and HIV/AIDS (MDG4-6), access to water and sanitation (MDG7), and ODA, trade and debt (MDG8).

As more women and men lose their jobs, salaries and remittances slump, and as the cost of living increases, poor families are falling deeper into poverty. This forces poor women and men to adopt short-term coping strategies and risky behaviors with long term impacts on human development.

The crisis is threatening women's livelihoods and is imposing additional burden of unpaid care work on women and girls—as governments cut spending on public services—preventing girls from going to school and women from engage in full-time paid employment. Other concerns raised include a rise in hunger as women and girls eat fewer meals per day, support to small-holder and subsistence farming, levels of violence against women and girls; HIV/AIDS prevalence; and criminal activities and security risks.

It is now critical and urgent for development partners to unite their crisis response, at both global and national levels, and turn the crisis into opportunity to improve the lives of women and men, girls and boys living in poverty. The actions that are taken now will determine the length and depth of the crisis and its effects on human development.

In line with advocacy and recommendations from women's groups and civil society organizations, many of whom had long warned about economic and financial policies leading to crises like the present one, we propose the following actions:

- Agree on the need for a new financial architecture to deliver greater voice and equal benefits to women and men.
- Agree that national stimulus measures should avoid protectionism in any form and avoid adverse impacts on poor women and men in third countries, particularly developing countries.
- Apply greater policy consistency—if expansionary fiscal packages manage to kick-start economies in developed countries, opportunities for applying such policies should be supported in developing countries too, particularly those policies that promote gender equality.
- Increase resources to developing countries, including through increased ODA, to protect the gains made towards the achievement of the MDGs, to kick-start economies in the south and finance gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Institute enabling policies for retrenched women to enter male-dominated sectors with decent employment by providing women with training and orientation in these sectors, and to access finance.
- Create jobs for both women and men by investing in physical and social infrastructure—while decreasing the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls—and expanding and improving the provision of health, education and nutrition.
- Provide social safety nets to help mitigate the adverse effects of different shocks to household income and prevent inter-generational transmission of poverty, in particular from women to girls but also to older women.
- Invest in alternative and innovative ideas, such as public-private partnerships and public-community partnerships for local service delivery, women’s green jobs and businesses, and alternative low cost energy programmes that contribute to the reduction of women and girls’ unpaid care work.