

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

United Nations Development Fund for Women



NEWSLETTER- ISSUE 2, AUGUST 2008

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Contact: gender.budgets@unifem.org

Website: www.gender-budgets.org

This second issue of the GRB newsletter coincides with the preparations for the Third High Level Forum of Aid Effectiveness to be held in Ghana, September 2-4, 2008. We thus take the opportunity to highlight some of the efforts put forth by gender equality advocates to ensure that the aid effectiveness agenda translates into stronger implementation of commitment to gender equality and women's rights by donors as well as partners countries. This issue explores the relevance of GRB approaches to ensuring that aid management systems as articulated in the Paris Declaration incorporate a gender perspective.

The newsletter also highlights a number of GRB country experiences (Nepal, Morocco and Egypt) where Ministries of Finance are taking the lead in introducing systems, guidelines, and mechanisms for ensuring that budgeting contributes to the promotion of women's rights.

Finally, this issue includes news on efforts in support of GRB by the UN system and other agencies as well as GRB initiatives in South East Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, Canada, and Senegal.

We hope that you will find the information useful and look forward to your contributions and comments on the present and future issues of the GRB newsletter.

ISSUE FOCUS: Gender Responsive budgeting and Aid Effectiveness

Following commitments made at the International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD, 2003) and the subsequent Rome and Paris Declarations, the development community is placing greater focus on new aid modalities. These are based on principles of national ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability between recipient and donor countries. While the Paris Declaration stresses accountability as a key factor in development effectiveness, the aid effectiveness agenda has not been sufficiently linked to the commitments that countries have made to advance gender equality and women's empowerment by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

In the Paris Declaration, gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability are referred to as cross cutting issues. Subsequent discussions on the implementation of the Paris Declaration have placed an emphasis on those issues as fundamental cornerstones for achieving good development results and demanded that they are seen as "functionally essential to increasing the impact of aid on reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating achievement of the MDGs".

There is great demand for concrete tools to guarantee coherence between gender equality outcomes and General Budget Support (GBS). Efforts are further needed to facilitate practical application of the principles and partnership commitments of the *Paris Declaration* in a manner that ensures progress towards gender equality. In this context gender responsive budgeting is identified as a key tool that will contribute to a positive impact of the aid effectiveness agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment. Studies conducted in the aftermath of the Paris Declaration have indicated the relevance of GRB work in ensuring that the aid agenda contributes positively to the achievement of gender equality in partner countries.

In response to this demand and building on past efforts in support of GRB, UNIFEM, in partnership with the European Commission, has launched a programme aimed at "**Integrating gender responsive budgeting into the aid effectiveness agenda**". The three year programme seeks to identify concrete ways in which GRB can contribute to gender-responsive aid outcomes.

The programme started with the launch of a multi-country research review entitled "**Effective Use of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Tools and Strategies in the Context of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda**". This research attempts to assess the added value and benefit of using GRB as a tool in national level processes and instruments to support gender equality and women's empowerment. Countries that are part of this review represent a sample of programme countries where a considerable portion of aid is disbursed through General Budget Support modalities and where GRB work has generated useful lessons and capacities over the past few years. Selected countries are: **Mozambique, Morocco, India, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Nepal, Cameroon, Peru and Ethiopia.**

The review will present a clear evidence base of the benefits and opportunities of using GRB as a tool that enhances accountability to gender equality in aid effectiveness. It is anticipated that the programme will generate recommendations to donor and programme countries for mainstreaming gender into mechanisms and instruments used for planning, managing and assessing general budget support including Direct Budget Support and Sector-wide approaches.

Currently, the EC and UNIFEM have a broader collaboration in the area of women's rights promotion including a Partnership on Gender Equality for

Development and Peace launched in 2007 to support stronger action on gender equality and women's human rights in national development processes.

The Ghana High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness:

In September 2008, ministers from over 100 countries, heads of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, donor organizations, and civil society organizations from around the world will gather in Accra for the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2-4 September). Their common objective is to help developing countries and marginalized people in their fight against poverty by making aid more transparent, accountable and results-oriented. The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF3) will review progress in improving aid effectiveness, broaden the dialogue to newer actors and chart a course for continuing international action on aid effectiveness

The Forum will be made up of three segments: a **Marketplace of Ideas**, which is a forum for information sharing on good practices among the HLF3 participants; nine **Thematic Roundtables** which will provide participants an opportunity for in-depth discussion to facilitate and support work on aid effectiveness; and the **Ministerial-Level Meeting** which will conclude with the endorsement of a ministerial statement—the Accra Agenda for Action—that aims to deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration. *Source: Accra HLF3 website*

Accra Women's Forum – 30 August 2008

In the lead up to Ghana, civil society organizations, women organizations and gender advocates around the world have been mobilizing to ensure that gender and other critical cross cutting issues are high on the agenda of the forum.

The mobilization has entailed the organization of a multi-stakeholder meeting on aid effectiveness, advocacy campaigns, monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration and providing input to the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). At regional level, preparatory consultations were held in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

The main gender-related recommendations emerging from this process include the importance of “incorporating gender equality targets and indicators in the design and implementation of development strategies and programs, and systematic use of sex disaggregated data for monitoring purposes”. (UNIFEM, 2008)

In the wake of the Ghana meeting, women’s organizations and networks will be holding a Forum on August 30, 2008 with the aim to provide space for debate between women’s rights organizations, women’s rights activists and gender advocates, to strategize for the HLF3 and beyond.

The Women’s Forum will be hosted at the Ellking Hotel, East legon, Accra (Ghana) by the Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) in partnership with WIDE, DAWN, FEMNET, IGTN, and AWID. The event is co-sponsored by the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), UNIFEM and Action Aid International. (Source Association for Women’s Rights in Development- AWID)

UNIFEM has engaged in the preparatory process of the Ghana meeting by identifying key gender concerns and proposing recommendations for a gender responsive application of the Paris Declaration by donors and partner countries.

UNIFEM will be part of the official UN delegation to the High Level Forum and the Women’s Forum and will make available - to officials and civil society organizations - a package of key messages seeking to address the concerns of gender equality advocates. A number of good practices identified based on mapping of aid policies in twelve countries will also be circulated. (See examples from Nepal and Morocco below)

The key messages that will be shared with the participants to the Ghana Forum call on governments and donor to:

- Expand spaces for the participation of gender equality advocates in policy making around national development strategies and aid delivery;
- Support the application of GRB approaches and institute systems that ensure adequate financial resources for women's priorities;
- Establish accountability mechanisms that enable systematic monitoring of progress towards gender equality targets and objectives set in national development strategies.

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN NEPAL:

ALIGNING NATIONAL BUDGETS WITH GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was introduced in Nepal in the context of Government efforts for a Budget reform which entailed: strengthening the Public Finance Management System, establishing a Medium Term Expenditure Framework, and moving towards performance based budgeting. To move forward with these plans, institutional mechanisms were established within the Ministry of Finance with the appointment of a gender budgeting expert and the establishment of a Gender Responsive Budgeting Committee (GRBC) in 2005. The Committee was established as a permanent body within the Ministry of Finance with the mandate to design a GRB system that can be applied at sectoral level, to monitor budget allocations and public expenditure from a gender perspective and finally to assess the impact of development policies on women and men. The committee is also required to provide sectoral ministries with the needed policy guidelines on GRB.

The Ministry of Finance formally introduced a GRB system developed by the GRBC in the financial year 2007/2008. In compliance with this system, sectoral ministries were required to categorize their programmes budgets according to the extent to which they support gender equality. The three prescribed categories are: directly responsive, indirectly responsive or neutral. The first indicates more than 50% of the allocation directly benefiting women, the second indicates 20-50% and the third indicates less than 20% benefiting women. The percentages are calculated based on five indicators:

- women’s capacity development
- women’s participation in programme formulation and implementation,
- women’s benefit incidence,
- support to women’s employment and income generation,
- positive impact on women’s time use and care work.

This categorization has facilitated the establishment of a monitoring system that allows greater institutional accountability for implementing gender mainstreaming and for a strengthened management for results. It also allows for gender budget analysis that informs planning and programming.

The analysis of the 2007/08 allocations indicates that an estimated 11, 33 and 55 per cent of the total budget will be spent respectively on programmes directly responsive to gender equality, indirectly responsive to gender equality and neutral.

About 24 per cent of allocations in the social sectors (education, health, local development, drinking water and others) are classified as directly responsive to gender equality, and 55 per cent as indirectly responsive. However, in economic services (agriculture, communications, forestry, land reform, transportation, industry), it is found that only 10 per cent of allocations is directly responsive to gender equality. The analysis identified significant gaps in the areas of land reform, forestry and communications, with at least 90 percent of expenditure seen as gender neutral. The analysis also allows for a break-down of gender responsive sectoral allocations according to the source of funding whether it is from the Government of Nepal or from Official Development Assistance (ODA). As a result, gender-sensitive sector programmes have provided the basis for donors to align their resource and programmatic support with national commitments to gender equality. For example, the Education for All (EFA) - sector programme (2004-2009) includes a separate expenditure heading for the elimination of gender disparities in basic education contributing to the realization of national targets in this area.

This text is adapted from the Nepal mapping study report commissioned by the EC-UN Partnership in 2008.)

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN MOROCCO:

INTEGRATING A GENDER APPROACH IN PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT

The Gender Budget Initiative in Morocco was launched in 2001 by the Ministry of Finance and Privatization with support from UNIFEM. The budget reform process launched by the government presented an opportunity to demonstrate how performance-based budgeting - focused on monitoring budget outcomes and results - can define budget targets and benchmarks in a gender responsive manner. The initiative benefited from a favorable political environment in relation to women's rights as reflected in the adoption of a new Family Code and broader reform processes.

Over the past few years, the government of Morocco has been systematically tracking budget allocations and results with a gender perspective.

In 2008, for a third consecutive year, the draft Finance Bill submitted to parliament was accompanied by a Gender Budget Report which identifies gender gaps and defines sectoral interventions needed to address them. This analysis represents the basis upon which budget demands of spending departments are established.

The Report which includes inputs by a number of spending departments, is coordinated by the Directorate for Financial Studies and Forecasts (DSFF) in the MoF in close collaboration with the Directorates of Budget (DB) and Administrative and General Affairs (DAA).

The GRB initiative is consistently providing tailored technical support to sector and local level planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation. One case in point is the support to the Secretariat of State for literacy and non-formal education and the Secretariat of State for vocational training - which have been identified as pilots to incorporate gender equality principles into their sectoral budget planning processes in the context of the roll out of the performance based budgeting to sector level departments. Additional support has been provided to address data requirements for effective monitoring. In 2008, a compendium of sex-disaggregated and gender baselines were produced to be used in monitoring planning and budgeting outcomes.

The GRB initiative in Morocco has enabled the achievement of concrete results through better resource allocation to respond to gender needs. The example of education shows the evolution over time of the school enrolment rate for children aged from 6 to 11, and school enrolment rate of young girls in rural areas. School enrolment for children aged from 6 to 11 increased from 79.1 per cent in 2000 to 93 per cent in 2005 and for young girls in rural areas it went from 66.1 per cent in 2000 to 84.3 per cent in 2005. The Program for Grouped Drinking Water Supply (PAGER) has also allowed for an important increase in the rate of access to drinking water in rural areas. It went from 48 per cent in 2001 to nearly 100 per cent in 2007. Increases in allocations to support gender equality in key sectors also began to emerge. Increases in the budget allocation by the Ministry of Agriculture towards targeted programmes supporting women's livelihoods resulted in an increase in the percentage of women beneficiaries of agricultural extension services (from 9% in 2004 to 39% by 2007).

For more information on the present case studies or on UNIFEM's work in relation to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda please contact Letty.chiwara@unifem.org; maria.karadenizli@unifem.org or Nisreen.alami@unifem.org For information on Ghana Forum visit Accra HLF3 website

COUNTRY FOCUS: INSTITUTIONALIZING GRB, THE EXPERIENCE OF EGYPT

Egypt is making significant progress in advancing women's rights with specific focus on its legal framework. Over the past few years, Egypt has adopted a series of laws and policies to further promote and protect the Egyptian women. Some of the most significant legislation has been noted in the personal status law. Family courts were established to facilitate and expedite the litigation process in family disputes. The Khul' law was passed to grant women easier access to divorce. A new marriage contract was issued in 2004 providing guarantees for women's rights as they enter into marriage. A Family Insurance and Alimony Fund were established to relieve women of the financial burdens that they encounter during divorce. Furthermore, in a significant development amongst Arab countries, the Nationality Law in Egypt was amended in 2004 to give women the right to pass on their citizenship to the children on an equal basis with men. A constitutional amendment introduced in 2007 also emphasized adequate representation of women in both houses of Parliament.

At the institutional level, the National Council for Women (NCW) was established in 2000. The mandate of the NCW includes drafting a National Plan for the advancement of women, providing guidance on public policy matters as they relate to women and recommending the adoption of laws and policies. NCW and civil society organizations and women's organizations have joined efforts to support implementation of these commitments towards gender equality in the country.

Despite these efforts, gender gaps still exist. Illiteracy rates amongst women are 51% as compared to 29% amongst men. Unemployment rate for women is 23% versus 7.5 percent for men. Women represent the bulk of non-wage workers whereas most men are either wage workers or business owners. In the agriculture sector, although women represented 1/3 of all workers, their lack of access to land ownership, credit, markets and information remains unaddressed. Finally, women hold only 3% of the seats in the national assembly.

A significant effort to address those gaps has been made through introducing modifications to the budgeting process, frameworks, and allocations. In 2008, the budget laws were amended to ensure that gender equality concerns are taken into account in budget planning processes and budget allocations.

In the following interview with the Egyptian Deputy Finance Minister (DFM), Ms Manal Hussein describes efforts towards Gender Responsive Budgeting, the shift to performance-based budgeting and improved accountability of public expenditures to gender equality goals.

UNIFEM: When and why was GRB introduced in Egypt?

DFM Manal Hussein: The initiative started in 2001 under the leadership of the National Council for Women (NCW) with support from the Dutch government and UNIFEM. In its early stages, the initiative focused on developing tools and raising awareness of planning and budget officers in all ministries, members of the civil society and parliamentarians regarding the relevance of GRB. NCW supported the establishment in all Ministries of an Equal Opportunity Unit charged with monitoring discrimination and ensuring that plans and budgets are gender sensitive. We also produced a GRB training manual for the staff of the Finance Ministry. This manual was developed through a participatory approach, where MOF budget employees worked with gender experts, planning experts from the National Planning Institute, as well as economists and Performance Based Budgeting (PBB) experts to tailor the manual to their specific needs. The manual was later used to build the capacity of relevant staff in the MOF and other Ministries to track, monitor, and evaluate national and local public budgets from a gender and poverty perspective. This resulted in the inclusion of gender concerns in the five year national socio-economic plan, the adoption of various gender-sensitive plans and programs at national level and the doubling of allocations to programs for the advancement of women.

What has been achieved so far through this work?

DFM: Firstly, two very important statements were included in the call circular for 2008/2009 stating that: "Justice in allocation of national resources is required, as it is the proper way for the efficient use of national resources and the distribution of budget allocations according to the actual needs of each citizen, in a way that achieves social justice" and "Mainstreaming the needs of the Egyptian family; man, woman and child, in the national budget is required to promote social justice and safeguard the rights of the child. This comes as part of Egypt's obligation towards the international conventions and treaties concerned with woman and child, and paving the way to applying gender responsive budgets in the future".

Secondly, two articles of the budget guidelines issued by the MOF for 2008/2009 highlighted gender concerns. Article 11 and article 12.

The MOF is now working on producing sex-disaggregated statistical statements for the year 2008/2009 as well as producing budget templates that are gender disaggregated, to ensure that national budgets are gender sensitive. These templates will be used by all government agencies included in the national budget, and those agencies will have to fill the

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templates with gender disaggregated data whenever they are asking for allocation of resources. Number and sex of beneficiaries will also be included in the templates.

Moreover, a gender report analyzing the budget will be annexed to the budget of 2009. It will include features of a gender responsive budget to show the direct allocations within the national budget for women specific projects, child and the family and budget allocations for women within a few other sectors. Finally, a Classification will be added to the current budget classifications to indicate allocations towards gender equality and women's empowerment

What are the mechanisms set up to ensure that the new budget guidelines are implemented?

DFM: A High Level GRB policy committee has been set up by NCW to monitor the mainstreaming of gender in the national socio-economic plan as well as in the National and local budgets. The committee consists of a number of experts in gender, planning, budgeting, and monitoring & evaluation. The MOF works closely with this committee. The MOF is also conducting GRB training workshops for budget employees. These workshops will be followed by on-the-job training and coaching to make sure that what they learned is being implemented at work in the following years.

What are the challenges faced in the implementation?

DFM: When the project first started, the major obstacle was to convince employees of the Ministry of Finance of its relevance and to have more allies and supporters for the GRB concept. However, necessary support was mobilized through media campaigns, informal meetings and lobbying. This proved to be an effective strategy as budget employees became really supportive of the initiative and showed great enthusiasm in developing the GRB manual. They even formed a budget reform committee to set a plan on how to reform the budget process. This committee produced recommendations that were taken into consideration by the Minister of Finance, and that led to drastic changes in the budget process in Egypt.

Another obstacle was the limitations faced by legislative bodies whose role in the budget process is often confined to approval and monitoring, while executive bodies are responsible for the planning of the budget and its implementation. However recent constitutional amendments give the parliament the mandate to discuss the budget and amend it.

The new Article 115 of the constitution makes it mandatory to present the national budget proposal to the People's

Assembly two months before the start of the financial year. Furthermore; the budget can no longer be implemented without the full approval of the assembly.

Finally, it seems that the application of GRB at the local and sectoral level still requires greater efforts in terms of explaining to budget officials and local authorities the recent changes to the budget process and how to abide by them and implement them.

What lessons have you learned from this process?

DFM: I think that the participatory approach used in developing the GRB manual was crucial in ensuring that the manual responded to the needs of the MOF. The support and involvement of the Minister of Finance, Heads of Budget Departments, as well as UNIFEM and NCW were also a main factor in securing fast policy changes. Finally, the cooperation between MOF and CAPMAS (national statistics institution) was one of the success factors in the production of gender disaggregated data and statistics.

What are the perspectives for the GRB work in Egypt?

DFM: With the recent developments, it can be confidently stated that Egypt can fully apply GRB by the financial year 2009/2010. The MOF is now working on the automation of the whole budget process. This will allow the MOF to produce a budget that is gender sensitive even at the local level. We are also trying to share our experience with other countries through contribution to newspapers, public events and making available additional tools.

With the Support and the leadership of the National Council for Women, the GRB initiative in Egypt was presented at the High Level Regional Meeting on Financing for Development in preparation of the Doha round. The 22 Arab Countries that participated in the conference expressed great interest in transferring the Egyptian model to other Arab Countries. In the upcoming years, we hope to sustain and strengthen the GRB initiative by increasing technical capacity to apply GRB, developing simplified budget monitoring tools for Civil Society and women organizations, establishing a Civil Society Network on Gender Budgeting and so forth. We also plan to create linkages between the Ministry of Finance and the Institute of National Planning and include Gender Budgeting in the academic program of the Institute of National Planning.

Thanks to Maya Morsy, UNIFEM Coordinator in Egypt (Maya.Morsy@unifem.org) and Ayaat Abdelmooty, Head of the Equal Opportunity Unit, Ministry of Finance, Egypt ayat.abdelmooty (ayat.abdelmooty@mof.gov.eg) for conducting this interview

Completion of the First Phase of the Regional GRB programme in South East Europe

UNIFEM has released the final report on the sub-regional programme “Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in South East Europe: Advancing Gender Equality and Democratic Governance through Increased Transparency and Accountability”. The programme was implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia, with support from the Governments of Austria and Finland during the period 2006-2008.

The programme was effective in achieving the following results:

- Creating a baseline of the budgetary processes, ongoing reforms, relevant capacities, and entry points for GRB work in the six countries
- Building a range of diverse and strategic partnerships (World Bank, Norway, participatory budgeting initiatives in Moldova, Academia e.g. the Academy of Economic Studies in Moldova)
- Developing capacity building approaches on GRB for women’s organizations throughout the region
- Increased allocations to women’s priorities at local level (e.g. Serbia)

Plans for follow-up are currently being finalized in Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia.

The majority of pilot interventions under the Programme were led by civil society organizations. The effectiveness of the civil society-led GRB initiatives in all countries has depended greatly on the ability of NGOs to work with government officials and to adequately engage in activities outside their usual scope of work.

Highlights of results achieved through the GRB programme in SEE

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the initiative’s focus on analysis and advocacy around financing for shelters for victims of domestic violence resulted in increased allocation in the regional and municipal budget for the year 2008. The Law on Protection from Domestic Violence was also amended to ensure co-financing of running costs of shelters by the regional and municipal budgets.

In Albania, the monitoring of the extent and nature of women’s participation in the public hearings in Elbasan revealed that women participate less than men, and when they do, they are rarely vocal about their priorities.

In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Programme supported an assessment of the costs of VAW for the state, non-governmental organizations offering services and women victims. The work also focused on the healthcare sector in particular on the impact of the Diagnosis-related group (DRG) policy on women’s unpaid care work. The policy under investigation was introduced as a pilot in Macedonia in 2007 and will be implemented throughout the healthcare system starting this year. It was introduced to improve hospital cost efficiency but one of its effects is shorter stay of patients in hospitals. UNIFEM supported analysis of the impact of the DRG on women’s unpaid care work, and the transfer of costs from the paid social sector to the “invisible” care economy. The study concluded that the shift of care from the hospital to the families has implications for women such as less time spent and salaries earned in formal employment, less leisure time and time for their children.

In Moldova, the focus was on the social protection and employment areas, specifically on ensuring equal rights for women and men in the process of budget structure formation and budget allocations. Pilots GRB case studies were launched to this effect. These case studies will feed into Public Expenditure Review (PER) led by the World Bank. Furthermore, capacity development and GRB awareness raising efforts targeting academia representatives resulted in the introduction of GRB-related courses as part of the curriculum for the Masters in Public Finance and Fiscal Studies. Finally, a GRB Task Force comprising professionals in finance and budget from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and Trade and key sectoral ministries and institutions was formed in 2007.

In Serbia, an agreement was reached to support a pilot gender budget initiative that focuses on the sector of employment where discriminatory practices and shortage of skills are among the reasons for women’s lower engagement. Partners are also looking at the 2007 and 2008 budgets and the impacts of existing budgetary allocations on employment such as funds for kindergarten and their availability and quality.

Contact Asya.Varbanova@unifem.org for more information

UNCDF and UNIFEM join forces for Gender Equitable Local Development in Africa

A joint UN programme on gender equitable local development (GELD) will be launched in Senegal, Rwanda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Tanzania by end of 2008 with financial support from the government of Belgium. The three-year programme, developed within the "One UN" principles, forges a partnership between UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNDP to support local governments in five African countries to improve women's access to resources and services. The initiative will seek to achieve this goal by promoting the application of gender responsive planning, programming and budgeting at local level.

In preparation for the launch of the programme, country studies were conducted examining decentralization processes from a gender perspective and identifying entry points for addressing some of the gaps in the five selected countries. Common trends across the GELD baseline studies include the gaps between policy commitments, gender priorities and budget allocations at local level and overall the lack of adequate budgets to support effective decentralization processes. The studies highlighted the limited capacity of women representatives both at local and national to effectively articulate gender issues during the planning, budgeting and monitoring processes even in countries where a gender sensitive legal framework provides good entry points for mainstreaming gender concerns within the planning, budgeting and monitoring system. The baseline studies also pointed out to the challenges caused by weak capacity in gender analysis and planning, limited revenues of local governments and the fact that decentralization process is at very early stages in most countries. The latter could also be

an opportunity since new approaches such as gender planning, budgeting and performance monitoring can be easily brought into early decentralization processes.

The GELD programme will be implemented in partnership with the following local governments:

- In Mozambique: Ribaué and Chibuto
- In Rwanda: Gicumbi and Rulindo
- In Senegal: Kebemer and Louga
- In Sierra Leone: Kenema District Council and Kenema Rural Council
- In Tanzania: Morogoro and Kigoma

Activities under the programme will kick off in November 2008. It is anticipated that the programme will result in:

- Increased participation of women in local planning and budgeting processes
- Increased capacity of local government in developing gender responsive planning, budgeting, and monitoring frameworks
- Increased access to services and resources for women in those regions.
- Informing broader policy forums on gender sensitive approaches to decentralization
- Stronger collaboration with UNDP, UN habitat and UN country teams

In addition to the support from the government of Belgium, the UN country programmes in Rwanda and Mozambique have made financial contribution towards the GELD initiative.

Ghana: President Kufuor announces relief of maternity care fees

The Government of Ghana has waived the full cost of maternity care in all health facilities across the country. The news was reported by "Public Agenda" an organization sponsored by the Ghanaian NGO, Integrated Development Center- ISODEC-. This directive by President Kufuor took full effect on July 1, 2008. A news release from the Ministry of Information indicated that the move is part of the government's efforts to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals.

To operationalize this directive, a special fund has been created through the National health Insurance Scheme for full reimbursement of claims by health facilities for services delivered under the relief package.

It is worth noting that Ghana has just embarked on rolling out its first pilot programme on gender responsive budgeting. The programme focuses on integrating gender in the planning and budgeting processes of at least 3 sectoral ministries namely Health, Food-Agriculture and Local Government-Rural Development-Environment. The programme was announced as part of the presentation of the 2008 Budget by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Since then, a series of GRB training workshops were convened by the Ministry of Finance in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women' Affairs, UNIFEM and UNDP.

Application of GRB to the Agriculture sector: Senegal awarded a prize for political innovation

In June 2008, the GRB initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture in Senegal in partnership with UNIFEM was awarded the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) prize for political innovation. This initiative is implemented as part of the cross regional Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme.

The prize awarded at a Fair organized by IFAD in Burkina Faso recognizes the political and technical innovations and promising practices in relation to the agriculture sector in Western and Central Africa.

UNIFEM presented its pilot experience for supporting a comprehensive and systematic approach to GRB in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MRDA for its French acronym) in Senegal. The presentation focused on support provided to the Ministry for the gender analysis of agriculture policies and programmes and for the elaboration of a gender sensitive Mid-Term Expenditure Framework for the sector. During the presentation, it was highlighted that in an effort to support the collection of data relating to the indicators introduced in the sectoral MTEF, the programme initiated a dialogue with the Statistical Analysis and Forecasts Directorate (DAPS) and reached an agreement for that purpose.

A main strategy of this initiative is the capacity building of the Ministry of Agriculture to engage in gender-responsive review of its existing budget. As part of a series of capacity building activities, a training workshop on GRB was organized in April 2008 for planning and budget officials of the Ministry. Technical assistants from the Parliament Finance Commission and Civil Society organizations affiliated with the agricultural sector also attended the workshop. Using gender budget analysis tools, participants to the workshop were able to identify gender gaps in the national Poverty Reduction Strategies and the National Program of Agricultural Development and formulate recommendations to address those gaps.

Gender issues in the agriculture sector of Senegal are set to be further addressed in the context of the application of the recently adopted law on Agriculture, Forestry and

Animal Herding. This law represents a legal instrument that supports equal access to and use of land and resources by men and women and equal opportunities for women and men in rural areas, particularly in agricultural production.

Canada: the House of Commons demands accountability to women's rights through budgets

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women in the Canadian House of Commons tabled its report entitled "Towards Gender Responsive Budgeting: Rising to the Challenge of Achieving Gender Equality. This report was commissioned by the House of Commons in 2007 amid efforts to contribute to achieving gender equality and improving women's economic security in Canada. The document released in June 2008 identifies how the Government of Canada can take a leadership role in correcting gender inequities through various budgetary measures and decisions. It also formulates recommendations designed to enhance the Federal government's capacity to achieve its commitment to gender equality. The recommendations ensure that federal budgeting decisions and processes consider the differential impact government spending and taxation policies have on women and men.

Further recommendations include that the Federal government establishes greater accountability mechanisms for gender equality such as the introduction of gender equality legislation and the establishment of an Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality. Finally, the report identifies areas of improvements in the Federal government's capacity to undertake gender analysis of government policies.

"We know that the federal budget is an important lever for achieving equality between women and men," said Ms. Yasmin Ratansi. "That is why our proposals in this report are aimed at making sure gender is part of the budgetary decision-making process."

For a copy of the report, please visit: http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteeList.aspx?Lang=1&PARLSES=392&JNT=0&SELID=e24_&COM=13186

Creation of a GRB network in South Caucasus

A GRB network was created in South Caucasus during a regional conference on “the Challenges of Engendering Economics” held in Tbilisi, Georgia in April 2008. The conference organized by UNDP sought to examine the perspectives of integrating gender into macro-economic policies and was preceded by a capacity building workshop on gender budgeting.

The newly created South Caucasian GRB Network brings together state organizations and NGOs from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia committed to working for the mainstreaming of gender in the national budgets of their respective countries.

A high level study tour organized between Finance Ministries of Morocco and Senegal

In May 2008, a delegation of officials from the Senegalese Ministry of Finance, Budget Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and members of parliament spent three days in Morocco learning about the Moroccan experience in institutionalizing gender into national planning and budgeting processes.

Participants in the study tour envisioned pursuing future collaboration towards further involvement of CSOs in GRB work, organizing a regional conference on GRB for women MPs.

NEW RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

GRB VIDEOS:

UNIFEM released two videos on GRB initiatives in Bolivia and Morocco. The short films showcase the roles played by Ministries of Finance, National Women’s Machineries, Local Councilors and women’s organizations in ensuring that budgets respond to women’s priorities and adequately address gender inequality.

In the Morocco video, officials of the Ministry of Finance explain the rationale and process of integrating gender in national level planning and budgeting processes. The video includes interviews with the Minister of Social Affairs, the Director of Budget, the Director of Studies and Financial Forecast and UNIFEM’s Country Director.

In Bolivia, the Feminine Institute of Integral Training (IFFI) built the leadership skills of local women councilors through training sessions and worked with the Mayor of the city of Cochabamba to secure budget allocations for vocational training programmes for women and sports facilities for girls.

The Morocco video is available in French, English and Arabic and the Bolivia video is available in English and Spanish. To watch the videos online visit: <http://www.gender-budgets.org/content/view/640/153/>

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE GRB PROCESS (by Khadija Errebah, Rabat, Morocco July 2008)

This training module in Arabic aims to introduce Moroccan civil society organizations to concepts on GRB and identify the role that they can play in support of gender responsive budgeting in the country. The module includes sessions that facilitate a discussion of the gender budget report, which is produced annually by the sectoral government departments, to identify the strengths and gaps in the report from a civil society perspective. The module also includes a series of hands-on exercises that familiarize civil society groups with tools to monitor budgets from a gender perspective.

The module is available at: <http://www.gender-budgets.org/content/view/632/240/>

GRB COURSE: “An Introduction to Gender Budgeting for Organizations and Institutions”

The ILO International Training Center is accepting applications for a GRB course to be held on the ILO Campus in Turin from 17 - 21 November 2008. The course targets policy makers, national and local public services staff; civil society representatives; staff of the UN and other international organizations.

For more information: http://gender.itcilo.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=35&Itemid=13