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The Unfinished Agenda

Balance Sheet of Progress and Backlogs on Gender Equality

Goal

Progress on Gender Equality

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1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

A number of women's organizations, particularly in African countries, have fought for and won equal rights of property for women, pastoralists, and in the case of land reform, landless people.

Women's participation in paid employment has increased in the period 1995 to 2004 in every region of the world except for sub-Saharan Africa.¹

Rural women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food in sub-Saharan Africa,² yet female-headed households are more likely to be poorer, and thus to spend a greater proportion of their income on food.³

Available data indicate that women are less likely to own land than men, and female landowners tend to own less land than male landowners.⁴

The paucity of gender-disaggregated data on women's access to credit, property ownership and other critical skills and tools for economic security continues to hamper efforts to address extreme poverty and hunger among women and girls.



2. Achieve Universal Primary Education

Nearly two thirds of countries reached gender parity in primary school enrollment ratios by the target year of 2005.⁵

Globally, 94 girls were in primary school for every 100 boys in 2005, compared with 92 in 1999.⁶

Ten million more girls than boys are out of primary school.⁷

Nearly two-thirds of the world's 780 million people who cannot read are women.⁸



3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Only seven countries are still not parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁹

Between 1990 and 2005, all regions except Europe, Central and East Asia saw an increase of women in national parliaments.¹⁰

Women account for almost 40 per cent of all paid jobs outside agriculture, up from 35 per cent in 1990.¹¹

More than 70 countries have supported gender-responsive budgeting in order to introduce gender equality objectives into the budget cycle.¹²

Violence against women is one of the most serious challenges to gender equality and women's human rights. A 2002 UNIFEM scan of anti-violence legislation found only 45 countries with specific laws on domestic violence. In 2006, that number had risen to 60 states.¹³

Worldwide, over 60 per cent of unpaid family workers are women.¹⁴

In 2007, the share of women with a wage and salaried job stood at only 15.5 per cent, which represents half of the same share of men.¹⁵

At the current rate, it will take women 40 years to reach 40 per cent parliamentary representation in developing countries.¹⁶

A rigorous study in ten countries from different regions found between 15 per cent and 71 per cent of women reported having experienced violence by a partner over the course of their lifetime, and up to nearly a third had reported violence in the past year.¹⁷



4. Reduce Child Mortality

In 2006 for the first time in recorded history, the number of children dying before the age of one dipped below 10 million.¹⁸

Child mortality was nearly cut in half from 1990 to 2006 in Central and Eastern Europe/CIS, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in East Asia and the Pacific.¹⁹

9.7 million children died in 2006 before their fifth birthday.²⁰



5. Improve Maternal Health

Every developing region has made progress increasing the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel, from 54 per cent in 1995 to 61 per cent around 2005.²¹

Worldwide, fewer women died during pregnancy and childbirth in 2005 (536,000) than in 1990 (576,000).²²

Maternal mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia have barely changed over two decades. The target to reduce the maternal mortality ratio is the area of least progress of all the Millennium Development Goals.²³

Over half a million women still die each year from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth, an average of about one death every minute.²⁴

Violence against women during pregnancy can endanger the health of the mother and/or newborn child, with rates in developing countries ranging from 4 per cent to 32 per cent.²⁵

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6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Disease

In a global surge of new resources for HIV/AIDS, funding has increased from \$260 million in 1996 to almost \$10 billion in 2007, along with commitments to empowering women and girls and guaranteeing their rights to prevention, treatment and care.²⁶

International funding for malaria control increased more than tenfold over the past decade.²⁷

Globally, the percentage of women and girls living with HIV and AIDS has risen from 41 per cent in 1997 to just under half today.²⁸

In sub-Saharan Africa, about 60 per cent of adults living with HIV are women.²⁹

Only approximately 11 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV today receive services to prevent HIV transmission to their children.³⁰



7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Between 1990 and 2006, more than 1.2 billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking water, and the world as a whole is on track to achieve the drinking water target for MDG.³¹

Between 1990 and 2006, more than 1.1 billion people gained access to improved sanitation.³²

Sub-Saharan Africa will not meet the safe drinking water target given current trends.³³ Carrying water long distances, a task typically performed by women and children, is physically burdensome, takes time from productive activities, and increases women's vulnerability to violence.³⁴

The world will miss the MDG sanitation target by 700 million people if current trends continue.³⁵ Searching for privacy to defecate is a humiliating routine that exposes women to ridicule, sexual harassment, and rape.³⁶



8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The growing use of targets and indicators to signal development priorities has led to a stronger emphasis on accountability for meeting agreed commitments. These tools can help in tracking, in resource allocation, and in the process of holding development actors accountable to women through aid.³⁷

In 2006, only \$10.2 billion in bilateral aid, about one sixth of the total, was identified by donors as intended to contribute to either gender equality or women's empowerment.³⁸

Based on a survey of about 1,000 organizations working on women's rights, 67 per cent said they find it more difficult to raise funds today than 5 years ago.³⁹

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304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA
T: +1 212-906-6400
F: +1 212-906-6705
www.unifem.org