

THE BURUNDI COMMUNIQUE ON PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW AID MODALITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS, 11th – 14th JULY 2006

Preamble

We the participants from 6 African governments, members of parliament, un agencies, development partners, and the women's movement, in Africa, meeting in Bujumbura – Burundi from 11th – 14th July, 2006 having held consultations on promoting gender equality and women's Human rights in the New Aid Modalities and Partnerships co-hosted by the Government of Burundi and United Nations Development Fund for Women, together reiterate the importance of ensuring that the new aid architecture and implementation of the Paris Declaration reinforce and support commitments to women's human rights undertaken by our governments.

We wish to acknowledge the willingness of governments to participate in the deliberations aimed at ensuring a gender and women's human rights perspective. We appreciate that they have accepted to include gender equality in their engagement with the new aid modalities.

We, the participants sought to:

- *Identify strategies to support African Governments to shape their planning processes, resource management modalities, and partnerships to respond to and promote women's human rights and empowerment.*
- *Set up mechanisms for development of gender responsive indicators and tracking aid flows towards gender equality in selected countries;*
- *Strengthen capacity of gender advocates and develop strategies for contributions to the preparatory processes to the high level meeting on Financing for Development to be held in Ghana in 2008*

We the participants express concern that new aid modalities may shrink the spaces and resources available to gender equality advocates in their efforts to promote women's human rights, empowerment and improvement of women's capacity to contribute to development.

Noting that:

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed in March 2005, establishes global commitments for donor and partner countries to support more effective aid in a context of significant scaling up of aid;

Political space and leverage must be created and consultations as well as decision making processes must include poor women and men for true citizen ownership of the development agenda;

Gender mainstreaming, as an approach, whilst it has made some progress has not achieved desired outcomes of advancing women's empowerment and gender equality.

Gender equality and women's human rights results and impact is an essential part of managing for development results and monitoring gender equality is imperative to the way of ensuring that aid is reaching those it intends to serve;

Recognizing that:

Africa faces challenges in achieving effective use of aid towards promoting gender equality and that failure to harmonise aid with country specific development strategies that are gender sensitive will compromise achieving development targets and women's human rights;

There is general lack of awareness on the implications of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's human rights;

There are major institutional capacity constraints among national women's machineries, line ministries and civil society on gender analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the context of new aid modalities;

There has been unpredictable financial commitments for promoting gender equality and women's rights from Governments, donors, and the private sector. In particular, the decreasing allocation of resources to civil society and women's organisations is likely to affect negatively the achievement of gender equality and women's human rights in the context of the new aid modalities.

Conscious that:

The 2005 Paris Declaration on the aid effectiveness set out five principles to guide its implementation. From a gender perspective, we interpret these principles to mean;

Ownership implies that women's as well as men's voices and concerns must be central to national development plans, processes and that the recipient countries should own the development agenda.

Alignment requires that donors who have gender equality policies and who have made international commitments align with the gender equality and women's human rights, policies and commitments of partners and strengthen capacity for coordinated effort/action;

Harmonization is likely to lead to new Programme mechanisms and rationalization of donor support. It will be necessary to ensure that gender equality and women's human rights perspectives and concerns are part of the priorities in jointly undertaken processes;

Managing for results cannot be comprehensive unless gender equality and women's human rights is central in all performance assessment frameworks;

Mutual accountability mechanisms must include women and accountability must be monitored with gender responsive indicators.

We hereby recommend that:

Governments

Should adopt national strategies that reflect the international, regional and national commitments on women's human rights and gender equality including CEDAW,

Beijing Platform for Action, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, Optional Protocol on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

In the context of sector-wide approaches, Governments should prioritize women's empowerment and gender equality as a sector in national development plans and allocate specific resources to this sector in national budgets.

UNIFEM

Should strengthen its technical support to African governments, parliaments and civil society for the inclusion of gender perspectives in national development planning,

Should lead the documentation of best practices and development of tools and strategies on promoting gender equality and women's rights in the context of new aid modalities;

Should spearhead the process of revitalizing and positioning of the Women's National Machineries to increase their influence for a more effective gender analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the context of new aid modalities and call on the relevant multi-stakeholders to support this;

Building on its experience in peace-building and reconstruction processes, UNIFEM should provide a framework for engagement with the new aid modalities in order to promote gender responsive policies and programmes in post conflict countries.

Civil society

Should play an active role in sensitizing and building capacity of civic leaders and relevant stakeholders to effectively participate and advocate for gender analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new aid modalities;

Should be a watchdog in ensuring that all stakeholders are accountable for progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's human rights in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the new aid modalities.

Donor aid

Should be made more predictable, with specific earmarked funds allocated to promote gender equality and women's human rights; and target **civil society organizations** in support of their role as advocates and watchdogs promoting women's empowerment;

Inter-governmental Organizations should engage with member states in implementing their commitments to increasing financial resources towards gender equality and women's human rights;

Private sector should promote women's human rights and gender equality through the adoption and implementation of gender responsive corporate social responsibility principles, employment policies and through trade;

All participants should commit to establish partnerships among themselves in order to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations and the commitments made in this communiqué and to work towards the preparations for the Ghana High Level Meeting on Financing for Development 2008.

Endorsed on Friday the 14th July, 2006

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ADDRESSING AID EFFECTIVENESS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA
 CONSULTATIONS CO HOSTED BY GOVERNMENT OF BURUNDI AND UNITED
 NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Bujumbura, Burundi

12 – 14 July 2006

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