

ALMATY DECLARATION

CONTRIBUTION TO THE GHANA HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON AID EFFECTIVENESS and THE ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION

PREAMBLE

We, representatives of Government, bilateral and multilateral organizations, civil society participating in the Almaty High Level Forum on Gender Equality and rights-based Development Planning and Budgeting in the Commonwealth of Independent States, having reviewed cumulative experiences relating to gender equality, development and aid effectiveness over the past few years, and

Recognizing that

1. since 2000, the international development environment has shifted to increasingly focus on the consensus on internationally agreed development goals as embodied in the Millennium Development Goals, with quantifiable and time-bound targets;
2. an emphasis on national leadership in defining and implementing national priorities based on the 5 core principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – ownership, harmonization, alignment, results management and mutual accountability – is critical for development and aid effectiveness;
3. ownership, harmonization and alignment imply a shift towards pooled funding and direct budget support, directly linked to national development strategies, and implemented through different mechanisms, often including Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs).
4. results-management and mutual accountability require that aid effectiveness be assessed by its contribution to development effectiveness and be monitored through transparency and measurable performance accordingly.
5. development effectiveness rests on the achievement of gender equality as a *sine qua non*, and that the most effective way to pursue gender equality is to ensure it is given priority in national development planning and budgeting processes, and to keep track of progress through sex-disaggregated targets and indicators.

Acknowledge that

6. the review of experiences with engendering national development planning and budgeting in the Commonwealth of Independent States demonstrate both progress and significant challenges which require specific measures by development partners and countries;
7. that geographic proximity and common past in the Commonwealth of Independence States are reflected in similarities of experience, challenges and opportunities that benefit from intra-regional exchange of experiences for

engendering development policies and strategies, budgeting processes, aid modalities and monitoring mechanisms;

Emphasize that

8. sectoral and cross-sectoral issues such as gender equality present particular challenges and will require further efforts in terms of prioritization in planning, budgeting and implementation processes by countries as well as by development partners,
9. such efforts will require a mix of aid instruments and a refinement of performance assessment framework indicators.
10. More specifically, this would entail:
 - sustained technical and financial support to develop national capacities for gender-responsive national development planning and budgeting;
 - commitment by countries and development partners to involve civil society, including women's groups, in order to ensure their participation in the definition of national priorities;
 - commitment by countries and development partners to gender-responsive and performance-based monitoring frameworks with harmonized, gender indicators

Commit to

11. further the establishment of policies and mechanisms to align national development planning and budgeting processes with nationally agreed gender priorities with broad-based participation from civil society;
12. support action so that the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Declaration, international conventions and commitments related to gender equality become fundamental to strategic policy, legislation and development and budgeting frameworks ;
13. ensure that the gender dimension is fully integrated into the processes set-up for aid allocation and effectiveness;
14. monitor the effective implementation of gender sensitive aid planning, assess its impact on the support to the gender dimension of the national development strategies, and sharing lessons learned from such monitoring and evaluation, both within and among countries of the CIS region;
15. improve the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and other relevant information, and facilitate the elaboration of gender-responsive social and financial standards for planning and forecasting;
16. expand inter-governmental cooperation within the CIS region in order to share the outcome of national efforts, including problems met and good practices.

Recommend that

17. a multi-year CIS regional programme or trust fund be considered and resourced to support countries of the CIS to access expertise, technical assistance and training towards strengthening capacities in the region on gender-responsive development planning, budgeting and monitoring
18. in its review of experiences and progress to date, to address concrete actions needed to meet the Paris HLF targets by 2010, the Ghana High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness anchors the principles of:
 - ownership, alignment and harmonization in line with globally agreed commitments on gender equality
 - managing for results to include gender equality goals as an integral part of development and aid effectiveness
 - mutual accountability to incorporate the responsibility of partner countries, donors, and other development actors to meet their gender equality commitments, and to track progress through sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators in performance assessment frameworks
19. the UN system be fully involved in promoting the gender dimension of development effectiveness and aid effectiveness, with the new gender entity and architecture envisaged in the framework of the UN reform acting as its driving force.
20. the “Almaty Declaration” be considered as a contribution from the Commonwealth of Independent States to the Accra Agenda for Action.

Almaty, 20 May 2007