

# DAC GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AID EFFECTIVENESS, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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# **Gender equality: empowering women so that development is effective**

## WHY GENDER EQUALITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Of the 113 countries that failed to achieve gender parity in both primary and secondary school enrolment by the target date of 2005, only 18 are likely to achieve the goal by 2015.
- More than 500 000 prospective mothers in developing countries die annually in childbirth or of complications from pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>
- In some African countries, children of mothers who have spent five years in primary education are 40% more likely to live beyond the age of five.
- In India, if the ratio of female to male workers were increased by 10%, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would rise by 8%.
- In sub-Saharan Africa it has been calculated that agricultural productivity could increase by up to 20% if women's access to resources such as land, seed and fertiliser were equal that of men.<sup>2</sup>
- Women reinvest 90% of their income in their families and communities, compared to men who reinvest only 30% to 40% of their income.<sup>3</sup>

## PREAMBLE

1. "Gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are cornerstones for achieving enduring impacts on the lives and potential of poor women, men, and children. It is vital that all our policies address these issues in a more systematic and coherent way" (Accra Agenda for Action, 2008).

2. Individually and collectively donor agencies and governments have made strong commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. Donor guidance to operationalise those commitments includes the *DAC Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation* (1999), along with the policies and plans developed by individual agencies.

3. In 2007 members of the DAC Network on Gender Equality reviewed the *DAC Guidelines* with the intention of revising them to reflect changed approaches to and practices in development co-operation. It quickly became apparent, however, that the twin track approach of the *Guidelines* – **gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions** – **continues to be a useful strategy. Instead** of revising them, members have therefore prepared these *Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*<sup>4</sup> to complement the existing *Guidelines*.

4. Recent reforms of aid delivery, most notably the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), have provided new opportunities and mechanisms to translate donor and government commitments into improved practice, results and impacts. The Declaration sets out five principles for reform of aid intended to "*increase the impact of aid... in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs*"<sup>5</sup>. Achieving these internationally agreed development goals will not be possible without progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. At the same time, implementing the Declaration's overarching partnership commitments is a powerful way of accelerating progress on MDG3: gender equality and women's empowerment. Whilst gender inequalities are costly and undermine aid effectiveness and development impacts,<sup>6</sup> gender equality and women's empowerment, on the other hand, are powerful multipliers of development efforts.

1 *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, United Nations.

2 *Gender equality at the heart of development – Why the role of women is crucial to ending world poverty*, Department for International Development, 2007.

3 Phil Borges (2007), *Women Empowered: Inspiring Change in the Emerging World*. New York.

4 Based on extensive consultations with members of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET).

5 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, paragraph 2.

6 It has been estimated that persistent gender inequality and discrimination against women due to restrictions on access to employment and education alone cost between USD 58 and USD 77 billion per year in the Asia-Pacific region – ESCAP *Surging ahead in uncertain times: economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific*, 2007.

5. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action provide the frameworks and good practice principles for fostering gender equality as a priority development issue. Each offers concrete opportunities to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives benefit from scaled up Official Development Assistance (ODA). The strengthened partnerships which are promoted in each will support both the supply side of governance (government policies, strategies and capacities) and the demand side (voice, inclusion and the empowerment of citizens, including women's groups and civil society). The Declaration and the Agenda for Action can be tools to empower women and men and to strengthen the responsiveness of governments to citizens.

6. These *Guiding Principles* focus primarily on the opportunities for using the implementation of the Paris Declaration's principles and commitments to:

- Harmonise approaches to support for gender equality.
- Implement concrete actions, focussed on results and impacts.
- Be responsible and accountable for those actions and for agreed commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

7. The suggested approaches and entry points can be used by policy advisors and programme managers in both donor and partner countries to increase the prospects for achieving results and impacts through work on gender equality and women's empowerment. As well as being development goals in their own right, gender equality and women's empowerment are catalysts for the reduction of poverty and the achievement of all the MDGs.

## PRINCIPLES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENTS

### OWNERSHIP

8. Donors can support broad based national ownership of the development agenda and strengthen the capacity of different stakeholders by:

- Supporting partner government efforts to base their Poverty Reduction Strategies on existing gender equality and women's empowerment commitments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action and by supporting efforts to translate these into budget-linked, prioritised, results-oriented operational programmes (Accra Agenda for Action, 13c).
- Engaging with civil society in general and women's organisations in particular, and finding ways to support gender equality champions and other gender-responsive "drivers of change".
- Working with partner country parliaments, ministries (including planning, finance and women's ministries), local government, NGOs and the private sector to ensure that women's voices are heard in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategies and other medium-term plans.
- Supporting national statistical institutions to collect, produce and analyse data disaggregated by sex (Accra Agenda for Action, 23a).

### ALIGNMENT

9. Greater use can be made by donors of constitutional and other legal instruments, international commitments and obligations, and national, regional, provincial and sectoral strategies, including those related to gender equality and women's empowerment by:

- Using global agreements and conventions, such as MDG3, the Beijing Platform for Action, the CEDAW Convention, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and national gender equality policies, in policy dialogues (Accra Agenda for Action, 13c).
- Monitoring the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are substantively addressed in policy dialogues.
- Drawing on existing gender expertise in partner countries (or regions) and developing local capacity when using external gender expertise.
- Building country capacity and knowledge on the implementation of regional and international gender equality commitments.

- Strengthening the capacity of finance and sectoral ministries to implement performance-based budgeting that includes measures to address gender equality and women's empowerment, coupled with strengthening the capacity of civil society to engage in national budgetary processes.

## HARMONISATION

10. Increased harmonisation would see donors and partner governments co-ordinating and working together to fund and support interventions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by:

- Undertaking jointly and using joint country and sector gender analyses, gender audits, assessments and evaluations, and gender-responsive poverty and social impact assessments.
- Sharing, drawing on and facilitating access to other donors' gender equality expertise at country level to ensure the best possible division of labour amongst donors.
- Working to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are prominent in Joint Assistance Strategies, and that in-country working groups and lead donors have sufficient competence in order to avoid the risk of settling for the lowest common denominator in efforts to harmonise around gender equality.
- Reflecting on how to ensure the protection and participation of women to achieve development effectiveness in fragile states in line with the *DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* (Accra Agenda for Action, 21b).

## MANAGING FOR RESULTS

11. Results oriented Performance Assessment Frameworks will yield better information on the quality of results when:

- Performance assessment frameworks include measurable results indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Sex-disaggregated data is collected, analysed, used and disseminated (Accra Agenda for Action, 23a); and there are indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment in monitoring systems for each sector.
- Countries and their citizens are supported to strengthen capacities and increase demand for gender-responsive results.

## MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

12. The concept and practice of accountability can be further developed by donors through support for the development or improvement of accountability mechanisms, indicators, data collection and processes to hold both themselves and partner governments to account for their work to reduce gender gaps and empower women. This could include:

- Support to women's organisations to strengthen their capacity to hold their governments accountable for commitments related to gender equality and women's empowerment and for the development process in general. As well as providing financial support to NGOs, donors can assist with creating an enabling environment through their policy dialogue with partner governments (Accra Agenda for Action, 13a, b).
- Support to central and local government institutions to strengthen their own accountability to all citizens and users of their services (Accra Agenda for Action, 14a).
- Support for efforts designed to ensure that parliamentary processes are informed about the cost of persistent gender inequality and discrimination against women, as well as the importance and utility of gender equality and women's empowerment for achieving development results.
- Finding incentives so that programme staff in all sectors are accountable for demonstrating gender equality and women's empowerment results.
- Tracking the proportion of ODA which is invested in gender equality and women's empowerment activities at country level.



- Using the DAC peer review process to evaluate donor effectiveness in integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into the implementation of the Paris Declaration.
- Working with multilateral organisations to ensure that they are appropriately accountable for their gender equality actions – in particular, at country level.

## TRACKING PERFORMANCE AND BUILDING CAPACITY

13. Increased investment in, and capacity development for, gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial instruments for achieving the implementation of the overarching principles and partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration. Effective strategies include:

- Strengthening political commitment at national level in both donor and partner countries.
- Making use of peer review mechanisms, including DAC peer reviews and the Africa peer review mechanism (Accra Agenda for Action, 24c).
- Tracking and disseminating the proportion of ODA which is directed towards gender equality and women's empowerment activities.
- Establishing a process for applying the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker to programmatic aid.
- Developing qualitative and quantitative gender equality indicators to measure progress towards challenging commitments such as country ownership.
- Providing technical assistance to strengthen local capacity to address gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Continuing to invest in the development of gender responsive technical and policy capacity to ensure gender analyses of emerging areas and thematic issues such as climate change.

A series of GENDERNET **Issues Briefs** on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness complement and expand on these *Guiding Principles*. The Briefs provide concrete examples and case studies. Currently available:

- *Making the Linkages* (Issues Brief 1),
- *Finding the Entry points* (Issues Brief 2),
- *Innovative Funding for Women's Organisations* (Issues Brief 3),
- *Managing for Gender Equality Results in Donor Agencies* (Issues Brief 4), and
- *Managing for Gender Equality Results in Partner Countries* (Issues Brief 5).



## DAC GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AID EFFECTIVENESS, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Recent reforms of aid delivery, most notably the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), have provided new opportunities and mechanisms to translate donor and government commitments into improved practice, results and impacts. Achieving internationally agreed development goals will however not be possible without progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. At the same time, implementing the Paris Declaration's overarching partnership commitments is a powerful way of accelerating progress on Millennium Development Goal 3: gender equality and women's empowerment. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) provide the frameworks and good practice principles for fostering gender equality as a priority development issue.

These *DAC Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* (endorsed in December 2008) suggest approaches and entry points for policy advisors and programme managers in both donor and partner countries to increase the prospects for achieving development results and impacts through work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

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