

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2005, the European Commission and UNIFEM organized a global consultation in Brussels, bringing together government representatives, women's organizations and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to review key opportunities and challenges for gender equality in the aid effectiveness agenda, particularly in the context of the Paris Declaration. In January 2006, the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality and the UN Inter-Agency Network on Gender Equality (IANWGE) held a meeting in Nairobi to further explore mainstreaming gender equality into the aid effectiveness agenda. As a follow-up to these meetings UNIFEM is holding five regional consultations to build knowledge, capacities and partnerships to support efforts to bring a gender perspective to this process, and track results towards the Ghana High-Level Forum in 2008.

In this context, in partnership with the National Commission on Family and Gender Policy under the President of Kazakhstan, UNIFEM has organized a High-Level Consultation for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on 20 May 2007 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, which major findings and outcomes are presented in this report. In the CIS, as elsewhere, the need for increasing the effectiveness of development assistance in support of national development processes is being framed by the Millennium Declaration and the principles outlined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, thus underlining global commitments made by both donor and partner countries. At national level, these are reflected in efforts to build national consensus on Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), and aligning development assistance to support countries to achieve the Mil-

lennium Development Goals (MDGs). The implementation of this agenda also implies the increasing use of such aid modalities as Direct Budget Support, whether in the form of General Budget Support or Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs). Multiple evaluations, assessment and analyses across the world have demonstrated such aid modalities still fall quite short of being rights-based and gender-responsive.

The Consultation has provided a platform for extensive dialogues between high-level policy and decision makers from national governments, civil society and bilateral and multilateral development partners from the CIS region to discuss challenges, opportunities and partnerships to address these issues on the way to the High-Level Forum in Ghana in 2008. As a result of extensive discussions, the Almaty Declaration "Contribution to the Ghana High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action" has been agreed by all participants and subsequently adopted. By adoption of the Declaration the participants make their contributions to achieving recognition by all partners that the implementation of gender equality commitments is an integral and important part of national development processes. Furthermore, it is an essential condition for the improvement of aid effectiveness within the region. This Declaration is an important political document to be used for further multilateral dialogue with a view to increasing understanding and awareness among delegates of the coming high level meeting in Ghana.

I. BACKGROUND

Gender equality issues are central for development processes, human security, ensuring human rights and social justice. Full-scale

implementation of national commitments on gender equality¹ is a necessary step for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Such an approach corresponds to key UN principles, including the principle of gender equality observation, which is a fundamental and integral element of democratic governance and poverty reduction measures.

Gender equality promotion is not only a method of combating discrimination, but also a process of promoting democracy. It is impossible to speak about democracy and legal norms if the opportunities and rights of an individual are discriminated against on the basis of sex.

Despite positive dynamics in the promotion of gender equality legislation², it is now clear that achievements solely in this area will not suffice. The experience of the CIS countries demonstrates that alongside the adoption of laws and international conventions, the problem of law enforcement and implementation for the realistic and practical protection of women's rights is critical. Despite the achievements in gender legislation, 30 years after the first World Conference on Women's Advancement, and 13 years after the World Conference in Beijing, the problems of poverty, violence and human trafficking still predominantly have a woman's face. In CIS countries, many achievements inherited from the Soviet epoch, such as equal representation of women and men at all levels of power, social security and protection of motherhood and childhood, high levels of literacy and education, and economic protection of women, were either partly or fully lost. In addition, the processes taking place in the world bring forward new challenges, which should be considered in activities aimed at achieving equal rights and opportunities both for women and men.

High costs caused by the slow process of implementation of laws and gender sensitive policies have direct consequences not only

for women but for society as a whole. It is impossible to achieve high social and economic growth, or to efficiently manage democratic processes, if women have limited access to the resources important for the well-being of their families, or are excluded from the development process.

There is a growing perception that economic policy can not be gender neutral. Although, within the CIS countries, this argument is still relatively new for those responsible for financial and economic policy-making in the ministries of finance, trade and economy, nevertheless there is a growing tendency for those ministries to note the positive link between gender equality and economic efficiency. Currently a number of countries, including Central Asian and Caucasian states, are working to develop policies and measures, which help to promote women's economic empowerment. However, the issue is that these measures are not always a part of a broader national policy and some important initiatives, such as gender budgets, are still at the pilot stage.

The issue of increasing aid efficiency is considered in the context of resourceful implementation of national commitments regarding gender equality. This issue acquires a specially pressing character due to the new commitment of donors, which propose to increase the volume of official aid for development purposes up to \$130 billion by 2010. Within the context of these commitments, the main concern for gender advocates is how to ensure that their contribution of the increased aid volume is directed towards the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals as a whole and, in particular, towards achieving the MDG-3 aimed at gender equality. The 2005 Millennium Summit clearly defined that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depends not only on the increase of the volume of official aid, but also on a significant increase of the effectiveness of the aid provided.

¹ Country Commitments under the Beijing Platform of Actions and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women.

² As of today 185 countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). 120 member countries implement their national plans of action in the gender area, over 95 countries introduced quotas to increase women's representation in Parliament, 89 countries adopted national laws aimed at fighting against gender violence in the family.

II. ENGENDERING NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESSES

Recently, the issue of engendering national development processes has become pressing, due to a growing need for an increased social focus and targeted approach, which are stipulated in the national development strategies. Use of such an approach implies the possibility of achieving real changes amongst the most vulnerable social groups.

There is a growing understanding that gender aspects should be integrated in all areas of socio-economic development, state administration and governance. Consequently, the issues of gender equality should be brought to the attention of the leading economists and experts of key sectoral ministries, who are involved in the development of state strategies and programs.

In Kazakhstan, the Government's mid-term plan of activities aimed at implementing the National Strategy on Gender Equality is currently being implemented. The Plan stipulates 45 large-scale consultations related to political and economic advancement of women, preservation of reproductive health of women and men, the fight to end violence against women and children and measures aimed at achieving gender equality in family relations. All of these meetings are carried out by state bodies and are funded mainly by the state and local budgets. Non-governmental and international organizations are also involved in the aforementioned activities.

Drafting the national development strategy implies a program-based approach, which requires the drafters to carry the relevant knowledge and skills in the area of strategic planning. During the Soviet period, long-term programs were developed by a group of drafters from the Academy of Science, thus planning had substantial scientific basis. Currently, under new circumstances where ministerial staff are responsible for drafting sectoral parts of the NDS, there is a general lack of knowledge among sector specialists in strategic planning as a whole, and in particular, a lack of awareness about rights and gender-based planning.

This lack of knowledge is further aggravated by weak interaction between sectoral drafters, which often leads to a risk of fragmentation of various sectoral parts of the document. An absence of a coordination mechanism between the sectors also impedes the dialogue on such cross-cutting issues as gender equality.

There is much to do in this direction; however, at present we can already speak about the existence of a network of gender experts, economists and sectoral specialists from the ministries of CIS countries. As a result of their participation in promoting gender issues within sectoral parts of the national strategies, they have developed an understanding that gender equality issues are an integral part of their work, and that consideration of the gender dimension will allow an increase in the efficiency of services provided to the population. It has been however noted that, in order to prepare national specialists who are knowledgeable in gender equality issues, there is a need to attract highly-qualified international experts, who would provide professional and technical assistance within the technical assistance programs funded by donor countries.

In Kyrgyzstan, some gender priorities were included in the "Development Environment" section that defines key priorities of the country within the governance and social development area. The Country Development Strategy provides an important reference, notably stating that gender equality issues of a high priority will be implemented through the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Gender Equality. It is notable that evaluation of needs in funding of the activities stipulated in the NPA was carried out. Based upon the results of the cost estimate, the volume of NPA funding was brought in line with the mid-term budget forecast (2007-2010) and the annual budget of Kyrgyzstan, which ensures real funding of national gender equality priorities.

This argument is confirmed by the experience of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Gender experts in these countries experienced specific difficulties caused by a poor understanding of gender issues by the basic group of drafters of the National Development Strategy. The

relative success of engendering the NDS in Kyrgyzstan was possible mainly due to the existence and work of a group of gender advocates in the country, who had special sector-specific knowledge, along with an understanding of the gender perspective, and who could justify the importance of including these gender priorities in the national country strategy. Therefore, subsequent close interaction of gender experts with the group of drafters served as a factor contributing to engendering the Country Development Strategy. A critical mass of civil servants, who understand and are committed to the ideas of gender equality, is necessary for the sustainability and systemic nature of such interaction.

Despite some progress made through the process of engendering national strategies in Central Asian and Southern Caucasus countries, the major challenge noted throughout the process was the difficulty of defining gender priorities in economic areas, mainly due to insufficient sex disaggregated statistics, exacerbated by the lack of sufficient national experience in gender analysis of economics. It is clear that, without specificity, there is a risk that gender issues will be formulated in generalized terms and will get blurred within the general sectoral issues. Gender aspects of the strategies and programs should be specific and clearly defined, accompanied by well-justified arguments and linked with relevant sections of the budget and programs, which include general sectoral priorities.

For successful engendering of the national development strategy, there is a need to consolidate the efforts of all stakeholders, as well as clearly understand the obstacles and define ways of overcoming them at all levels. This includes ensuring implementation of laws at the legislative level, working closely with sector specialists at the executive level, especially with those working in the area of economy and finance, and at the community level, more efficiently influencing the changes of social stereotypes as a condition for sustainable promotion of gender equality ideas.

III. GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

The presence of the gender dimension in the national strategies and sectoral programs

that are supported by budget funding implies a shift from declaratory statements to the practical solution of problems in achieving gender equality.

There is growing recognition of gender responsive budgeting as a tool that can be instrumental for defining and locating funding to support programs aiming first of all at increasing people's well being, ensured by targeted and equitable budgeting of socio-economic development and enhanced national capacities for development. The experience of Russia in the application of a gender responsive budgeting approach demonstrates that ensuring gender responsiveness of policies and strategies largely depends on well-thought-out and comprehensive budget analysis to show how much funds the state allocates to promoting the equal status of women, and how this influences the efficiency of reforms, which are aimed at achieving the development goals of the country. Analysis of social items and programs of the budget constitutes a basis of the GRB method, which takes into account the social consequences that can be different for men and women.

Actions undertaken within the gender budget's initiative in Russia included:

- Gender analysis of budget and tax codes, adopted social laws, etc.;
- Gender analysis of the budget adoption process and its execution;
- Budget estimates made at the national level in the system of consolidated budget at all levels of state power (federal/regional);
- Budget estimate of the share of gender-sensitive expenditures, which have an impact on improving the status of women;
- Gender expertise in the federal budget within the social policy area;
- Analysis of funding systems of pension funds and funds for compulsory medical and social insurance;
- Studies of factors in gender discrimination, and development of proposals for the elimination of these factors based on real economic opportunities;
- Gender review of the legislation related to electoral systems, labor, pension, family issues.

In Russia, gender responsive budgeting was initiated by gender advocates and public organizations, supported by the UNIFEM Project "Gender Budgets of Russia". The initiative was quite successful, starting with gender expertise in budgeting methods and going further in increasing gender sensitivity of the state administration. Furthermore, this initiative helped to increase the role of women in decision-making at policy level, as direct participants in the budget process.

The GRB initiative coincided with administrative reform and an extensive reform of social policies and legislation ongoing in the country. Therefore, the focus of the GRB initiative was placed on gender expertise in Federal (national) and Municipal (local) budgets, and gender expertise has been provided on a set of the Laws necessary for budget policy decisions, such as the Law on 'Minimum wage rate'; the Law on 'State allowances to citizens having children'; and the Law on 'Budget of Federal Fund for compulsory medical insurance'. The expertise was provided by the core group of 36 experts (16 national and 20 local), trained within the project on gender-responsive policy-making through 5 expert meetings and learning workshops. These recommendations aim at redistribution of approximately 1,5 billion dollars in the Federal budget to cover the expenditures of gender-responsive measures, including the measures for: a) increase in the minimum wage rate; b) increase in the wage rate of the social sectors (health, education, culture – with women being a majority working in these sectors); c) increase in the allowances for children and d) increase in privileges for tax exemption for families with many children; etc.

The effectiveness of the budget developed through the gender responsive budgeting approach is obvious. An increase of budget resources for health care and social policy purposes has brought significant results, which showed that indicators of maternity and child mortality for January-February 2007 differ sharply from those indicators for the same period in the past years. Currently, there has been a marked decrease of the child mortality rate by 8.5% and an increase in the birth rate by 9.6%. The measures stipulated in the budget will surely bring successful results during the coming years.

One of the important outcomes of this initiative was the formation of a community of experts (advisers and consultants of government structures responsible for state budgeting process; scientists and professors, representatives of NGOs and mass media) having expertise in the effective promotion of gender budgeting in the system of the state budget. Further work on building national capacities on gender responsive budgeting will be made through the Course on GRB which was integrated into the Curricula of the Russian Academy of Public Administration as a part of the Programme on "Social Policy" (mandatory course for civil servants and post-graduate students of the Academy).

IV. GENDER EQUALITY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

Today, when the Paris Declaration clearly defines the principles for increased aid efficiency and strengthening the role of the national government in order to secure sustainable social and economic development, the gender dimension within the national strategies becomes particularly critical.

Whilst recognizing the timeliness of international arrangements for increasing aid and development efficiency, there is also a concern that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness does not contain provisions on gender equality. By ignoring the gender perspective, donor-funded programs are not able to effectively evaluate their impact on the needs of women and men, which might in turn affect aid efficiency.

Assessment of national poverty reduction strategies in CIS countries also revealed the lack of correlation between the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the sectoral programs, which consequently leads to no ties with the budget processes. As a response to the problem, which basically made the PRS a declarative document, the countries have made a shift in the approaches for drafting policies and national development strategies, to ensure clear relationships between the national strategies and the macroeconomic and financial forecasts, through links with the mid-term budgets.

A shift to results-based programming, which is currently underway in Russia and Kyrgyzstan, requires relevant knowledge and skills in the issues of result-oriented long-term and mid-term planning among sectoral ministries staff. The results-based programming and budgeting is important as it helps to identify priorities in sector development, evaluate the cost of planned activities and clearly define the source of finance and existing financial gaps.

This approach proves most effective in meeting the requirements of the aid modalities. From the perspective of gender equality, there is an evident link between the gender approach, which assumes a clear identification of aid recipients, and a clear vision of the final results and skills needed to calculate which financial means are necessary for achieving such results.

Specific steps on coordination and harmonization of aid were undertaken in the Republic of Moldova. In May 2006 the Government of the Republic, together with a number of international donor organizations working within the country, signed an agreement on partnership development for the coordination and harmonization of activities, in order to increase aid efficiency. The document defines the general principles, mechanisms and procedures for partnership in compliance with the Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonization, and the Paris Declaration on provision of aid, consistent with the country's priorities on coordination and harmonization of aid, in order to avoid duplication.

In this regard, currently we witness a significant momentum, when under the Paris Declaration donor countries and aid recipients reached a consensus, that development effectiveness and aid effectiveness directly depend on the capacity of the country to determine development priorities in a strategic way, strategically allocate national budget resources, and harmonize them with financial support of donor countries.

While such consensus is important for promoting gender responsive development, both governments and international donors still

face difficulties in conducting adequate gender analysis of the national strategy and development programs, specifically in relation to their interaction with the foreign aid flow into the country. Mechanisms for coordinating multilateral cooperation are necessary for ensuring that such analysis will be conducted in a systematic and comprehensive way. However, today in some countries of the CIS region there are certain difficulties in reaching agreement for donors' coordination, which is time consuming and requires a strong political will among the partners.

Coordination of donor help in Ukraine is within the competence of the Department for Technical Assistance Coordination of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, which functions through the operation of thematic groups, including the human rights and gender equality groups. Special attention should be paid to the coordination of real rather than formal inclusion of gender issues in projects funded by international and donor organizations. Efficiency of such projects can be evaluated with the help of a set of inter-related indicators and development of a matrix of gender priorities, based on the data obtained from the results of research studies of various organizations.

Ukraine's experience shows that reaching agreements between donors and national partners is possible, provided that the government will take a leading role, ensuring an agreed approach to development gender analysis methods and harmonized gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation indicators. It is the role of government to ensure practical use of international treaties as monitoring tools for implementation of state programs, to attract international organizations to provide technical and expert assistance, and to ensure active involvement of the civil society in the development and monitoring of state program implementation.

In the context of aid effectiveness the experience of Tajikistan could be interesting, providing an example of practical linkages between the National Development Strategy and the MDGs. Prior to the preparation of the NDS, the country went through the process of costing of MDGs in Tajikistan. The costing

estimates provided an idea of the volume of financial resources required for implementing the Millennium Development Goals. According to the calculations, the existing demand in funding activities stipulated in the NDS is \$4.8 billion for three years, including approved foreign funding in the amount of \$2.3 billion. This costing exercise is important as it provides an opportunity for defining linkages between development priorities set in the NDS and the funding needs, thus providing direct correlations between the questions "what are the development priorities" and "how much does it cost," or in other words between policy decisions and budgeting processes. Following this process, the government linked the NDS to the Medium-term expenditure framework, thus overcoming the gap between national development plans and budgeting process.

Aid effectiveness depends largely upon its compliance with national goals and priorities, as defined in the national strategies. The experience of Moldova shows that, following the previous practice, donors were coming into the country each with their own strategy, thus forcing the government to compromise its priorities in accordance with those imposed by donors. Today, in the light of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, there is the real possibility of changing this practice. Following the principle of national ownership of the development processes, the government has worked to identify priority areas, which are of particular importance for a country. In turn, donors are trying to provide assistance in areas defined by the countries themselves.

Within the context of this process, there is the possibility of reviewing the system of donor assistance. Donors and aid recipient countries should agree that along with funding of specific programs or projects on gender equality issues, allocation of budget funds should be stipulated for carrying out gender related activities within the sectoral programs. Furthermore, timely and high-quality gender advice on all sectoral programs and projects during their development is very important. It is important to analyze the situation in specific areas of social and economic development, by using gender indicators, harmonized with the indicators of the CEDAW, the BPFA and the MDGs.

At present, a number of CIS countries have observed significant progress in economic development. Such progress can lead to the allocation of special funds for gender issues within the framework of sectoral state programs. Thus, for instance, the President of Kazakhstan in his Annual Appeal paid special attention to social programs specifically aimed at helping women and children, as well as at improving the material well-being of families. In this context, it is timely and feasible to create a consolidated fund in the CIS region, thus giving new donor countries such as Russia or Kazakhstan an opportunity to provide financial aid supporting the initiatives to promote gender equality. Such a fund can advance the implementation of commitments on gender equality, as well as promote the increase of the level of accountability of all partners, including the national and international communities, for achieving gender equality goals in the CIS countries.

V. RESULTS MANAGEMENT: PROGRESS IN PREPARATION FOR THE FORUM IN GHANA – 2008

The Paris Declaration places urgency on the need to achieve a consensus between donors and recipients with respect to indicators that monitor aid effectiveness. In this context the next valid point is, to what extent the issues of gender equality and women's human rights are part of the system of monitoring and evaluation of development effectiveness and aid effectiveness.

The Paris Declaration, with particular focus on the technical aspects of foreign aid, does not elaborate on development issues. At the same time, gender aspects of development applicable to the principles of the Paris Declaration may have a significant impact on increasing the capacity of civil servants for efficient strategic planning and budget allocation. This may further improve the efficiency of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of development priorities, with particular consideration of the impact of such measures on women and men. In this regard, it is obvious that there is a need to develop an approach that would integrate the gender dimension into the monitoring system of the Paris Declaration.

Harmonization of the gender monitoring system within the existing systems of monitoring of international and national commitments on improving gender equality and women's empowerment (for instance, CEDAW, BPA, UN Security Council Resolution 1325). The institutionalization of sustainable and systematic monitoring implies availability of provisions which stipulate standards, procedures and requirements for monitoring, including normative documents, which define the rights of citizens for access to information and documents.

A prevalent issue is the need to improve the methodology used to measure the impact of gender responsive development actions. The difficulty is that currently there are significant gaps in deploying the gender dimension in monitoring and evaluating donor-funded programs. Usually, monitoring indicators are simply limited to measuring the number of women who took part in the project. Obviously, this is not sufficient. In order to effectively promote gender sensitive monitoring, there is a need to engender the general set of programme indicators, implying availability of sex-disaggregated data, but also to add specific gender indicators that allow for expanding the areas of monitoring, making it more specific and outlining the different impacts that programmes may have on men and women.

There is a need to improve the methodology of monitoring and evaluation of results, which allows tracking and assessing of the outcomes achieved with the help of donor funds, as well as the results achieved through using internal resources of the country. Improvement of such methodology is possible if both the political will and mutual accountability of partners are in place, as well as a sufficient capacity of institutes and experts in gender sensitive monitoring. Following aid effectiveness principles, the Paris Declaration indicators have to be synchronized with the national systems of monitoring. The process of harmonization of these two systems represents a realistic opportunity to introduce gender indicators into these systems.

This underlines the importance of work performed by the partners in CIS countries in de-

veloping the set of gender indicators by harmonizing the indicators put within CEDAW, the BPFA, and the MDGs, which can be measured and traced by countries at national level. Further work needs to be done for institutionalization of national monitoring systems, that implies availability of provisions, stipulating standards, procedures and requirements of monitoring, including normative documents stipulating the rights of citizens to demand accountability from government and donors.

VI. DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ALMATY DECLARATION

The high level meeting in Almaty was followed by discussion of the Draft Declaration of the Almaty meeting as contributing to the preparation for the high level meeting in Ghana 2008. With respect to concept and content, discussion centered on the idea of creating the "Regional Fund for Support of Country Initiatives in Achieving Gender Equality in CIS countries". The idea was generally supported. It was also noted that establishing such a fund requires detailed discussion of the principles of its creation and operation with all the stakeholders.

Based on discussions and comments made, the Declaration was adopted by all participants of the meeting. It was noted that by adopting the Declaration, the participants make their contribution to achieving recognition by all partners that the implementation of gender equality commitments is an integral and important part of national development processes. Furthermore, it is an essential condition for the improvement of aid effectiveness within these countries. It was also stated that UNIFEM is a driving force within the UN system in supporting countries to increase the capacity of national institutions and authorities in development, budgeting, and the implementation of gender responsive strategies and programs.

At the meeting, it was noted that the dialogue held between partners representing governments and civil society from 10 CIS countries, partners from donor countries and UN agencies is extremely important, as it promotes gender equality issues towards

a greater practical level within national development processes, allowing these issues to be implemented within national development strategies.

The meeting provided a greater incentive for partnership at various levels, namely, civil, government, academic, international community, UN system and private sector. Such partnership is important for ensuring real changes, enabling a shift from declarative gender equality statements to practical implementation of activities, which are set in national and sectoral development strategies, and financed from the national budget and with the donor countries' support.

Considering the vast complex of problems related to practical engendering in order to fulfill the principles of the Paris Declaration, it was strongly recommended to hold a series of meetings with representatives of donor governments and aid recipients, during which it is necessary to place greater emphasis on gender equality issues as an integral element of the development processes. The Declaration adopted by the partners at this meeting is an important political document, which will be used for further multilateral dialogue with a view to increasing understanding and awareness of gender equality issues among delegates of the coming high level meeting in Ghana in 2008.

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The process of preparing national strategies and programs, during which the key priorities of country development are defined, is a unique opportunity for centering gender equality issue within the national policy;
- Gender equality and empowerment of women are important conditions and constituents in achieving general effectiveness in social and economic development, whereas aid effectiveness is an integral part of this process.
- Where gender issues are excluded from the national policy agenda, gender inequality issues will be further ignored. Engendering the national strategies and programs places gender equality issues at a higher political level, enabling them to reach their practical implementation.
- The issue of political will is strategically important for efficiently engendering the national development strategies. In countries lacking a clearly expressed policy that defines ways and means for achieving gender equality, the process of engendering the national strategies is complex and time-consuming. This requires additional efforts to improve awareness among politicians and civil servants, as well as education on the importance and need to consider gender aspects while planning measures for social and economic development;
- The political will, consistent with the Paris Declaration principles of national ownership and the key role of the national governments in the national development area, should be reinforced by allocating budget funds towards gender equality issues. Otherwise, the policies developed will be declaratory in nature and will not be properly implemented.
- The issue of political will is indirectly raised by a lack of correlation between national development priorities and international commitments of countries, such as under the Millennium Declaration, international human rights conventions, etc. Poor connection or lack thereof reduces the level of a government's accountability towards its citizens in regards to the fulfillment of undertaken commitments, especially in the area of gender equality promotion.
- Efficiency of measures aimed at gender equality promotion has much to do with the national budgeting processes, which serve as channels for directing financial flows of aid. As the budget is allocated by priorities defined in the national development strategies, the level of gender equality promotion depends on the adequate inclusion of gender priorities in these national strategies.
- Due to the historical past of the CIS countries, there are problems with interaction between the policy development process and budget formulation. Primarily, as was noted by a group of experts

at the recent regional meeting in Moldova, these problems are caused by lack of experience of civil servants in strategic planning and application of the result-oriented approach.

- Increased capacity and awareness of civil servants working on gender equality issues is necessary for performing qualitative analysis, developing monitoring indicators and ensuring measures aimed at improving the collection of reliable data, which provides a real opportunity for tracking the level of aid's impact on development processes.
- On one hand, in order to ensure the effectiveness of actions in gender equality promotion, it is necessary to improve the knowledge and gender sensitivity of key politicians and civil servants, as well as strengthen their belief that the solution of gender equality issues is an important element of the efficient implementation of priority tasks stipulated in the national strategies and programs. On the other hand, it is necessary to improve the expertise of civil society representatives and facilitate their active participation in monitoring the fulfillment of gender equality commitments.
- For an efficient engendering process, it is necessary to provide the politicians with well founded information, based on the results of deep gender analysis in different sectors of economy and social development, supported by valid qualitative and quantitative data. Currently, there is a considerable gap in the gender analysis area, requiring improvement of the system of statistical data collection, development of various techniques, approaches and tools for gender analysis, as well as in preparation and implementation of gender oriented strategies, programs and budgeting processes.
- There is a pressing issue of advancing the theoretical and methodological basis for gender analysis, particularly in the economic and financial areas. In addition to the analysis of statistical data, it is necessary to analyze the impact and consequences of measures for men and women. This allows consideration of traditional and cultural factors, further revealing the causal effect of gender issues.

- A set of clear indicators, that allows tracking of the dynamics of the solution of gender equality issues within the framework of national strategies and development programs, is required to ensure accountability. The gender budgeting experience is a good opportunity for expanding the governments' capacity and improving their accountability, thus strengthening the forecast of funding and its targeted allocation.
- Understanding equality principles centered on result-based equality was especially noted. If countries are striving to promote sustainable and equal development, along with equal distribution of outcomes of economic growth among men, women, children, adolescents and aged people, then result-based governance allows increased openness and accountability of both the government and donors.
- It was noted that the development priorities defined within national and sectoral strategies are often not aligned with the aid strategies of donor organizations to a country. This problem increases the importance of applying the international commitments as a general political basis, which is relevant and mandatory for adherence both by national governments and by donor organizations.
- In many countries the issue of poor coordination of donor assistance remains serious. In this regard, the appropriate issue is how well the countries are prepared for implementation and fulfillment of the Paris Declaration. It is necessary that the donor countries and beneficiary countries use dialogue mechanisms at a country level in order to determine the common agenda of foreign aid and to discuss the development processes' outcomes. Therefore, approaches that strengthen the system of accountability of donors to beneficiaries, along with the accountability of beneficiaries to donors, should be developed. Another important issue is that donors providing aid to the country development should undertake commitments to use national systems, such as the national government procurement system and the application of financial management systems, among others.

ANNEX #1

AGENDA

High-level Regional Consultation Almaty, Kazakhstan 20 May 2007

OPENING SESSION

Ms. Aitkul Samakova, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the National Commission on Family and Gender Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Greetings

Mr. Marek Belka, United Nations Under Secretary-General, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in Kazakhstan

Introduction/Opening

Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

SESSION 1

Engendering National Development Planning & Budgeting: Lessons learnt and next steps

Chairperson:

– Mr. Erzhan Kazykhanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan

Discussant:

– Ms. Anara Niyazova, Special Representative of the President to the Parliament on Gender Development, Kyrgyzstan

Presenters:

– Ms. Aitkul Samakova, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the National Commission on Family and Gender Policy under the President, Kazakhstan

– Ms. Damira Sartbaeva, Regional Programme Director for the CIS, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

SESSION 1 (cont.)

Engendering National Development planning & Budgeting: Lessons learnt and next steps

Chairperson:

– Mr. Erzhan Kazykhanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan

Discussant:

– Ms. Anara Niyazova, Special Representative of the President to the Parliament on Gender Development, Kyrgyzstan

Presenters:

– Ms. Lyubov Glebova, Stats-Secretary, Deputy Minister of Health, Russian Federation

– Ms. Uktomkhan Abdullaeva, Minister of Labor and Social Protection, Kyrgyzstan

– Ms. Sadagat Gakhramanova, Deputy Chair of the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children Affairs, Azerbaijan

SESSION 2

Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness: challenges and opportunities

Chairperson:

– *Ms. Svetlana Zhalmagambetova, Member of Senate, Kazakhstan*

Discussant:

– *Ms. Nina Orlova, National Coordinator, SIDA, Moldova*

Presenters:

- *Ms. Galina Balmosh, Minister of Social Protection, Family and Children, Moldova*
- *Ms. Madina Dzharbussynova, Ambassador at large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan;*
- *Ms. Zebo Yunusova, Head of the Department of Health, Women and Family Affairs, Executive Apparatus of the President, Tajikistan;*
- *Ms. Raisa Semenets, Director of the Department of Family, Gender Policies and Demographic Development of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport, Ukraine*

SESSION 3

Managing for results: tracking progress towards Ghana 2008

Chairperson:

– *Mr. Patrice Robineau, Special Advisor to the Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*

Presenters:

- *Ms. Ewa Ruminska-Zimny, Senior Social Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*
- *Dr. Danbala Danju, Associate Professor, Chair of Department of Economics, Kazakhstan Institute of Economic and Strategic Research, Kazakhstan*
- *Ms. Sabine Güntner, Director, WomNet*

SESSION 3 (cont.)

Managing for results: tracking progress towards Ghana 2008

Chairperson:

– *Mr. Patrice Robineau, Special Advisor to the Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*

- *Main Findings of the CIS Regional Expert Meeting “Engendering Poverty Reduction Strategies/National Development Plans”, Moldova, 8–10 May 2007, presented by Ms. Mira Karybaeva, Agency for Social Technologies, Central Asia*
- *Presentation of the Draft Almaty Declaration “Contribution to the Ghana High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action”*

Discussion and Adoption of the Declaration

CLOSURE

Ms. Aitkul Samakova, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the National Commission on family and gender policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

ANNEX #2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

High-level Regional Consultation Almaty, Kazakhstan 20 May 2007

Armenia		
Ms Armenui Tanashyan	Deputy head of department for family, women and children affairs, head of section for women's affairs	Ministry of labour and social issues
Azerbaijan		
Ms Sadagat Gakhramanova	Deputy Chair	State Committee for family, women and children affairs
Ms Farida Akhmedova	Chief Advisor	Ministry of economic development
Georgia		
Ms Ketevan Makharashvili	Member of Parliament	Parliament
Kazakhstan		
Ms Aitkul Samakova	Chair, Advisor to the President	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Natalya Korzhova	Minister	Ministry of Finance
Mr Erzhan Kazykhanov	Vice Minister	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms Madina Dzharbussynova	Ambassador at Large	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms Byrganym Aitimova	Permanent Representative	Permanent Representation to the UN (New York)
Mr Abuseitov Kairat	Permanent Representative	Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UN and the international organizations in Geneva, Embassy of Kazakhstan in Switzerland
Mr Beksultan Tutkushev	Senate Deputy	Parliament
Ms Svetlana Dzhalmagambetova	Senate Deputy	Parliament
Kyrgyzstan		
Ms Uktomkhan Abdullaeva	Minister	Ministry of labour and social protection of KR

Ms Toktokan Borombaeva	Executive Secretary	Secretariat, National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development under the President
Ms Anara Niyazova	Special Representative of the President of the KR on Gender Issues in the Parliament of the KR	Special Representative of the President on Gender Development Issues in the Parliament
Moldova		
Ms Galina Balmosh	Minister	Ministry of social protection, family and children
Ms Natalia Catrinescu	Head of Department of macroeconomic policies and development programmes	Ministry of economy and trade
Russian Federation		
Ms Lyubov Glebova	Stats-Secretary, Deputy Minister	Ministry of Health and Social development
Tajikistan		
Ms Zebo Yunusova	Head of section for public health, women and family	Executive Apparatus of the President
Ukraine		
Ms Raisa Semenets	Director of Department of family, gender policy and demographic development	Ministry for family affairs, youth and sport
Uzbekistan		
Ms Gulnora Marufova	First deputy chair	Committee of women
International Organizations		
Mr Marek Belka	United Nations Under Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe	UNECE
Mr Patrice Robineau	Special Advisor to the Executive Secretary	UNECE
Ms Ewa Ruminska-Zimny	Senior Social Affairs Officer	UNECE
Mr Haoliang Xu	UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative	UN system in Kazakhstan
Ms Tarja Virtanen	Head of the UNESCO Cluster office in Almaty and UNESCO Representative to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	UNECE

Mr Vlastimil Samek	Representative	UNDPI
Ms Annegret Westphal	Representative to Kazakhstan	GTZ
Ms Larissa Kobelynska	Equal opportunities programme manager	UNDP Ukraine
Ms Nina Orlova	National Coordinator	SIDA, Moldova
Ms Gulira Myrzabayeva	Director	UN Gender and Development Bureau in Kazakhstan
Ms Eugenia Benigni	Human Dimension Officer	OSCE Centre in Almaty
International Women Networks		
Ms Sabine Gurtner	Director	WOMNET
Regional NGOs		
Ms Meruert Makhmutova	General Director	Public Policy Research Centre, Kazakhstan
Ms Mira Karybaeva	Expert	Agency of social technologies, Kyrgyzstan
Ms Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy		Centre of gender studies, Kyrgyzstan
Ms Tatyana Bozrikova	Chair	Panorama Public Foundation, Tajikistan
Ms Dilovar Kabulova	Director	Centre to support civil initiatives, Uzbekistan
Ms Raushan Sarsenbayeva	President	Association of business women of Kazakhstan
Ms Svetlana Shakirova	Director	Centre of Gender Studies, Kazakhstan
Ms Evgenia Kozyreva	President	Feminist League, Kazakhstan
Ms Zulfia Baisakova		Union of crisis centres of Kazakhstan
Ms Laila Akhmetova	Chair	Association of women of intellectual labour, Kazakhstan
Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan		
Ms Rashida Naubetova	Head	Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Naylya Kulmanova	Staff member	Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Bayan Donobaeva	Staff member	Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy

Ms Akkenzhe Lavrenova	Staff member	Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy
Mr Ulan Kasymbekov	Staff member	Secretariat of the National Commission on family and gender policy
UNIFEM		
Ms Noeleen Heyzer	Executive Director	UNIFEM
Ms Zina Mounla	Chief of Europe/CIS Section	UNIFEM
Ms Damira Sartbaeva	Regional Programme Director for CIS	UNIFEM
Ms Sagipa Jusaeva	Regional Programme Specialist	UNIFEM
Ms Natalia Galat	National Programme Officer	UNIFEM
Ms Elena Kudryavtseva	Communication Specialist	UNIFEM
Ms Laura Kabdunassova	Administrative Assistant	UNIFEM
Ms Nargis Azizova	Gender and Governance Advisor in Tajikistan	UNIFEM
Ms Ulziisuren Jamsran	Chief Technical Advisor in Moldova	UNIFEM
Ms Gulnara Baimambetova	Programme Manager in Kyrgyzstan	UNIFEM
Kazakhstan National Commission on family and gender policy under the President of Kazakhstan		
Ms Maria Andarzhanova	Director of polymertrub Ltd., Almaty oblast	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Gulnara Iksanova	General Director of Khabar Agency	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Kulshat Karbuzova	Chief doctor of polyclinic in Taraz	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Raisa Kushekova	Director of Raykhan complex, Atyrau	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Aiman Musakhadzhaeva	Rector of Kazakh National Academy of Music, Professor	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Zamzagul Myrzhakhmetova	President of Tumar Corporation, General director of Kokhsetau large-scale mechanized bakery	National Commission on family and gender policy

Ms Lyubov Ni	Director of State Republican Korean Theatre of Musical Comedy	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Saule Nukusheva	Professor of politics and public health management with Public Health Higher Education School	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Raisa Polischuk	Director of Petropavlovsk gymnasium # 1	National Commission on family and gender policy
Mr Serik Seidumanov	Deputy Mayer of Almaty city	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Aigul Solovyeva	President of Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Soltieva Zhumagul	Deputy chief editor of Ege-men Kazakhstan	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Nina Kayupova	Chair of Republican Council of women	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Saida Iskakova	President of Foundation to protect health of mother and child Mama	National Commission on family and gender policy
Mr Galym Bekmagambetov	Deputy Akim (Governor) of Akmola oblast, chair of commission of family affairs and gender policy under oblast Akim	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Tamara Duysenova	Deputy Akim (Governor) of South Kazakhstan oblast, chair of commission of family affairs and gender policy under oblast Akim	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Gulfairus Kassymova	Secretary to the commission of family affairs and gender policy under Akmola oblast Akim	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Dana Mamanova	Deputy Akim (Governor) of South Kazakhstan oblast, chair of commission of family affairs and gender policy under oblast Akim	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Galiya Tashkina	Secretary to the commission of family affairs and gender policy under South Kazakhstan oblast Akim	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Kulyash Shamshidinova	Vice Minister of Education and Science	National Commission on family and gender policy
Ms Alma Abdulkasymova	Director of Republican scientific-practical centre Uchebnik	National Commission on family and gender policy

