

## **ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIVE GENDER EQUALITY SHOULD NOT SIMPLY BE A PROCEDURAL AND PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH**

### **I. Gender Equality in the Busan Outcome Document**

The Fourth Draft Outcome Document for the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, presented in Busan, Korea 2011, hereafter referred to as the Busan Outcome Document, has indeed drawn attention to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Paragraph 17 of the Fourth Draft Busan Outcome Document asserted on the commitment to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through credible development programs consistent with State priorities. The paragraph also specifically mentioned on the need to reduce inequalities as the prerequisite for inclusive development growth and sustainability.

Efforts to attain gender equality and promote women's empowerment include the following:

- a. Accelerate and deepen efforts to collect, disseminate and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decision and guide investment, ensuring in turn that public expenditures are targeted appropriately to benefit both women and men.
- b. Address gender equality systematically as part of mutual reviews of performance, grounded in international and regional commitments
- c. Systematically address gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspect of our efforts to support peace building and state building

This is indeed an encouraging step forward when compared to the Outcome Document of the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness which only stated on the commitment to promote gender equality, but failed to set out concrete measures needed to make good on the commitment.

The three agendas which parties at the Fourth Busan High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 had agreed to implement were nothing more but a gender equality concept based only on a procedural and programmatic approach.

Past experience has instead proven that a procedural and programmatic approach will not ensure the attainment of gender equality in a de facto or substantive manner.

**II. Critique on the formulation of gender equality in the Busan Outcome: the formulation remains insufficient and ineffective in contributing to the attainment of gender equality, due to the following rationale:**

1. Ensuring gender equality simply through a procedural approach, such as the provision of sex-disaggregated data to feed policy-making and guide investments, and guaranteeing that public expenditures are well-targeted from which both women and men can benefit from, merely emphasizes on the process and incapable of assuring that tangible outcomes and impacts are generated to create gender equality. Efforts to bring about gender equality must be all-embracing to the extent that they engender equality of result or ensure substantive equality where men and women can equitably benefit from the development process and the resultant yields.
2. Unless program policies and implementation guidelines are subject to binding laws that guarantee an enabling environment where women are free from direct and indirect discrimination, it would be impossible to ensure that all parties, States, civil societies and the private sector are bound to comply with non-discriminatory principles.
3. Pursuing substantive equality also calls for an effective strategy to address the issue of women's lack of representation in policy- and decision-making, as well as with regard to the redistribution of resources to overcome gender inequalities in gaining control over resources and creating balanced power relations between men and women.

4. The agenda on guaranteeing that public expenditures are appropriately targeted to benefit women and men has not been sufficiently formulated. First, this formulation fails to guarantee that women and men are qualitatively and quantitatively equal in enjoying benefits drawn from public expenditures. Second, budget policies, even from the initial phase of formulating expected outcomes of programs and activities, not only in terms of expenditure, have created gender inequalities which have failed to guarantee women and men equal opportunities and access to decision making, participation in program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and for women and men to equitably benefit from program outcomes. Gender inequalities also frequently stem from policies intended to increase budget revenue, particularly as such measures in turn inflate living costs which women can ill afford, resulting in dual burden and exerting pressures on women's lives. Budget formulation should therefore guarantee the creation of gender equality and justice from two aspects, i.e., revenue and expenditure.
5. The agenda on addressing gender equality systematically as part of mutual reviews of performance, grounded in international and regional commitments has not been formulated sufficiently. Efforts to ensure gender equality shall be rendered ineffective, unless they are initiated from the beginning when the commitment was declared and when policy-making is systematically geared at tackling gender inequalities and discrimination against women. The lives of women and men must be taken into account in a contextual manner and actions undertaken should lead to the actual transformation of opportunities, institutions and systems to the extent that they are no longer based on men's historical paradigm as the determinant of power division and way of life.

### **III. Recommendations for Busan Outcome Document**

In order to ensure gender equality in a de facto and substantive manner, development actors such as the State, private sector, donors, international financial institutions, and civil society must fulfill three key conditions.

1. All parties, States, the private sector, donors and civil societies must have fundamental rules or laws in place to guarantee that women are free from direct or indirect discrimination and protected from all forms of discrimination inflicted by those in authority, and that sanctions are meted out for every discriminatory act against women.
2. All parties, States, the private sector, donors and civil societies must establish concrete policies and effective programs for advancing women's de facto position, including but not limited to efforts at ensuring affirmative actions and preferential treatments based on contextual considerations on the specific conditions of local culture.
3. Establish guidelines to assure gender mainstreaming in planning, provision of data disaggregated by sex, age and special needs (e.g., vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, the disabled, and other special need groups), and developing monitoring tools, including but not limited to the use of the MDG achievement monitoring framework in order to gauge the extent to which gender equality has been effectively attained.
4. Creating an enabling environment for women, individually and collectively, to meet their fundamental needs and enjoy a decent life, develop life skills and participate in the entire democratic process and procedure.