



**WORKSHOP ON**

**DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN PRACTICE:  
APPLYING THE PARIS DECLARATION TO ADVANCING  
GENDER EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**Session B – Discussant**

**Joint Assistant Strategies – a way to advance cross cutting issues?  
Advancing Gender Equality under JAS in Tanzania**

**by**

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The key issue to explore in this session is whether Joint Assistance Strategies are a way to advance cross cutting issues and how JAS can and does engage wider stakeholders.

## **Discussant Presentation: Advancing Gender Equality under JAS in Tanzania**

### **1. Introduction**

The Environment case study presented in this session provides background information on JAS in Tanzania. Here, we will look at experience of other cross cutting issue i.e. Gender Equality under JAS.

Like Environment, Gender as a Cross Cutting theme requires mainstreaming at all levels of government in policies, systems and processes. It is therefore a function of many stakeholders. To avoid that gender mainstreaming becomes nobody's business, the Ministry of Community Development Gender and Children has by Act, being given the overall mandate of promoting and monitoring Gender Equality in the country.. The Tanzania Joint Assistance Strategy, 2006 (JAST,2006) serves as the tool for enhancing the work of the national machinery

This discussion paper makes a critical assessment of the progress made on gender mainstreaming within the JAST principles; with a focus on *harmonisation* and

### **1. Relationship with country partners**

The Ministry of Community Development Gender and Children, is the national gender and women machinery responsible for the promotion of gender equality, and is thus the main government contact institution. Working relationships with the government has been chiefly through the Gender Macro Working Group (GMWG-MP) which has served as the main forum through which DPs dialogue with the government and other relevant stakeholders.

The membership of the group is comprised of focal points from all government sector Ministries, CSO representatives, DPs, representatives from academic institutions and researchers. The heterogeneous nature of the members of the GMWG-MP has been a great strength in enhancing the collective work of the GMWG –MP, and ensuring timely sharing of information and key documents for timely gender input.

The GMWG-MP was very instrumental in ensuring that GE was effectively mainstreamed in national frameworks namely the MKUKUTA and the JAST.

Efforts to engender key government and sector systems and processes such as planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluations, reform programmes such as the Local Government Reform Process (LGRP) and the Public Service programmes, their assessments and reviews have chiefly been through the GMWG-MP

In the spirit of harmonisation, the GMWG –MP has worked closely with the Ministry to harmonise plans and priorities for attainment of the national GE commitments. Until recently, the GMWG-MP had been donor led contrary to the JAST principles. Guided by the JAST principles the group is effective April 2007 led by the MCDGC.

## **2. Relationships amongst donors**

Gender Equality promotion with the JAST is greatly a function of effective working relationships of all key stakeholders. Coordination of DPs active in Gender Equality is crucial in enhancing effective dialogue with the government. With the Government taking leadership of the GMWG-MP which is effectively the main forum for dialogue with the government, the JAST requires donors to work in a co-ordinated fashion.

The Development Partner Group (DPG) architecture developed under JAST Division of Labour articulates the required sector and thematic working groups. The recent (2006) review of the architecture provided for DP- Gender Equality Working group (DP-GEWG) effectively in January 2007. By its cross cutting nature, the group needs to influence all the other working groups both vertically and horizontally. A mechanism to effect this is yet to be established, but it is in discussion under the JAST DoL process .

The DP-GEWG provides a forum for DPs active in Gender to agree on common position and communicate to the government with common voice – reducing transaction costs on both the government and the DPs. This however, poses a great challenge since internal DPs structures and regulations remained as key bottleneck.

Guided by the JAST DOL the DP GEWG has developed a categorization matrix showing the Agency status (lead, active, delegate) with respect to involvement on GE promotion in Tanzania. The group has also mapped out the various donors' areas/sectors of engagement to establish where respective DPs have comparative advantage in promoting GE. The group has developed a comprehensive work plan which is closely aligned with the broad priorities of the Ministry and the functions GMWG to avoid duplication. The group works collaboratively in recognition of the gender expertise capacity gaps existing amongst members of the DP group. The JAST thus provides unique opportunity for further promotion of GE.

## **3. Internally amongst Agencies**

Harmonisation is about increased use of Government systems, structures and procedures. Harmonization cuts red tape for developing countries partners, reduces overlap amongst donors and gets more out of limited aid dollars. The JAST advocated harmonisation and alignment include funding systems and approaches, and procurement processes for TA and other services. Internally donors supporting GE have been in discussion with the MCDGC on opportunities for its being able to contest for the GBS funds - preferred mode of funding under the JAS, and the possible alternatives. Negotiations between the MCDGC and the Ministry of Finance are ongoing in recognition of the limited capacity of the Ministry to contest for funds under GBS. This requires donors to explore possibilities of exercising some flexibility in funding approaches such as joining baskets and projects. Difficulties are envisaged due to limited Agency internal flexibility on funding approaches. USAID for example cannot currently go GBS or basket funding

## **Challenges**

To a great extent, the JAST has enhanced promotion of GE, however there are a number of challenges experienced. These include:-

- The limited capacity of the Ministry particularly in terms of skilled human resource availability to maintain the momentum of the group addressed.
- This being a new way of doing business to all stakeholders including the government, DPs and CSOs, it requires change of mindset and attitude which is not easy and requires time
- Development of new skills and capacities amongst all stakeholders to manage the changed working environment.
- Multiple roles of practitioners renders them unable to effectively deliver on the gender front as gender is often taken as add on to the many tasks.
- Under the JAST, focus has been too much at the central level and policy level

### **Opportunities**

Despite the challenges we see some opportunities for further enhancement of GE:-

- Both Government and Donor partners are fully committed to promote Gender Equality within the JAST.
- Existence of Gender Focal persons in all the sector Ministries and their strategic location in the planning departments
- JAST implementation recognises capacity as an issue across the board that needs to be urgently addressed

### **Lessons Learnt and good practices to note**

- Open dialogue and effective communication is paramount. There is need to be talking more amongst all key GE stakeholders. Need to cultivate trust.
- For effective delivery there is need to exercise a certain level of flexibility in our systems and processes, patience and tolerance for each other.

### **Conclusion**

With time, JAS can be a great vehicle for enhancing promotion and sustenance of Gender Equality. The challenges should be taken as positive learning experiences. It is most important that existing opportunities are maximized, and that implementation builds effectively on the lessons learnt.