

**Workshop on Strengthening the Development Results of the Paris Declaration  
through Work on Gender Equality, Social Exclusion and Human Rights**

**London, United Kingdom, 12-13 March 2008**

**Implementing the Paris Declaration: Implications for the Promotion of Women's  
Rights and Gender Equality**

**Session 10**

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This presentation is based on the paper *"Implementing the Paris Declaration: Implications for the Promotion of Women's Rights and Gender Equality"* commissioned by the Canadian Council on International Cooperation (CCIC) and developed by AWID and WIDE. The paper was based on reviewing literature and in depth interviews to gender advocates and women's rights activists.

This study highlights main concerns from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and women's organizations about the implementation of the PD from the women's rights perspective. Despite changes in how aid is delivered to partner governments, CSOs contend that the Paris Declaration remains an unjust and unequal framework for understanding and implementing the aid effectiveness agenda. Among other concerns, the Paris Declaration is gender blind, and as a result, fundamentally flawed.

An analysis of the five principles of the PD raises the following concerns:

- **Ownership:** country ownership of development programmes should not be equated with "government" ownership. Citizens, including women's organisations, should be involved in the formulation and delivery of development policies and programmes.
- **Alignment:** as donors "align" aid with national budgets, and with aid mainly being channelled from government to government, if gender equality is not an explicit national priority (and in many cases it is not), will it be entirely excluded from donor agendas as well? There is also a risk that fewer aid resources will be available to support the work of CSOs, and particularly women organisations.
- **Harmonisation:** it is easy to see how "harmonising" donor policies could lead to a strengthening of conditionalities, such as the imposition of certain economic and trade policies. There is also a risk that harmonisation will result in too narrow a framework (based on the policies of the least progressive donor) and thus a reduction of the development agenda.
- **Managing for results:** human and women's rights principles and the legal obligations of donors and governments should be used to determine the effectiveness of policies and approaches – particularly their impact on vulnerable groups.
- **Mutual Accountability:** the principle of mutual accountability, where donor countries, recipient countries and citizens should be able to hold each other to account for their development commitments, can only be truly possible where strong, independent, and well resourced civil society and women's rights organisations exist.

The PD relies on a range of "new" aid modalities, including budget support, sector wide approaches, poverty reduction strategy papers, basket funding and joint assistance strategies. Across the board, these modalities raise concerns in terms of the possibilities for real civil society participation in influencing development plans and funding for development, limited capacities to play an informed role in shaping and monitoring budgets, persistent conditionalities imposed by donors that override national development interests, and fears that "country ownership" in contexts of lukewarm

political commitment to gender equality will translate in far-reduced donor support for women's rights.

The analysis developed by AWID and WIDE leads to several recommendations to strengthen the gender equality dimension in the aid effectiveness agenda:

- 1) Donors and governments should deliver on their commitments to gender equality by:
  - Delivering on their commitments to the International Human Rights Frameworks and key agreements on women's rights and development.
  - Ensuring sufficient financial resources to accomplish their commitments towards gender equality, human rights and development.
  - Ensuring the effective participation of national machineries for gender equality in development planning and implementation.
- 2) Strengthening democratic ownership and women's participation in the aid effectiveness agenda:
  - Strengthen national public awareness about the PD and the centrality of gender equality.
  - Promote mechanisms for effective civil society, including women's rights organisations, participation in designing, implementing and monitoring national development plans.
  - Promote better communication and engagement between CSOs, women's rights groups, and local governments and Parliaments.
  - Promote an autonomous and responsive aid support to civil society actors including women's organisations, with inclusive new aid mechanisms.
- 3) Include gender equality in the monitoring and evaluation of the PD:
  - Use gender-sensitive instruments.
  - Develop statistics disaggregated by sex.
  - Support the development of qualitative indicators and analysis.
- 4) Develop guidelines and tools on the contribution of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality:
  - Support the development of guidelines, monitoring tools and indicators on the contributions of the new aid modalities to national obligations to gender equality.
  - Document the experiences of gender advocacy and promotion in the PRSP processes and provide an analysis of women's poverty in direct relationship to national macroeconomic policy.

In the Third High Level Forum it is vital that CSO delegations, including an important presence of women's rights organisations, be accredited for participation in the Forum. The Round Tables have to integrate gender equality in terms of content (following the Terms of Reference) as well as in terms of women's participations between the designated speakers. With regard to the resulting Accra Agenda for Action and beyond, recommendations include:

- Promote the centrality of gender equality and women's rights as a development goal for aid effectiveness. A twin-track approach involving both gender mainstreaming and specific women's rights interventions is recommended.

- Carefully track funding that goes to support women's rights in order to "follow the money" and its impact.
- Develop adequate guidelines and tools to ensure that the new aid modalities are not marginalising gender equality and women's rights.
- Promote a review of the monitoring system for the Paris Declaration, and integrate a gender equality perspective into the monitoring and evaluation efforts.