



Report from the Roundtable and High-Level Panel on:

Gender equality in the post-2015 agenda The importance of social norms for inclusive development

30 June 2014, Paris

On 30 June, the OECD Development Centre and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) co-organised two high-level events on social norms, gender equality and the post-2015 agenda. These events were organised within the framework of OECD Development Centre's [2014 Development Week](#) and mark the starting point of the collaboration between the Development Centre and OIF in promoting gender equality in a post-2015 agenda, following the November 2013 "Action Plan between OIF and OECD". Both institutions support the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender into other goals.

The events gathered gender ministers from Francophone Africa as well as experts on gender and development issues. As discussions leading up to the establishment of a new development framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals are underway, the two events highlighted the need to select the right goals and targets. Throughout the day, discussions re-affirmed that gender equality is fundamental for economic development, good governance and peace, and that social norms¹ are important drivers of gender inequality that must be tackled in the post-2015 agenda.

Meeting of the Francophone Ministerial Working Group on Gender Equality

The Francophone Ministerial Working Group on gender equality gathered for their inaugural meeting at the OIF headquarters for the first of the two high-level events. The Ministerial Working Group was formed at the 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), following a high-level meeting organised by the OIF on 10 March 2014 in New York. Its mandate is to promote gender equality, women's rights and empowerment in the Francophone countries and within international discussions on the post-2015 agenda. The eight Ministers in the Francophone Ministerial Working Group are from the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Luxembourg, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal.

¹ Social norms, practices, formal and informal laws: these include among others, early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, violence against women, son bias, restrictions on access to public space and restricted access to productive resources. OECD Development Centre's [Social Institutions and Gender Index](#) (SIGI) highlights the role of discriminatory social norms as drivers of gender inequalities, with negative outcomes for a range of development goals.

The objective of the inaugural meeting was to adopt a common advocacy strategy that fully integrates gender equality and women's empowerment within the post-2015 agenda. It was also the opportunity to inform Ministers of the post-2015 process and of strategies for including social norms in their national priorities.

The meeting began with the ministers outlining their national priorities for the post-2015 agenda² and sharing their assessments on the implementation of the MDGs in their countries. There was a consensus that progress was made on some of the MDG targets such as primary education or maternal mortality, but that adolescent pregnancies, violence against women and women's access to credit remain challenging issues. Despite women's increased political participation in Burkina Faso and the introduction of new marriage laws in Côte d'Ivoire, it was agreed that women's access to employment, training and economic empowerment should be further strengthened in all countries. In particular, Senegal specified its priority of promoting gender for good governance, peace and security, as well as universal health. All countries agreed that a roadmap for the post-2015 agenda is needed with key responsibilities and deadlines outlined.

A roundtable discussion followed focusing on the sharing of good practices and promising initiatives from their countries. Key initiatives to note include the following: a) in Niger, a programme called "l'école des maris" was implemented by UNFPA to engage men in health issues and contribute to the shifting of attitudes at community level; b) in Côte d'Ivoire, the First Lady launched an initiative to facilitate women's access to credit through the 'Fonds d' Assistance aux Femmes de Côte d'Ivoire'; and c) in Burkina Faso, a 2009 law on quotas was adopted imposing a minimum of 30% for women's representation.

The OECD, represented by the OECD Development Centre and the Development Co-operation Directorate, provided ministers with an overview of the statistical and political challenges in the lead up to the selection of post 2015 goals and targets. The OECD Development Centre presented indicators and methodologies from its Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) which could be useful in ensuring that any gender goal can achieve equitable social transformation. Examples of indicators were provided, including those addressing unpaid care work and land rights.

The Development Co-operation Directorate presented the calendar of upcoming deadlines for the international negotiation process on the post-2015 agenda and gave an update on the most recent documents related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These include the report from the Inter-governmental Committee on the financing of the SDGs, which will be presented in September 2014; and the synthesis report from the UN Secretary-General, to be published in December 2014. The imperative for political coordination amongst the Francophone ministers was emphasised given the lack of consensus on gender mainstreaming across all SDGs: at present gender is mainstreamed in only nine out of the 17 SDGs.

In the concluding remarks, participants highlighted that a key challenge in making a new programme for the post-2015 agenda is for goals to translate into effective policies at national and international levels. In this context, Ministers agreed on the following actions: a) greater effort to ensure transparency in gender budgets at the national level; and b) greater collaboration and coordination between ministers in the lead up to 2015, including regional and sub-regional meetings where good practices and policies can be shared. A key milestone for 2014 is the High-Level Summit of Heads of State in Dakar, Senegal (28-30 November 2014), whose theme is women and youth, as well as events commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and Fourth World Conference on Women.

² More on the post-2015 development agenda can be found here: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015.shtml>

High-Level Panel on gender equality, social norms and the post-2015 agenda

In the afternoon, the OECD hosted the High-Level Panel on "[Gender equality in the post-2015 agenda: the importance of social norms for inclusive development](#)". The Panel was composed of Nestorine Sangaré, Minister for the Promotion of Women in Burkina Faso; Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, Visiting Fellow at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and former UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty; Lynne Featherstone, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development in the United Kingdom; and Federico Bonaglia, Acting Deputy Director of the OECD Development Centre. The debate was moderated by Julie Katzman, Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Panel was opened by Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa to the G20, who emphasised the importance of gender equality for building inclusive economies and societies, which is at the core of the OECD's mandate. She also emphasised the need to focus on norms, culture and education as the sources of discrimination, and the role that each individual has in transforming tolerance of discrimination. Ambassador Annika Markovic, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OECD and UNESCO also provided opening remarks on the importance to develop better indicators and address gender statistics gaps to better capture and keep track of progress. She called for the need to have gender mainstreamed throughout the post-2015 agenda, and pointed to key enablers such as access to land and credit, childcare, literacy and education, and political decision-making.

Panellists interactively exchanged on effective means for integrating social norms within a post 2015 agenda, of which the main messages are outlined below. At the end of the discussion, Michaela Bergman from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) showed a three-minute video entitled "[Gender Equality Works](#)".

Main messages

Panellists discussed concrete actions and effective policies on how tackling the root causes of gender inequality can ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

A transformative approach taking into account the full life course of women

In recognition of the limitations of the MDGs, panellists agreed that a transformative approach to gender equality must include taking into account the full life course of women in research and policy design in order to understand how social norms and inequality intersect at different stages. In addition, changing social norms requires long-term commitment, as it implies requires shifting deeply rooted discriminatory attitudes that restrict women and girls' physical integrity, civil liberties, decision-making or access to resources. This can be achieved through education, gender-transformative policies and working with men and boys.

Addressing FGM and early and child marriage

Given the strong global leadership of the UK on FGM and early and forced marriage, discussions looked at what works in challenging these violations of women's and girls' rights. This gave the opportunity for Lynne Featherstone to position the UK Government's Girl Summit as an important milestone for the development community in the campaign against these two harmful and discriminatory social practices. She also shared some examples from DFID's programmes in Africa,

such as the 'End FGM in a generation' campaign. Nestorine Sangaré shared her experience on FGM issues as Minister for the Promotion of Women in Burkina Faso. She highlighted that awareness-raising was not sufficient, since women continue to undergo FGM, and few cases are reported to the authorities. She stressed the important role that men and boys can play in eliminating FGM and how sensitising them in particular is very important to end the practice. Nestorine Sangaré also stressed the need for harmonised legislation across countries at the sub-regional level due to evasion of perpetrators of FGM into neighbouring countries where the criminal penalties are lower.

Improving women's political participation

While acknowledging the advantages of quota laws, panellists called for greater efforts that go beyond legislation to achieve greater equality in public and political life. This included paying more detailed attention to the effective implementation of such legislation and introducing programmes to train women political leaders.

Including unpaid care work in post 2015

Unpaid care work is "the elephant in the room in gender and development" (Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona). Strong consensus on the need to push for its inclusion at the international level was reached given its potential positive impact for gender equality. Evidence was given on the relationship between the amount of time spent by women and girls on unpaid care work and key development areas, such as education, employment and well-being.

Conclusions: the road to post-2015

Panellists agreed that since the MDGs will not be fully achieved, the post-2015 agenda must be ambitious and transformative: it must look beyond outcome measures in order to fast-track progress towards gender equality and recognise that discriminatory social norms impact on women's and girls' empowerment pathways across their entire lives.

Including social norms in a post 2015 framework is increasingly feasible given the rise in data availability and reliability. The forthcoming launch of the 2014 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) in November 2014 will provide governments and the international development community with up-to-date data and country profiles on social norms. Such data and evidence are key to track and measure progress, and to inform effective policy design at the national level. The SIGI will also include for the first time OECD countries.

These two events confirmed that the development community needs to continue investments in gender equality and data availability at the national level and also share knowledge on good practices and effective policies. Other key levers of change are strong donor commitments, coordination between the development community and governments, and strong national legislation to tackle discrimination. In addition, community-led initiatives with success stories on tackling social norms, especially through working with men and boys, should be thoroughly examined as a model for potential national and regional scale-up.

The OIF and the OECD Development Centre plan to continue this fruitful collaboration in the following months through continued capacity building and discussions with Francophone gender ministers and a possible joint side event at the Dakar Summit in November 2014.