

These key demands are a living document open for comments and endorsements\*

# Key Demands from Women's Rights Organizations and Gender Equality Advocates

To the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan 2011) and the Development Cooperation Forum (2012)

October 2011

As feminists, gender equality and women's rights activists and organizations mobilizing on the road to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4), this document reaffirms our vision for transformation and offers concrete recommendations for improving the international development cooperation architecture.

While the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) on gender equality (paragraphs 3, 13c, 21b and 23a) were important advances beyond the largely gender-blind Paris Declaration (PD), women's groups and gender equality advocates urge all PD and AAA signatories to translate their words into concrete actions and deepen these commitments.

HLF-4 must produce an outcome document that provides the basis for a new development cooperation architecture that is inclusive and just and thus also responsive and sensitive to women's rights and gender equality. This architecture should be situated within the UN, with full participation of all relevant actors, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs), including women's groups. The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) has significantly strengthened its inclusion of civil society actors following the Accra HLF-3. This experience should be applied in other, broader spaces, such as the UN DCF, under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). There need to be clear and effective mechanisms for on-going CSO participation and formal representation in development cooperation debates and processes.

## Vision

### Women's rights and gender equality advocates and organizations...

...**reaffirm** their vision of a world where aid is no longer necessary, where transformed power relations and the democratic redistribution of wealth counter norms and structures of injustice and war and create new forms of relations based on respect, solidarity, equity, inclusion, non-subordination and justice for all.

...**believe** in development as a right, as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Right to Development<sup>1</sup>. This includes recognizing the right of all people to define their own understandings of development, based on their local experiences, needs and responses, in ways that are sustainable for the planet and promote human rights, peace and justice for all.

...**believe** that international solidarity through sustainable

international cooperation has a crucial role to play in fulfilling states' responsibility to ensure that all people realize their rights<sup>2</sup>, thereby contributing to redistributive justice and the eradication of inequalities at the global level. Development cooperation and gender equality should not be instrumentalized to benefit market or military interests unrelated to the promotion of sustainable development and human rights.

...**challenge** mainstream economic development models based on unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, the privatization of public systems, exploitation and unequal gender and social relations.

...**aim to shift** the dominant development discourse towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm that recognizes and values reproductive and care work, promotes decent work and promotes the empowerment, autonomy and emancipation of women and girls.

...**underscore** that women, feminists and women's organizations and movements play key roles in development at all levels. Women and girls carry the bulk of unpaid care work (including food-production), are active in peace-building and in the management, conservation and use of natural resources. Women must be recognized as key development actors in their own right, not as passive victims in need of protection and rescue, nor as consumers to be instrumentalized for economic growth.

...**stress** that the full realization of women's rights as human rights are essential to any development cooperation framework. Human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Moreover, the implementation of gender equality and women's rights commitments are cornerstones for development. Women's empowerment and full and equal participation in all spheres are fundamental for the achievement of social and economic justice, substantive democracy and peace for all.

1 - The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 41/128 on 4 December 1986 and issued the Declaration on the Right to Development; relevant provisions are stated in Articles 1, 3 and 4.  
2 - As stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, part II, article 2 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 22.

## Recommendations

Women's groups and gender equality advocates engaged in the HLF-4 process call on all governments and other development actors involved in the HLF-4 and 2012 DCF process to consider the following imperatives:

- 1** Any new development cooperation framework to be agreed in Busan should be based on human rights, including women's rights.
- 2** A new equitable development cooperation system for gender equality and women's rights under the United Nations is in place.
- 3** Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organizations.
- 4** Promote multiple accountability systems for women's rights and gender equality, improving existing monitoring systems.
- 5** Financing for Development: Gender Equality and Women's Rights Beyond Mainstreaming
- 6** Development cooperation to the countries in situations of fragility and conflict must acknowledge the differential and disproportional impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.

## 1 A new development cooperation framework to be agreed in Busan must be based on human rights, including women's rights

- 1.1 **International cooperation**, of which aid is a part, should not increase divisions and inequalities in developing countries, but instead **provide the basis for the achievement of human rights, including women's rights, and of commitments on gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability. It is crucial to move beyond aid effectiveness towards human rights-based development cooperation** as a new framework for international solidarity to advance development and poverty eradication in ways that are coherent with international human rights standards and give adequate attention to women's rights, the right to development and environmental justice.
- 1.2 **Development cooperation policies and nationally-owned country strategies must align with international human rights and gender equality standards.** States and other duty-bearers must comply with legal norms and standards enshrined in international human rights legal instruments and related standards, as has been reaffirmed in the AAA. This includes gender equality standards, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), UN Security Council Resolution 1325, among others, including those at regional levels. Such standards should be used to determine the suitability and effectiveness of development cooperation policies and approaches, particularly their impact on highly discriminated and excluded people, especially women and girls in all their diversity.
- 1.3 **Governments should support the inclusion of non-sexist education for all throughout the life-cycle**, considering the role education plays in the transformation of gender norms and stereotypes. Moreover, governments should assume their obligation to comprehensively review and revise the sexist content of curricula at all levels of education and support CSOs specialized in that subject.
- 1.4 **Human rights legal standards, principles, and the legal obligations of governments should be used to hold all donors and governments accountable for the impact and outcomes of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and development policies.** An example could be to use the Inter-American Human Rights System<sup>3</sup> (a regional body) or the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)<sup>4</sup> (an international mechanism) to hold donor and partner governments accountable for their commitments and the negative impact of inappropriate aid prioritization, disbursement and/or implementation.
- 1.5 **Policy coherence for development and gender equality is essential** so that economic policies (e.g. trade, migration, energy etc.) and social policies are not working at cross purposes, resulting in the perpetuation of or increases in social and gender inequalities.

## 2 A new equitable development cooperation system for gender equality and women's rights under the United Nations is in place

- 2.1 **Situating the development cooperation system within the UN will facilitate more democratic, equal participation of all countries**, which have been traditionally excluded from decision-making processes at the regional and international levels. Currently the UN is the only legitimate space meeting the minimum equal participation criteria. The UN DCF should be strengthened as the main space for standard-setting on development cooperation, ensuring clear, effective and on-going mechanisms for CSO participation in international development cooperation of all kinds, including South-South cooperation.
- 2.2 **A different, clear and transparent system for ODA allocation is urgently needed.** Criteria should not solely include economic growth indicators, but also social, economic, gender and environmental indicators that also account for inequalities within a particular context
- 2.3 **UN Women has a key role to play in advancing gender equality and women's rights as part of the multilateral development cooperation system.** UN Women's high-level political status should be used to champion gender equality and women's rights in development cooperation processes within the DCF, the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and other key spaces at international, regional and national levels. At the same time, clear, effective and on-going mechanisms for CSO consultation and participation as part of UN Women's agenda-setting are vital.

3. Further information: [www.cidh.oas.org/DefaultE.htm](http://www.cidh.oas.org/DefaultE.htm)

4. Further information on the UPR: [www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/BasicFacts.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/BasicFacts.aspx)

- 2.4 **Development program / project implementation at country level is a joint responsibility between recipient countries and development partners, including CSOs, and must address inequalities and build on human rights legal standards and principles.** As reflected in evaluations of the PD, tools guiding country level implementation, such as country compacts, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), or others, must not place the responsibility for implementation solely on recipient countries.
- 2.5 **Recognizing the increasing importance and value of financial flows channeled through South-South and Triangular cooperation,** governments should include in their technical assistance good practices related to gender equality and women's rights strategies. Governments engaging in South-South cooperation initiatives should implement mechanisms to ensure adequate access to information and space for CSO participation in cooperation processes.

### **3 Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women's and feminist organizations**

- 3.1 The participation of women's organizations in policy dialogues at local, national and international levels must be ensured. Governments should support development actors' (including women's and feminist organizations and movements) effective participation at local, national and international levels and at all stages of the development process (planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating), as well as in setting and debating priorities and in aligning development and women's human rights commitments. In some cases this may require the creation of relevant spaces and institutional mechanisms.
- 3.2 **Move away from policy conditionalities towards consistent application of concepts of multiple responsibility, accountability and transparency among both donor and developing countries.** This could be advanced, for example, by supporting democratic scrutiny of development goals, policies and results. Policy conditionalities can have negative impacts on people, particularly on women and girls. They undermine the principle of ownership and contradict the right to development and self-determination.
- 3.3 **Donors should be accountable for the aid that they deliver by ensuring transparent, open, predictable and participatory opportunities for dialogue on aid processes, priorities, agreements and progress assessments.** Transparency is key to democratic ownership and accountability and ensures CSOs' meaningful participation in policy and political dialogues. It is therefore crucial that all development partners, including the private sector, adopt policies of automatic and full disclosure of relevant information and submit to the norms and direction-setting of the UN. Existing aid transparency initiatives, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) which applies the gender marker and complements it with additional data, are a promising step forward.
- 3.4 **Developing countries should have the opportunity to choose among the range of aid-modalities, based on what is most appropriate to their context.** For example, in countries where social sectors are less likely to receive adequate funding, sector budget support should be considered for gender equality, women's rights and health issues in particular.
- 3.5 The development of a framework that ensures all stakeholders engage in broader health planning, implementation and monitoring processes, building on successful experiences of the Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanisms.
- 3.6 **Human rights-based development is primarily the responsibility of states, although the private sector can also play a relevant role in development.** There is no direct correlation between stimulating the private sector and positive impacts on sustainable development. If the private sector is to play a role in development, it must commit to human rights legal standards, including those relevant for women's rights, decent work, and environmental sustainability.
- 3.7 **Create an enabling environment for CSOs and particularly for women's human rights defenders.** All states have the responsibility to implement and respect all provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders<sup>5</sup>, which clearly establishes what contributes to an enabling environment for women's human rights defenders as individuals and their organizations and outlines a series of principles and rights based on human rights standards enshrined in international legal instruments.

5. UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders: [www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(symbol\)/a.res.53.144.en](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(symbol)/a.res.53.144.en)

#### 4 **Promote multiple accountability systems for women's rights and gender equality, improving existing monitoring systems.**

- 4.1 **Shift to a "multiple accountability" approach**, which recognizes and includes diverse development actors such as CSOs (including feminist and women's rights organizations), parliamentarians, local governments, the private sector and others. Multiple accountability is stronger than mutual accountability, which is based on bilateral development relationships that no longer reflect the reality of the complex development cooperation system.
- 4.2 **Accountability must not be based on a new OECD monitoring system and should go beyond measuring outputs (aid delivered) to examine the level of outcomes (results). Improve aid and development cooperation monitoring systems by building on and improving the existing country or regionally relevant indicators and accountability mechanisms**, such as: MDG targets and indicators, CEDAW reporting requirements, reporting on the BPfA, the ICPD, and other international mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council UPR.
- 4.3 The monitoring and evaluation system established as part of the new development cooperation architecture should **make reporting on gender equality outcome indicators mandatory for all governments**. This includes the current optional module on gender equality and aid effectiveness<sup>6</sup>, developed by the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), and other – indicators, such as those measuring countries' budget allocations to women's rights and gender equality. **All aid (including multilateral aid) should be screened against the DAC gender equality marker.**
- 4.4 **Accountability of the private sector must include respect for international human rights standards, including women's rights and gender equality legal standards.** Governments must be responsible for holding private sector development interventions accountable through regular reporting. In addition, CSOs must hold their governments accountable in their duty to protect citizens from potential harm caused by private sector actors.
- 4.5 **All parties and signatories of the Busan outcome document should leave with concrete responsibilities (goals, targets, indicators) and be held accountable for undertaking their agreed commitments.** We welcome new actors to the Busan HLF-4, however, their participation should not "water down" the previous commitments made.

#### 5 **Financing for Development: Gender Equality and Women's Rights Beyond Mainstreaming**

- 5.1 **Funding must be diversified to ensure that gender mainstreaming and division of labor approaches do not dilute women's rights commitments** or exclude other targeted work that is critical for advancing women's rights, gender equality and poverty reduction. Mainstreaming should be accompanied by direct and specific actions (twin-track approach) aimed at achieving women's rights and gender equality, and include direct support to local women's groups.
- 5.2 **Adequate investment should be ensured for certain controversial and sensitive women's rights issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights**, which are loaded with debates around access to family planning/contraception, safe abortion and sexual orientation. There are countries where government support for sexual and reproductive rights is weak or nonexistent. In these cases it is recommended to use a mix of funding mechanisms including general and sector budget support, direct support to UN agencies and CSOs (including feminist and women's rights organizations), as well as project-specific funding.
- 5.3 **Governments should support local women's groups to build awareness and capacities in their societies and communities** and to provide oversight for local, regional and national development policies and projects. All development actors should prioritize and invest in capacity building for women's organizations strengthening their participation and, as a result, democratic ownership of development agendas at local level.
- 5.4 **Governments should ensure increased, substantial, flexible, predictable and multi-year core funding for women's rights organizations** and effective mechanisms in place to guarantee that funding reaches these organizations in all their diversity.

6. The optional module has been integrated into the 2011 Paris Declaration monitoring survey on a voluntary piloting basis. Further information: [http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3746,en\\_21571361\\_39494699\\_46642822\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3746,en_21571361_39494699_46642822_1_1_1_1,00.html)

- 5.5 **Donor and partner countries should ensure that public financial management systems are gender-responsive** and include more rigorous tracking of expenditures for the achievement of women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment. In the long-term, this will ensure that budgets and plans address the needs of all people equitably and promote accountability and transparency in the determination of priorities for public spending.
- 5.6 **Take steps to set up democratic and innovative financing for development mechanisms:** All states should agree on a clear process under the UN to establish additional and innovative financing mechanisms for development by 2015. The "Robin Hood Tax", is one innovative funding mechanism that could contribute to creating a more democratic international system to finance development and overcome the disparities inherent in the current development cooperation system.
- 5.7 **As a key new player in development cooperation, UN Women must be equipped with adequate, immediate, long-term, predictable and multi-year core funding** comparable to the commitments made to other UN funds and programs.

## **6 Development cooperation to the countries in situations of fragility and conflict must acknowledge the differential and disproportional impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.**

In Accra, governments committed to work and agree on a set of realistic peace and state-building objectives to address the root causes of conflict and fragility and help ensure the protection and participation of women (AAA §21b). This process was to be informed by international dialogue between partners and donors on these objectives as prerequisites for development. However, there have not been substantial improvements in this area.

- 6.1 **All governments should work towards implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889.** In countries in situations of fragility or that are emerging from conflict, donors must support state and civil society actors (including women's organizations) to develop national action plans to operationalize the UN resolutions on women, peace and security.
- 6.2 **All governments should acknowledge the differential and disproportionate impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.** This means guaranteeing cooperation to address these issues and to ensure equality, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for women who are victims, as well as effective participation in peace processes and post conflict reconstructions.
- 6.3 **Donor and developing country governments should commit to support feminist and women's organizations as part of achieving sustainable, peaceful and lasting solutions for women and girls in conflict-affected or fragile states.**
- 6.4 **Governments must not sell arms to countries engaged in armed conflict.**

These women's key demands for Busan and the 2012 DCF process were elaborated during the International Women's Organizations Consultation on Development Cooperation, Women's Rights and Gender Equality held in Brussels, Belgium, 9-10 June 2011. The consultation was hosted by WIDE Network and co-organized with the other women's organizations of the BetterAid Coordination Group: the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Coordinadora de la Mujer from Bolivia. The event was supported by

Civil society voices for  
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The key demands were reviewed by many, also beyond the participants of the June consultation and the current document was updated based on comments received to the July 2011 version and lists below the endorsements received:

Action Aid International	Crisis center Aldynai	Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana - Perú	Onor Bulagy Public Foundation Kyrgyzstan
Amur Temir micro rayon women council	Daughters of Mumbi Global Resource Center	Gulnar Yessirgepova (as individual) - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Kazakhstan office	Osh media resource center
Articulación Feminista Marcosur	"DIA" (Karasuu) Kyrgyzstan	Initiative group «Demilge»	Public Association Jarandyk Demilge Network Kyrgyzstan
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development - APWLD	Ene Nazary (Gulcha) Kyrgyzstan	International ecological association "Women of East"	Public Association "Otandastar"
Association for Women's Rights in Development -AWID	Equilibres & Populations: Eurodad	"Kyrk-Kyz" Foundation of Social Protection of Women of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Reality of Aid
Association of Issyk-kul women	Federación Catalana de ONG para el Desarrollo	K.U.L.U.-Women and Development	Red de Género y Comercio - Capítulo Latinoamericano
Association of Ahiska turkish women in Kazakhstan	Feminist League from Kazakhstan	La Alianza - Colombia	Réseau des Organisations Féminines d'Afrique Francophone- ROFAF
Association of disabled women Kyrgyzstan	FEMNET- The African Women's Development and Communications Network	L'Association des Femmes Africaines pour la Recherche et le Développement (AAWORD/AFARD)	Research Centre "SEDEP" Kyrgyzstan
Association of women artists and art critics Kyrgyzstan	FOKUS –Forum for Women and Development	NETRIGHT	Rural Women's NGO "Alga" Kyrgyzstan
Banúlacht -Women in Ireland in Global Solidarity	Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres FMICA	NGO Asteria	Sisma Mujer
Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán	Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan	NGO Demilgeluu insandar	Social Union Epkin, Kyrgyzstan
Coordinadora Andaluza de ONG de Desarrollo	Fundación Suma Veritas	NGO «Demoor» Kyrgyzstan	Solidarité des Femmes Burundaises pour la Lutte contre le Sida et le Paludisme
Coordinadora de la Mujer - Bolivia	GCAP Feminist Task Force	NGO «Gulmaidan» Kyrgyzstan	WILDAF - Women in Law and Development in Africa
Cotidiano Mujer	Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	NGO «Leilek ayalzaty»	WIDE network
		NGO Mammological center	дамира раимбеков