

GENDER ROUNDTABLE FOR HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON POST 2015 CONSULTATION

National Building Blocks for Sustained Prosperity

Economic Transformation

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In order to realize economic transformation, the prevailing economic models must make way for alternative models that are firmly rooted in human-rights, consider the well-being of people, particularly the most marginalized and take into account the political, social, cultural and environmental impacts. Recognizing that the current development framework has resulted in increased structural disparities; the new development framework must be reoriented to reduce inequities and inequalities in wealth, resources and power within our communities, between and within countries, the rich and the poor and between men and women, people living with disabilities and among minority groups. This can only be achieved if the framework is centred, owned and driven by these most marginalised populations.

What do women want in the Post 2015 Development Framework

The participants present at the roundtable presented the following three structural conditions necessary to achieve economic transformation.

1 To secure **access to and control over resources** – land rights and access to land are a key block on women’s economic opportunities. Globally, women own 1% of property, despite making up 80% of smallholders farmers. Women’s access to energy, water, information, education and technology are also critical to enabling women to access the economy and secure sustainable livelihoods.

2 To ensure **decent work and a living wage for women** – 2/3 of women are engaged in informal sectors, without security and social and legal protection, and with low pay. They are also denied rights to organise and address infringements to their rights. Meanwhile, women’s **unpaid care work** needs to be recognised, reduced and remunerated. The majority of unpaid care work falls on women, resulting in increased time poverty, limiting opportunities for pursuing paid work and education. While care is necessary for the well being of society, women do the vast majority of unpaid care work which is essentially a free supply of labour. And they have little choice.

3 to ensure that the challenge of rising **violence against girls and women and the violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights** that result in unsafe abortion, maternal mortality, early marriage and female genital cutting, is prioritised and addressed. Women have little access to support services, including justice. Violence is particularly stark in the case of cross border trade, migrant, domestic and sex workers. VAW/G and violation of SRHR are the most widespread and tolerated of all human rights violations which additionally impose huge economic and social costs that prevent transformation from taking place.

Unless women’s role in economic development is recognised, durable and visible solutions will not be possible. Creating the right governance framework is key to ensuring this happens, and requires, amongst others, gender responsive macro economic policies including budgeting,

transparency especially in the effective management and equal access to natural and mineral resources, and tackling corruption. The new framework must include a solid accountability framework that takes these factors into account.

High Level Panel response

The resounding message echoed by all members of the High Level Panel and their representatives was that gender equality will be at the centre of the new framework. In the words of Amina Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Post 2015, “In every single goal, women will matter.”

The High Level Panel lead author, Homi Kharas supported this stating that the issue is not what or whether we will try to address women issues since there is overwhelming evidence, support and consensus on this but on the how and what will be done to advance this agenda. He posed reflective questions to the participants present at the roundtable: Why has this gender agenda not advanced further? What will we do to push the agenda further and faster if we want to see real change rather than repeating the previous processes in the new development framework?

Joanne Teague (representing Gunilla Carlson), reiterated that among the top priorities on the universal agenda is gender equality. The importance of women participation and gender equality vis-a-vis economic development cannot be understated. What must be addressed is the huge cost of denying women’s agency and thus failing to unleash the potential of women to truly transform the economy. There is a strong link between reproductive rights to women’s productive role in the society. With regard to the governance issues raised, she was happy to hear the importance given to governance issues by women since democratic governance will be central to and not a fraction of the Post 2015 agenda.

Varad Pande (adviser to Government of India) was in agreement with the roundtable participants on the issue of women representation. He reaffirmed the importance of women in decision making on a 50-50 representation basis, urging that it is time that representation of women goes beyond just legislature and executive but also in local governments and private sector boards. He mentioned this as a sustainable suggestion for practical solutions to faster economic development in the new framework.

Violence against women/girls was a fully supported agenda by the HLP members. Ms. Amina Mohammed made it clear that the HLP has acknowledged the gravity of this especially among indigenous people, people living or coming out of conflict and LGBTI. Structural violence was also recognized as an invisible but nonetheless key deterrent to transformation.

Additionally, Mr. Homi Kharas emphasized that global level action cannot be the starting point but must rather support actions at the national and regional levels which have specific contexts and priorities. The mass action that followed the gang-rape case in India last month is an excellent illustrative example that touched people’s hearts and conscience in a way that no report would. Participants agreed that the new framework must complement and push for the implementation and fast-tracking of existing global, regional and national frameworks on women’s rights and gender equality.

The importance of both quality and disaggregated data was stressed especially to ensure that disparities and inequalities weren’t hidden amidst averages and bulk data.

The participants made a recommendation on the need for monitoring and reporting at all levels, including local and national which would enable citizens to hold their electorate to account much more closely.

CONCLUSION

THE HLP members affirmed their commitment to gender equality and an all-inclusive process. They specifically asked for suggestions on the actual matrix of practical targets and indicators for the new framework which could be implemented realistically and collectively.

The HLP members and representatives were thanked for their commitment to gender equality and women's rights and for their recognition of the role of civil society not only in the lead up to 2015, but also to oversee the implementation and monitor the results of the new framework.

If the post 2015 framework is to be transformative, economic policies in particular need to be reoriented to reduce inequality and enable the poorest and most marginalised to claim their rights for the long term. A post 2015 framework can only deliver economic transformation if it changes the way we understand women's contribution to the economy. This would reap enormous economic benefits and would accelerate the achievement of other development goals. The following three priorities 1) access to and control over resources 2) dignified work and living wage 3) bodily integrity and autonomy as well as matters of governance need to be addressed with a view to unleash the potential for women to act as agents of economic transformation.

To ensure women can drive forward economic transformation, the post 2015 development agenda must include both a reinforced stand-alone gender equality goal and expanded gender targets and indicators mainstreamed across the entire framework, tackling the above issues. Failure to do so would reverse the gains made of the last 20 years.