



MEDIA ADVISORY

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IN ANTICIPATION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT 23 – 24 OCT 2007

Civil Society Groups Sound the Alarm: the current development financial architecture undermines gender equality and women's rights

New York, NY. – October 22: As governments prepare to convene for the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on 23-24 October to follow-up on the Financing for Development (FfD) process, civil society groups say that financial resources for sustainable development, poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women are insufficient.

The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) together with GCAP Feminist Task Force, The Anglican Consultative Council UN Office, and Women in Development Europe (WIDE), are demanding that governments deliver on commitments made of the UN conferences of the 1990s by providing adequate funding and policy support for the social sectors, and for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Sustainable development needs far-reaching policy changes: All development and related economic policies must be embedded into a firm commitment to the realization and protection of economic and social human rights; not only by national governments, but by global players like the IFIs, the WTO and Transnational Corporations as well. Ms. Nerea Craviotto (WIDE) highlighted that, in this context *“the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights must be strengthened, all mechanisms to improve its enforcement must be supported and universal ratification must be achieved. In addition, governments must ensure that economic policies promoted at national and international level are coherent with their commitments towards sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equality”*.

We call for a formal process for civil society participation, to prepare the Monterrey Consensus review, in Doha, late 2008. As stated in the Paris Declaration (OECD-DAC 2005), national ownership is a key element to ensure development effectiveness. However, the current international financial architecture and the new aid modalities are not ensuring democratic ownership through civil society participation. The UN Economic and Social Council must play a crucial role to strength development effectiveness from a civil society perspective through the new Development Cooperation Forum.

Ms. June Zeitlin of WEDO states that “Financing for Development must include substantial financing for gender equality. It is now well-documented that gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the key drivers of sustainable development. The MDGs cannot be achieved without gender equality. We have the commitments. We have the rhetoric. Now we need the money.”

Unless more funding is allocated to these areas, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—a set of eight goals that emerged from the 2000 UN Millennium Summit to improve living conditions and remedy key global imbalances by 2015—won't be met. Neither will the world's larger development agenda that goes beyond the targets set in the MDGS, say these groups.

Studies suggest that initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment have not been effectively included in the development process, despite a commitment to do so in the Monterrey Consensus—the agreement adopted at the 2002 FfD conference. Women's machineries and programs have also been grossly under funded.

Women contend that the present situation could have been avoided if human rights and sustainable development, instead of a market-driven approach, had been the overarching framework at the start of the FfD process. They are arguing for governments to address a set of key policy issues within the financing for development review process in order to reverse the current trend.

The social dimensions of development are sidelined when governments prioritize market-based solutions over human rights. **In conjunction with the High-Level Dialogue, members of the press are invited to attend the press conference at 11.00 on Tuesday, 23rd October at the UN Secretariat Room S-226 (2nd floor) with speakers from:**

- **Ms. Barbara Adams, UNIFEM**
- **Ms. Hellen Wangusa, Anglican Consultative Council, UN Office**
- **Ms. Nerea Craviotto, Women in Development Europe (WIDE)**
- **Ms. June Zeitlin, Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)**

The press conference is sponsored and co-hosted by United Nations Women's Development Fund (UNIFEM).

Founded in 1991, the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) is an international organization that advocates for gender equality in global policy. Working in key global forums such as the UN, WEDO advocates for and seeks to empower women as decision makers to achieve economic, social and gender justice, a healthy, peaceful planet and human rights for all. Find more information about WEDO's work on Financing for Development and gender equality in the press packet and at www.wedo.org (click on "financing for development").

The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) formed in 2003 is a [growing alliance](#) of trade unions, community groups, faith groups, women and youth organizations, NGOs and other campaigners working together across more than 100 national platforms. GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. Find more information about GCAP on their website www.whiteband.org.

Women in Development Europe (WIDE) is a European feminist network of women's organizations, development NGOs, gender specialists and women's rights activists, monitoring and international development and economic related policies and practice from a feminist perspective. WIDE's work is grounded on rights as the basis for the development of a more just and democratic world order and the search for alternative approaches to the economic mainstream. WIDE enables members and partners to articulate alternatives to the negative impacts of globalization, and makes feminist alternatives visible. Through the dissemination of our research and analysis, WIDE promotes gender equality and social justice. Find more information about WIDE on their website www.wide-network.org.