

## 2<sup>nd</sup> High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development June 27-28, 2005

### Women's Caucus Recommendations

*The following are key recommendations asserted by women's groups at the ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action (March 2005) and the Informal Interactive Hearings with NGOs, Civil Society and Private Sector (June 2005), both part of the lead-up to the 2005 World Summit in September.*

1. Recognizing that the vast majority of women who contribute to local and global economies are not entrepreneurs but workers and farmers, Governments must create an enabling economic environment for the fulfillment of the Millennium Declaration and outcomes of the conferences of the 1990s, particularly the Beijing Platform for Action and the ICPD Programme of Action, that goes far beyond micro-enterprise, micro-credit and individual responses and instead frames a broader economic agenda for sustainable development and equity among countries and sectors. Governments must address the economic rights of women full-time, part-time, seasonal, informal, migrant and unpaid household workers and farmers.
2. Recognizing that unprotected, precarious forms of work in the economy, mostly done by women, have increased over the last decade, Governments must implement the ILO decent work agenda, and affirm the right of all workers to freedom of association, the right to organize and the right to collective bargaining with no discrimination on the basis of immigration and employment status. Governments must be able to retain flexibility in the policy sphere in order to ensure sustainable livelihoods and employment among urban, rural, casualized, informalized and migrant workers in the formal and the informal economies.
3. As military expenditures exceed US \$1 Trillion at the expense of scarce public resources that are essential to human development, and while ODA levels are at \$78 Billion, budgetary priorities need significant adjustment. Governments must reallocate budgetary expenditures away from militarism and the provision of tax holidays to corporations, and secure resources for social and re-distributive goals, especially in the areas of access to goods and services related to health, education, and clean water.
4. 'Public-private partnerships' between a weakened public sector and an emboldened private sector gives the private sector special advantages and opportunities for increasing their control of assets and services that are critical to the achievement of the goals, while privatization of essential services and the introduction of "user fees" in these services jeopardizes access by the poor. Reaffirm the crucial role of the public sector in providing adequately funded and accessible essential services and public goods including primary health care, sexual and reproductive health including adolescent health education, housing, all levels of education, water and sanitation, energy and transport.
5. Strengthening partnerships with civil society, Governments must mobilize sufficient resources directly to NGOs and community based organizations, including grassroots women's and indigenous groups, working on the issues of the Secretary-General's Report and addressed by civil society at the Informal Interactive Hearings, on a long term and sustained basis.
6. Governments must undertake gender reviews and impact assessments of sector reforms promoted and financed by multilateral institutions, and of bilateral, regional and international trade agreements in order to identify gender biases in earning levels, job security, labor standards, unpaid work burdens and access to productive and natural resources.

7. Unjust trade regimes that deny poor countries access to markets and pit the interests of powerful corporations against those of small farmers and producers cannot contribute to eradicating poverty or achieving gender equality. Governments must make a firm commitment to review and resolve all pending implementation issues in the WTO in order to more fully understand the prospects and impact of trade liberalization and to avoid rushing imbalanced trade rules under the mantle of "development" in the so-called Doha Development Round.

8. Governments must gear existing regulatory regimes on property rights to promoting people's access to and ownership of knowledge and the protection of environmental resources. Developed country Governments must eliminate agricultural subsidies which adversely affect small-scale farmers, the majority of whom are women. Financing for Development and 2005 World Summit outcomes must ensure that trade rules are dedicated to poverty eradication and bound by existing international agreements that promote and protect human rights, including women's rights, and the environment.

9. G-8 Governments must ensure unconditional debt cancellation of all illegitimate debts, such as those that cannot be serviced without causing harm to people and communities, those incurred by corruption and fraud and those incurred by exorbitant interest rates. Any 'debt sustainability' analysis must include an audit of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of all previous debts. Further, any debt relief must not be at the expense of increased aid.

10. Donor countries should increase the flexibility with which resources are made available and eliminate conditionality attached to development assistance, particularly when these imply further economic restructuring and especially when the exercise by women of their rights is curtailed.

11. Recipient countries should ensure that a necessary amount of the assistance received, determined in consultation with women's groups, is earmarked towards implementation of commitments related to achieving gender equality, including the outcomes from Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen and Durban.

12. Within the UN, women's agencies and divisions are weakened by lack of resources and low status in the institutional hierarchy. The slow progress of gender mainstreaming within the UN system is a failure of the institutional leadership to give serious recognition and resources to women's and gender concerns. In the FfD and World Summit processes, Governments must push for reforms that strengthen gender units through increased resources for regional activities and more political clout within the UN itself.

13. The current development framework promoted by most Governments and the IFIs and WTO reflects a market-oriented approach which opens up countries of the South to increased exploitation from powerful corporate interests from the North, further marginalizes people and increases the gap between rich and poor. We therefore call on governments to acknowledge that neo-liberal economic policies have actually exacerbated problems that the MDGs are supposed to address and that they also contribute to abuses of human rights and jeopardize human security. Thus Governments must adopt a human rights-based approach in their strategies and decision-making to achieve the interdependent goals of development, security and human rights.