

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO and UNICEF

International Secretariat: 1, rue de Varembe, C.P.28, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Tel: (+41 22) 733 61 75 . Fax: (+41 22) 740 10 63. e-mail: wilpf@iprolink.ch website: <http://www.wilpf.int.ch>

UK Section

3 Derry Downs, St. Mary Cray, Kent BR5 4DT 01689 837848,
e-mail: sheila.triggs1@btinternet.com website: www.ukwilpf.gn.apc.org

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) UK Section would like to bring to Mr Bernard's Mudho and representatives' attention to the impact of these reforms on women, and the implications of donor's new aid modalities for civil society activities on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights. Economic policies and reforms have contributed to the unequal development and participation of women across the globe.

To improve the effectiveness of aid, donors have now committed to a set of principles and approaches which are laid out as new aid modalities in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005.

The poor progress made in poverty reduction reinforced an impression that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) lacked the coverage, capacity and coordination to make any significant difference. Donors now emphasise the role of CSOs not so much in service delivery but in holding governments to account for the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs), often through Direct Budget Support. However it does not appear to have an explicit strategy promoting CSOs activities in gender equality or women's empowerment.

In theory, the new aid modalities ought to put into action their commitments to gender equality, however in many countries the opportunity to promote gender equality are being missed. Civil society organisations working on gender issues and recent publications of donor's new aid modalities, such as DFID and UNIFEM, have suggested that donor's new policies and approaches have contributed to a sidelining of gender equality work.

WILPF expresses concern that women will only benefit from the new aid modalities if gender equality is recognised as key component of poverty reduction. A study of 13 PRSPs in 2003 indicated the first generation of PRSPs were relatively gender-blind. General Budget Support has handed control of aid to governments, which tend to favour the simplest approach to gender equality such as girls' access to education, not to more complex or broad-based reforms.

According to a World Bank and IMF study in 2002, "attention to gender issues in PRSPs, tended to decline as countries moved from diagnosis to actions and from actions monitoring". The dialogue on the use and allocation for Direct Budget Support is largely confined to private engagement between donors and Ministers of Finance with no input from CSOs or any gender-related expertise.

Our recommendation to Mr Mudho and member states, is to recognise that the promotion of gender equality and women's rights are crucial elements in the process of poverty reduction and economic reform; as well as to integrate policies for mainstreaming work on gender equality.

WILPF emphasises that reviews of PRS such as Sector-Wide Working groups ought to make governments accountable to their citizens with regard to gender equality and create more space for CSOs working on women's human rights to influence transparent policy processes.

Thank you Mr President.