

**GENDER EQUALITY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS**  
**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE:**  
**EXPERIENCES FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA**

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## CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY .....	3
1. SUMMARY .....	3
2. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.1 The challenge.....	4
2.2. The Bangkok workshop.....	4
2.3 This report.....	5
3. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE STUDIES .....	6
3.1 Not ‘best practice’ .....	6
3.2 Ownership .....	6
3.3. Alignment .....	8
3.4. Harmonisation.....	10
3.5 Managing for results .....	12
3.6 Mutual Accountability.....	12
3.7 Summary .....	12
4. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS: HOW INTERNATIONAL AID PRACTICE CAN SUPPORT NATIONAL EFFORTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY.....	14
4.1 Ownership: .....	15
4.2 Alignment .....	16
4.3 Harmonisation.....	16
4.4. Managing for results .....	17
4.5 Mutual accountability .....	17
4.6 Summary .....	18
5. THE PARIS PRINCIPLES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE .....	18
5.1 How supporting gender equality objectives can strengthen the implementation of the Paris principles.....	19
5.2 Constructing partnerships.....	20
ANNEX A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE BANGKOK WORKSHOP .....	21
ANNEX B THE CASE STUDIES .....	24

### TEXT BOXES

Indonesia: reducing maternal mortality through gender relations

Cambodia: gender mainstreaming machinery

Vietnam: gender equality and the PRSC

Timor Leste: strengthening women’s participation in politics

## 1. SUMMARY

Studies and discussions at a workshop of four aid-funded initiatives in different countries in South East Asia show that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness offers a useful framework for assessing and strengthening government-led efforts towards greater gender equality and the achievement of the MDGs. The Paris principles provide the opportunity for governments, civil society and donors to work together in more genuine partnerships provided the search for efficiency gains is not at the expense of securing long term impact and that donors change their own organisational behaviour where this constrains gender equality efforts.

It also means supporting those seeking change rather than being over-discouraged by sections of government or society that are indifferent or even resistant. The challenge is for women's interest groups in and outside government to become more influential in the bodies that are responsible for the aid effectiveness agenda. Donors need to proactively support such efforts, something which according to the studies commissioned for this workshop has not always been the case. The presence of energetic and committed individuals on both government and donor sides combined with greater harmonisation of effort appears to be a key factor in successful policy ownership and alignment. This means donors appointing appropriate staff and rewarding their efforts, recognising that quick results may not be achievable and that sustainability of long term commitment is vital.

Governments must take a leadership role in changing those patterns of gender relations that have an adverse effect on women's lives but also donors must actively align with country specific agendas for gender equality rather than pushing priorities determined in their head offices. At the same time both governments and donors should recognise their mutual accountability for securing the realisation of women's rights through agendas for gender equality that reflect and report to the CEDAW framework.

The recent renewal of donors' commitment to promoting gender equality offers a significant opportunity for putting the aid effectiveness principles into practice. Both content and process are important. It means constructing partnerships that recognise and address power inequalities through genuinely inclusive processes where diversity of views are welcomed as an essential step for identifying the context specific and complementary aid modalities that are required for securing long term social change.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 The challenge**

In international aid circles, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is commonly referred to as a 'cross-cutting' issue, meaning that it has to be taken into account if results are to be achieved from investments in specific sectors such as health, agriculture or enterprise development. Equally importantly, it is a developmental goal in its own right – MDG 3. Because policy priorities of governments and NGOs often reflect structural inequities in power relations within the wider society the most difficult goals to reach and that need the most investment, paradoxically, tend to be those that get the least attention. For example, it is the reduction in maternal mortality (MDG 5) which is the Millennium Development Goal where least progress has been made. The Paris Declaration's emphasis on ownership, impact and accountability offers an important opportunity for aid recipient countries and their development partners to reverse this tendency. Yet the Declaration will not deliver on its potential for international aid to make a real and positive difference in millions of women's and girls' lives unless those working for women's rights take the fullest advantage of what the aid effectiveness agenda can offer.

In countries of the SE Asia region that are experiencing rapid economic growth, steady progress towards most MDGs and low levels of aid dependency, the aid context is one in which government leadership is being more easily asserted and the drivers for harmonised donor working are more prevalent. As a result of this (and other factors) South East Asia is proving to be the testing ground for a number of innovative approaches to aid effectiveness in Asia. These include reforms to consultative and working group practices amongst donors and governments; new forms of multi-donor office and multi donor strategies and programming as well as new aid modalities. In such a changing aid environment are there experiences and ways of working for promoting gender equality that can be usefully shared both within the region and more widely?

### **2.2. The Bangkok workshop**

A steering group from regional offices of DFID, UNIFEM and the World Bank decided to deepen mutual understanding amongst development practitioners of the challenges and opportunities for implementation of gender equality objectives through the Paris Declaration in SE Asia. A workshop, held in Bangkok on 2-3 April 2007, had two objectives:

- (1) To strengthen the achievement of gender equality objectives within specific aid funded initiatives to be discussed at the workshop;
- (2) To produce recommendations in support of international processes aimed at strengthening the pursuit of gender equality within aid effectiveness agendas.

In preparation for the workshop and in consultation with the governments concerned, three consultants working in the region were commissioned to study aid-funded initiatives in Cambodia (Cheryl Urashima) Vietnam (Dipa Bagai) and Indonesia and Timor Leste (Sofi Ospina). They explored how these initiatives are promoting gender equality using the lens of the Paris Declaration's aid effectiveness framework.

Just as the case studies sought to capture and articulate different perspectives without providing any ready-made solutions, so the workshop itself was designed to ensure an inclusive process in which all participants could voice their experience and ideas as well benefiting personally from the critical learning taking place. The majority of participants were those from governments, civil society and donor agencies with a direct stake in the initiatives studied. There was also, however, regional/head office participation from ADB, AusAid and Focus on the Global South.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.3 This report**

The purpose of this report is to summarise the issues and views emerging from the case studies and the workshop. Section 3 provides a synthesis of the generic issues emerging from the case studies with the cases themselves in text boxes; section 4 summarises the workshop's collective recommendations to international aid practice in relation to aid effectiveness and gender equality while section 5 provides a brief commentary on the broader implications of these recommendations and the overall workshop process.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex A for the list of workshop participants and Annex B for the studies themselves, as used as inputs for workshop discussion.

### **3. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY: THE CASE STUDIES**

#### **3.1 Not 'best practice'**

The very diverse aid-funded initiatives studied for the workshop provide a representative cross section of current policy and programming actions in the context of current efforts to strengthen aid effectiveness. The Vietnam study looks at the Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit (PRSC) and the extent to which it includes gender-equality objectives; the Cambodia study concerns the machinery established to implement the Paris Declaration agenda at the national level and the efforts underway to 'mainstream' gender within that machinery; the Indonesia study relates to a multi-donor funded programme in two provinces in support of the fifth Millennium Development Goal (improving maternal health) and the Timor Leste example is of a focused UNIFEM coordinated effort to enhance women's leadership and promote gender responsive democratic governance.

Not only diversity of cases was sought but also diversity of views from those involved in them. When a case is framed as 'best practice' dissenting voices may self-exclude themselves from comment and thus from providing an alternative point of view that helps reveal the complexity of reality and that there are rarely quick fix and off-the-peg solutions. The purpose of the studies was not to show the rest of the world how well SE Asia is doing in terms of implementing the Paris Declaration in support of a 'cross-cutting issue' but rather to allow the participants (and an eventual wider audience) to identify issues, opportunities and challenges that can be taken up and responded to. For this reason both the case studies and the workshop itself took an approach in which a diversity of perspectives was welcomed and encouraged.

Despite the differences in the initiatives, the studies - and the associated workshop discussions and subsequent action plans made by the stakeholders in the initiatives examined - revealed some common themes and issues which the rest of this section considers within the framework of the five principles of the Paris Declaration.

#### **3.2 Ownership**

In all four cases, while there were some parts of government machinery and civil society strongly committed to securing greater gender equality, many other influential policy actors were indifferent or even openly resistant.

## Indonesia – reducing maternal mortality through changing gender relations

To fight the high maternal and neo-natal mortality, the Ministry of Health has developed a national strategic plan for Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS), 2001-2010. A multi-donor programme in the two provinces of Nusa Tenggara Barat and Nusa Tenggara Timur in support of MPS aims to put in place an integrated health planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system; to strengthen the emergency referral system; to ensure that clinical services meet national standards and complement health promotion activities and to empower communities, especially those in poverty, to access appropriate services. While there have been efforts to harmonise other elements of the programme, so far donors have made little effort to develop a joint framework for addressing the underlying gender issues in maternal mortality prevalence.

**Questions from the workshop about this initiative** included issues relating to:

- opportunities for the central government and donors to learn from this project for implementing national policy on gender equality within the context of decentralisation and social and religious diversity;
- incorporating gender analysis and gender equality objectives into provincial line departments, including health and the potential role of the gender equality unit in the central Ministry of Health therein;
- leveraging wider changes in gender relations through the use of available sex-disaggregated data;
- ensuring that government and donors have a shared and adequately resourced and costed gender equality results matrix for the two provinces concerned and holding them accountable for this;
- plans for involving civil society and the beneficiaries in shaping this initiative;

**Agreed actions arising from the workshop** were drafted within framework of the five principles of the Paris Declaration. *Ownership* for gender equality objectives within a decentralised structure requires working at all levels, including through the work of traditional birth attendants with the communities and with MPS review meetings at provincial and central levels, as well as with collating and updating local gender training materials. *Alignment* action includes making the MPS provincial budgets gender sensitive using the President's instructions on gender equality. Gender equality objectives could serve as a spearhead for *harmonising* donor support within the health sector and the team will take this proposal to a forthcoming national workshop; gender disaggregated data will be used for specific planning and budgeting for *results* and team will work to show the importance of gender equality for development and training to achieve results. The team will promote the introduction and monitoring of gender specific indicators in the MPS national framework and will draw on the experience of working with community groups in one district to strengthen *accountability* between government, donors and citizens.

Donors need to support those seeking change rather than be discouraged by the sections of government and wider society that are indifferent or resistant. Yet they should not be misled that commitment from some sections means commitment from everyone and assume that the task is easier than it is.

In *Timor Leste*, the manifest serious commitment by the highest level of government and other key civil society groups may mask scepticism and inaction in some sectors and at lower levels in the government and in other conservative groups in society. In the case of *Indonesia*, while a very favourable policy environment for reducing maternal mortality has been established through a presidential decree (9/2000) on gender mainstreaming and two ministerial decrees for gender mainstreaming in the health sector - and there is a commitment among local community leaders to tackling the high level of maternal mortality - senior staff at the provincial level do not see gender equality issues as a matter of concern.

While Indonesia and Timor Leste already offer possibilities of broader based civil society ownership - and in the latter instance the initiative under study has had active civil society engagement from the start - in Cambodia and to an even greater extent in Vietnam, civil society is nascent. Because it is even harder to present evidence of a broader-based ownership of an agenda that is ignored or resisted by many government officials, there is a tendency to prioritise support to champions within government. Under the leadership of the Minister of Women's Affairs the desire to build stronger government 'ownership' in *Cambodia* shaped the design the technical working group on gender and the gender mainstreaming groups inside each ministry.

In all four countries, the challenge is how women's interest groups in the government (such as the national machineries for women's affairs) and outside (NGOs, mass organisations) can become more influential in the bodies and mechanisms (such as the Consultative Groups) that are responsible for the aid effectiveness agenda.

### **3.3. Alignment**

In *Vietnam* several donors and government representatives hold the view that the successful performance of the government on most gender parameters has actually made it more difficult to mainstream gender issues in the PRSC.

## Cambodia: gender mainstreaming machinery

Although showing signs of improvement, gender inequalities continue to persist in Cambodia, reflected, for example, in unequal access by women to education and health services and representation in politics and policy making. The Cambodia case study concerned mechanisms to promote and support the integration of gender equality concerns into mainstream policies and programmes.

The Technical Working Group on Gender (TWGG) is one of a number of such working groups within the framework of the Government-Donor Consultative Committee (GDCC). Chaired by the Minister for Women's Affairs with two donor co-facilitators the TWGG aims at building overall government *ownership* of the responsibility for addressing gender disparities, *aligning* donor support for mainstreaming gender in government policies, *harmonising* resource allocations and providing a framework for *managing for results* and ensuring *mutual accountability* through the identification of clear targets and indicators. Between 2005-2007 - with the encouragement of the TWGG - Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) were established in 21 out of 26 line ministries as well as in central offices of state. So far Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs) have been developed by 9 ministries.

**Questions from the workshop about this initiative** included issues relating to:

- whether the donor co-facilitators of the TWGG could play more of a leadership role in ensuring that gender equality concerns are integrated into the other technical working groups;
- the role of the GMAGs in getting lead donors in their sector to champion gender equality and their sustainability;
- the political leverage of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) to mainstream gender into other line ministries and its potential for promoting gender equality objectives in the government reform agenda, for example through gender budgeting;
- arrangements for monitoring the impact of the ministries' gender mainstreaming action plans;
- the harmonisation of donors' capacity development initiatives in relation to gender equality and the strategic use of the current limited gender expertise capacity; and,
- the role of civil society in participating in and contributing more broadly to the formulation and achievement of gender equality objectives.

**Agreed actions arising from the workshop** are to focus on (a) strengthening communication and linkages between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), the government body responsible for coordinating government-donor dialogue and contributions to implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), including the Consultative Group; (b) prioritising efforts in a few key sectors (e.g., health, education, agriculture) where the ministries would be encouraged to integrate their gender action plans into their sector-wide plans and donors encouraged to ensure that MAG members are part of programme development and review processes. Other actions include the CDC recommending the designation of gender focal points in all technical working groups and obliging these groups to include progress on gender equality objectives in TWG reports to the GDCC; MOWA to take the lead in harmonising donor support for capacity development and for co-ordinating donor support for gender equality initiatives; and, MOWA will work with the Ministry of Planning to develop guidelines for ensuring annual progress reports on NSDP implementation are gender-sensitive.

Yet, the same point might apply to many other areas of policy reform that are nevertheless captured within the policy dialogue for the PRSC. Both government and donor staff can be selective as to which policies they see as priority for alignment and the challenge is to include other voices in making such choices.

A common theme is the link between the level of investment in both capacity development and research on the one hand and the prioritisation of gender equality for policy alignment on the other. For example, lack of priority means few resources for research which means there is not the evidence available for implementing results based policy. Donors' own priorities are a significant factor; the studies noted the mismatch between donor policies on gender equality and commitment of human and financial resources in practice.

The presence of energetic and committed individuals on both government and donor sides, as is currently the case in *Cambodia* and *Timor Leste* appears to be a key factor in securing successful alignment. In Cambodia, donors are increasingly aligning to the strategic plan of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) as compared with the past when donor funded initiatives within MoWA were pursuing varying approaches to mainstreaming gender.

### **3.4. Harmonisation**

Although in many aid recipient countries, gender working groups for greater donor coordination were often the precursor for wider harmonisation processes, today donors appear to be struggling to harmonise their support in this area. Despite the success of donor alignment to the strategy of the MoWA, *Cambodia* is struggling to achieve the same outcome for donor support to gender equality objectives in specific sectors. It is more of a challenge for donors to apply a gender equality perspective to their joint programmatic support than to their separate stand alone projects, possibly because this involves donor staff for whom gender equality is not a priority. In *Vietnam*, according to gender equality advocates within government, donors lose sight of gender equality objectives when financing programmes like the PRSC.

In *Indonesia*, four donors have harmonised their support to Making Pregnancy Safer in the two provinces. Despite this very concrete example of harmonization some government officials do not consider that donors are coordinating adequately in terms of managing for results and equal quality of coverage of services.

## **Vietnam: Gender Equality and the Poverty Reduction Support Credit**

Vietnam has made progress in recent years on mainstreaming gender equality issues in the health and education sectors and has recently passed a Gender Equality Law to strengthen women's participation in decision making. Major current concerns relating are the potential impact on women's empowerment of the rapidly changing nature of the Vietnamese economy. Those parts of the government machinery responsible for promoting gender equality objectives, such as the National Council for the Advancement of Women (NCAFAW) and the Vietnam Committee for Population, Family and Children (VCPFC) remain under-resourced and are not included in major capacity development programmes.

The Vietnam PRSC is a World Bank (WB) led general budget support operation designed to support the Government of Vietnam (GOV) reform strategy outlined in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), now the Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006 – 2010, and other key planning documents. The WB leads this process with donors co-financing engaging in policy dialogue with the GOV. 19 donors are currently engaged and in 2005 the PRSC represented 10 percent of Official Development Assistance and 2.3 percent of total budgetary resources. There has not been an attempt so far to mainstream gender issues within the PRSC by including any comprehensive initiative with gender equality objectives, or at examining the gender equality impact of PRSC policy actions.

**Questions in the workshop about this initiative** included issues relating to:

- What could be done to ensure that gender equality objectives – including the implementation of the gender equality law - are reflected in the PRSC matrix?
- What actions are needed to overcome the lack of gender analysis capacity and the lack of incentives for gender mainstreaming amongst government, donors and civil society?
- How do you enable additional stakeholder groups beyond those parts of government and international aid agencies most directly involved in the PRSC to be included in the shaping and monitoring of the PRSC process from a gender equality perspective?
- How can donors support and enable the NCAFAW/Women's Union to be more proactive in the PRSC?
- Apart from the NCAFAW who are the gender equality champions (both formal and informal) in government and how can they be enabled to be more involved in the PRSC?

**Agreed actions arising from the workshop** were drafted within framework of the five principles of the Hanoi Core Statement (national version of the Paris Declaration) which in terms of *ownership* would be used as the rallying point for the gender equality agenda; with respect to *alignment* the VCPFC would share with donors the draft of the implementation guidelines of the Gender equality law and organise consultation workshops; a meeting would be organised between PRSC co financiers and GoV on PRSC roadmap for gender policy actions, connecting the aid effectiveness and gender people - both government and donors . For *harmonisation*, for the GoV and donors each to establish a single focal point for dialogue on gender equality policy and for *managing results* gender indicators will be included in the 2007 labour force survey.

### **3.5 Managing for results**

In 3.3 we noted one of the challenges of current approaches to managing for results. Another is that donor timetables of looking for quick results may constrain their enthusiasm for including achieving gender equality objectives in any results matrix. This suggested the National Committee for the Advancement of Women is the challenge for the PRSC in *Vietnam*. In *Indonesia*, the national Ministry of Health aims to have 17% of all districts with a gender responsive action plans and budgets by 2009. Yet, attitudes of some decision makers within the health sector at provincial and district level who have not yet been convinced that gender considerations are important may undermine the achievement of these targets and curb enthusiasm.

Project initiatives, such as that in Timor Leste, face another kind of challenge, that of clearly articulating desired results and having these integrated into broader national planning and monitoring processes.

### **3.6 Mutual Accountability**

In *Vietnam* there is little understanding of the mutual accountability principle in general, and from a gender perspective in particular, on the part of both donors and the government. The Women's Union were concerned that it was not possible for them to find out what impact the PRSC policy actions were having on women. Lacking both knowledge of the process and capacity, they could neither monitor the results nor challenge the policies. Some donors and NGOs also shared the concern of inadequate capacity to take advantage of the World Bank's openness in inviting them into the PRSC planning and review process.

The *Cambodia* study notes the government's responsibility for reporting on CEDAW but not that of donor governments although the comment is made that donors are lagging behind the Cambodian government in 'demonstrating a consistent commitment to gender'.

### **3.7 Summary**

Each of the four initiatives studied demonstrated the opportunities and challenges in shaping the practice of aid to the five principles of the Paris Declaration. Shared commitment to social change between those giving and receiving aid appears to be the principal driver for making aid effective in improving women's lives and securing greater gender equality. In Timor Leste, the choice of a project based aid instrument combined with high level political support provides a solid grounding for broadening and deepening the policy

### **Timor Leste: Strengthening gender responsive democratic governance**

Since 1974 women have been actively involved in the struggle for independence and promoting equal rights in Timor Leste. During the 1999-2002 United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) they lobbied for the creation of a Gender Affairs Unit (GAU), promoted a 30% per cent quota for women in decision-making positions within UNTAET, organized a women's network (REDE Feto) to promote gender equality within government and society, and created a women's caucus (Caucus Feto Iha Politica, referred to simply as 'Caucus') to support women in politics.

The current UNIFEM-led initiative aims to enable women at the local and national levels to become effective leaders in nation building and to participate actively in the electoral processes as candidates and voters and to serve as decision-makers in government and as members of pressure groups to influence policy and development programme design and implementation. More broadly, UNIFEM is currently working with the GoTL on a *High Level Gender Coordination Mechanism* (HLGCM) to ensure a coherent and coordinated gender strategy for Timor-Leste with sound coordination and communication

**Questions in the workshop about this initiative** included issues relating to

- How can the high level gender equality mechanism (HLGCM) involve all relevant stakeholders in its operations including its monitoring and evaluation?
- What could be done to strengthen and broaden government ownership in supporting women's participation in politics and decision making?
- What further support is needed for women in public life to actually make a difference and how are you going to measure their impact?
- What avenues and opportunities are available to gender equality champions in civil society, government and among the donors to join forces?
- How can there be developed a broad based constituency to enable UNIFEM to build on this initiative and exercise a leadership role amongst development partners for supporting Timor Leste to achieve its gender equality objectives?
- How will you ensure the sustainability of the positive changes coming out of this initiative?

**Agreed actions arising from the workshop** included that the membership of the HLGCM be expanded with more civil society and donors; a report back mechanism to be established between HLGCM and the Timor Leste Development Partners' Meeting to ensure that women's empowerment objectives in general and promotion of women as leaders and in governance in particular are included in the agenda of TLDPM; to ensure that the Local Governance Development Programme includes actions to promote women as effective leaders and support women's participation in local governance; to promote women's empowerment as a separate public expenditure budget line. Relating to *Managing for Results*, including women's empowerment objectives in the Annual Action Plan at the Directorate level and in the budget execution quarterly report; developing sex disaggregated data common gender targets and indicators that are clear, agreed and jointly monitored by government and donors; revisiting localized MDGs to include targets and indicators on women leadership; including women's empowerment objectives in the budget execution quarterly report and to *Mutual Accountability* promoting long-term commitment for the initiative and pooled fund from donors and government.

agenda within the framework of the Paris Principles, potentially stimulating in turn a greater and more sustained and harmonised commitment from donors than has been the case in the past.

In the case of Vietnam, workshop participants realised the benefit of frank and open discussion of the challenges facing both government and donor staff when working for gender equality and how greater alignment and harmonisation of their effort offered the potential for collectively influencing the wider policy agenda. The legal framework to support gender equality is gradually being completed, and the necessary institutional arrangements for implementing the government commitments to gender equality are now needed, including effective accountability mechanisms. Donors can provide resources to help implement mandates and to monitor progress.

Cambodia has made remarkable progress in establishing the institutional arrangements for mainstreaming gender equality objectives through the government and donor consultative machinery within the framework of the Paris Declaration but actual impact on sector policies and budget is still weak and a broader based constituency for changes needs to be developed, within government, among donors and with civil society.

Indonesia's challenge is how a commitment to gender equality at the national level can be successfully implemented in provincial and district level decision making – and what is the role of donors in this context of decentralisation where local conservative attitudes can block change? The multi-donor decentralization support facility to the Government of Indonesia may provide an opportunity to move forward. Some pilots could be established in which local governments and development partners, working in a single district plan, define gender outcomes and benchmarks to which the local government and donors are accountable.

#### **4. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS: HOW INTERNATIONAL AID PRACTICE CAN SUPPORT NATIONAL EFFORTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

As discussed in the next section, the key finding from the workshop was the *utility of the aid effectiveness framework* for assessing, strengthening and building on aid-funded initiatives for promoting gender equality.

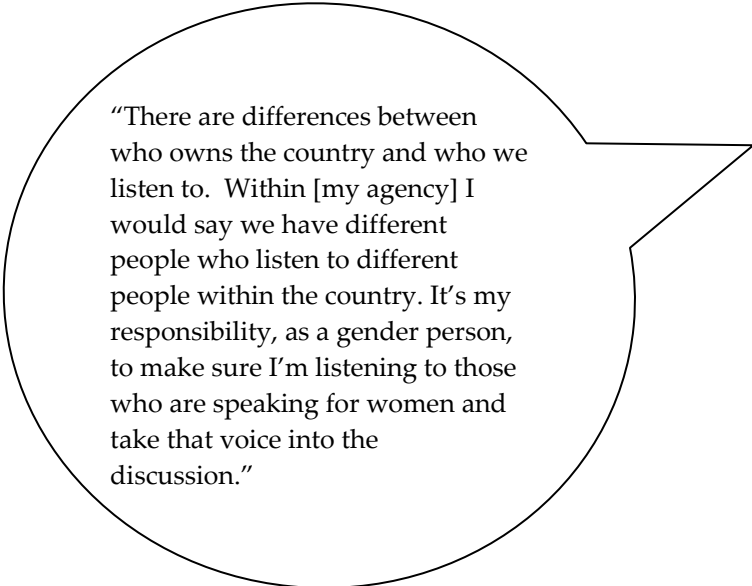
Based on their critical reflections and plans for future action in their own country initiatives workshop participants were asked to consider how the

overall approaches and practice of international aid could be more effective in promoting women's empowerment and gender. This section summarises their conclusions and captures elements of the concluding debate with a panel of donor agency representatives.

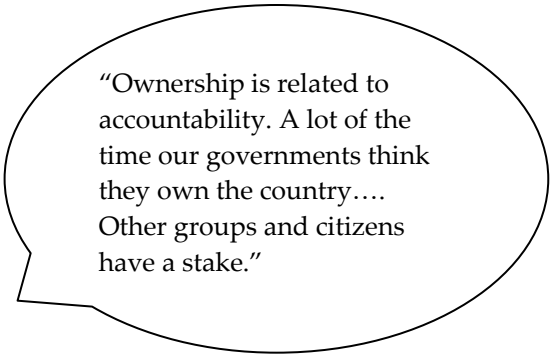
#### 4.1 Ownership:

*Recognising that there are many different points of view and making sure that gender equality advocacy gets its voice heard*

Ownership is about recognising that the policy agenda belongs to many others beyond just some sections of government service or donor agencies and this is the key to securing real world changes in women's lives.



"There are differences between who owns the country and who we listen to. Within [my agency] I would say we have different people who listen to different people within the country. It's my responsibility, as a gender person, to make sure I'm listening to those who are speaking for women and take that voice into the discussion."



"Ownership is related to accountability. A lot of the time our governments think they own the country.... Other groups and citizens have a stake."


Making national plans gender sensitive requires *wide consultation within and beyond government, including with civil society and gender equality advocates*. Donors need to encourage this process and include gender expertise in their technical assistance and policy dialogue around national development plans. However, ownership is not just at the national level. Governments need to ensure *mechanisms for realising national gender equality goals at sub-national levels* and need to work together to promote *regional co-operation* in matters important to gender equality such as migration, trafficking and environmental impact.

There are also a number of instruments associated with the aid effectiveness agenda around *assessing levels of ownership* and gender analysis has to be incorporated into these – for example the OECD/DAC survey on the Paris Declaration.

## 4.2 Alignment

### *Being context specific and assuring the necessary capacity and financial resources for backing the government's not donor gender equality priorities*

Government and donors need to agree on the gender equality priorities. Such an agreement needs to be based on the country context (rather than donor's top-down agendas) with consultation and capacity development for gender analysis and policy formulation. Donors should use the Paris Declaration to discipline themselves and encourage governments to take the lead.



"Within the Paris Declaration there is a risk in alignment that when a government's gender equality policy is not clear, donors who want to align behind government have a really good excuse for not doing anything. It's important that we assure our senior managers that when there is a gap in policy it is good to engage in constructive criticism and dialogue."

"Even if [donors] have their own gender policy, it's better to work with governments to help them to develop strategies and policies. Don't just give funds in line with your own policy which will not get implemented. If donor policy does not suit the government then it will not work."

The case studies revealed that donors are under-performing in aligning their practice with their policies on gender equality. To improve their performance donors need to be clear about what they understand by mainstreaming and appreciate that is only one among several avenues for change and that policy alignment and harmonisation may require specific initiatives for women's empowerment with its own targeted funding. Donors also need to look at themselves and change their institutional norms, rules, procedures and culture, including with respect to budgetary allocations and performance appraisals.

## 4.3 Harmonisation

### *Agreeing a common framework while using a variety of aid instruments*

Donors need a common framework and improved mechanisms for supporting gender equality in any particular country, including common targets and indicators; they should encourage the national machinery to take the lead in making this happen.

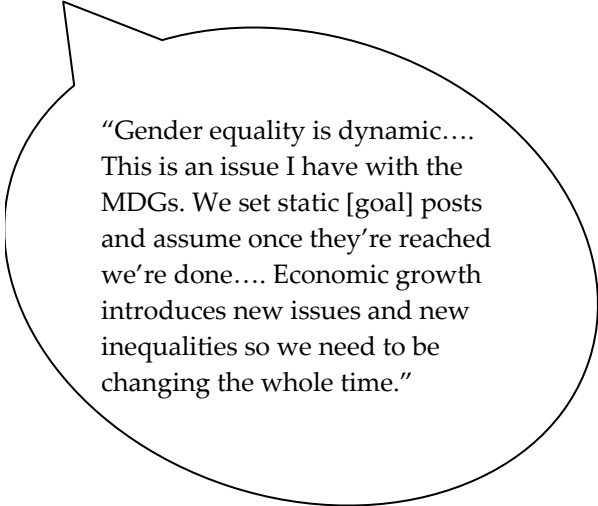
Harmonisation does not necessarily mean choosing a single aid instrument for promoting gender equality; the complexity of the challenges requires diverse and complementary responses. For example, political participation and strengthening voice often get left out and need other kinds of instrument. There are interesting examples of project support which maximise donor efficiency in the disbursement of funds and minimize transaction costs, for example the China Gender Facility which with pooled funding is a means by which NGOs and civil society can access funds.

#### **4.4. Managing for results**

*Evidence of how gender sensitive programming makes a difference while being aware that qualitative methods may be required for capturing some of the most significant results in an ever changing world*

Managing for results should include results at the intervention level and the national level as well as international comparators. Reporting on any aid funded initiative has to be gender sensitive and national policy performance and policy assessment frameworks should include national and international commitments to gender equality objectives (MDGs, CEDAW).

There is a continuing requirement for evidence that gender sensitive programming really delivers more impact for men and women, as well as evidence of linkages between gender equality and poverty reduction with more sector-specific examples of concrete actions that have delivered results on aid effectiveness and gender. At the same time, managing for results must promote interventions that require longer term financial and technical support.



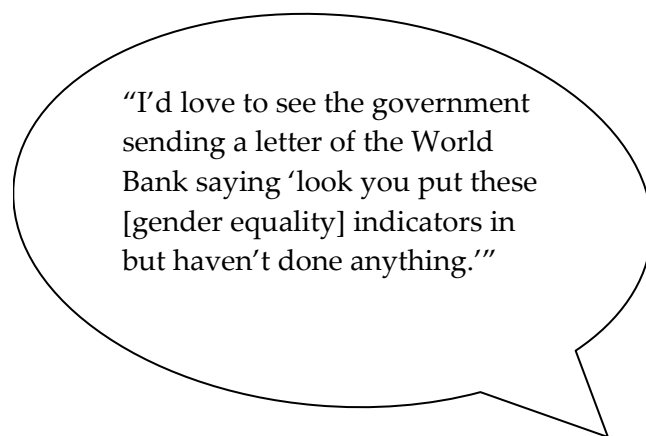
“Gender equality is dynamic.... This is an issue I have with the MDGs. We set static [goal] posts and assume once they’re reached we’re done.... Economic growth introduces new issues and new inequalities so we need to be changing the whole time.”

#### **4.5 Mutual accountability**

*Joint monitoring and peer reviews against pre-established frameworks, rewarding success*

Ratification of CEDAW provides a ready made mutual accountability mechanism for both donor and recipient governments and the various technical working groups and other government-donor co-ordination mechanisms offer excellent opportunities for peer reviews of progress on gender equality at sector, local and donor levels with champions identified and rewarded.

At the same time mutual accountability, as a concept, has to move from a general statement to accountability to specific identifiable groups, bearing in mind that different sets of women may have varying and even conflicting interests, as for example between elites and those living in poverty.



#### 4.6 Summary

Both the case studies and the ideas for improving aid effectiveness for gender equality that emerged from looking at these demonstrate the necessity not only for governments to take a leadership role in changing patterns of gender relations that have an adverse effect on women's lives but also for enhanced donor performance in support of that leadership. This section has identified the main conclusions emerging from the workshop as to how donors could do this. The next and final section places these conclusions within a wider discussion of how the Paris agenda can be used creatively as a pathway of women's empowerment and for greater gender equality.

### 5. THE PARIS PRINCIPLES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

International aid has a chequered history of success in supporting long term processes of social change. Concerning women's empowerment and gender equality, there is a view that more was achieved in the last decade than the present one. Yet it is a policy agenda that can allow the implementation of Paris Declaration a significant opportunity to show how the five principles can be effective in making real and positive changes to people's lives.

*We recently looked at the work we do on gender equality, and it showed us that while we'd had some successes, the truth is that we hadn't fully put gender equality into the heart of DFID's work. We're not alone in this. Our colleagues in Norway, and in the World Bank and at the UN came to the same conclusions"*

Hilary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development, March 8th 2007

## 5.1 How supporting gender equality objectives can strengthen the implementation of the Paris principles

That the Paris Declaration is a potentially useful framework for making aid work better for women contradicts the view held widely in the international women's movement and in some donor circles that the Paris Declaration has been unhelpful in this regard. What, however, is at issue appears not to be the principles as such but the manner in which they are implemented and the other changes in international aid practice that have tended to be associated with the Paris agenda – such as reductions in staff capacity that are associated with programmatic spending or the diversion of such capacity to developing the management systems for alignment and harmonisation.

During the course of the country studies, one donor staff member lamented that she had spent two years working on procurement systems; she was frustrated because she saw little connection between this and making a difference to the lives of real people. Yet, in different shapes and forms, putting people at the centre of the international aid agenda has always been a challenge in which the rhetoric of the glossy booklets has been contradicted by bureaucratic incentives. Organisations tend to forget that effective aid – for example in achieving MDG 5 - means supporting locally owned processes of change and prioritising the appropriate human and financial resources to make that happen.

It is not the Paris Declaration that is at fault but some of the characteristics of the organisations responsible for implementing it. Harmonisation and alignment do not necessarily mean the deployment of certain aid modalities. Nevertheless, *efficiency* arguments favour sector wide programmatic support rather than small targeted interventions –e.g. with civil society - that may have greater *impact* for social change. Diversity of approaches and voices in policy debates may be minimised for the same reason – and those with less power may be excluded. Results and therefore strategies to achieve these are set by those with a seat at the table and even successful outcomes for gender equality may be disregarded and not built upon should they not fit the priorities of those with decision-making power to judge what a result is.

At the same time the gender equality agenda offers aid organisations significant opportunities to make more creative use of the Paris Declaration. The Indonesia team working on Making Pregnancy Safer showed how by adopting a holistic gender equality approach they are able to think outside the sector box, explore models of partnership across government and with civil society and emphasise and monitor results as judged by the end users of aid.

## 5.2 Constructing partnerships

The Paris Declaration is a welcome structural shift in power relations between aid giving and aid receiving governments with potential for genuine partnership as expressed through the principles of *ownership / alignment/ mutual accountability*. At the same time donors must take great care that debates – locally, nationally and regionally - on what needs to be changed to improve people’s lives, and how to bring such changes about are not discouraged through a misapplication of *harmonisation / results based management*.

While there are obvious arguments for better co-ordination and more efficient use of resources, a balance has to be struck between this and encouraging diverse points of view for solving complex problems. Both consensus and contestation are equally drivers of pro-poor change and if the former dominates, there may be a tendency for questions about ownership, alignment, harmonisation and results to look only for a single diagnosis and solution, thus shutting down the possibilities of creative dialogue and the collaborative challenging of implicit assumptions about how the world works that closes down innovation and constrains imagination. In situations of unequal power relations or inequality of access to information, this risk is particularly high. For this reason the Bangkok workshop was explicitly designed as a process for strengthening partnerships through critical, strategic and constructive reflection; through learning from one’s own and other’s experience while recognising that what works in one context might not apply to another; and through making sure everyone has time to understand the issue and that their voice is heard.

Such a process means that those already better informed about international aid practice (donor staff who work full time on the issue as compared with government and civil society representatives whose focus of effort is on making change happen in their own country) - or for whom the language of the workshop is their mother tongue - must be patient and deliberately seek to include others in the discussion. The rewards are worth the time spent. One workshop participant remarked that if government-donor consultation meetings they attended were designed in the manner of this workshop there would be much greater potential for gender equality issues to be understood and addressed in the policy dialogue.

In brief, the process has to be got right - and resources of people and time have to be devoted to the process – if the Paris Declaration is to live up to its potential for making aid better support partnerships for social change.

**ANNEX A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE BANGKOK WORKSHOP  
PARTICIPANTS LIST ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND GENDER  
EQUALITY WORKSHOP, IN BANGKOK FROM 2 – 3 APRIL 2007**

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**REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL**

1. Mr Marshall Elliott, Head of DFIDSEA, DFID Bangkok (Monday morning)
2. Mr Ian Porter, Country Director, World Bank, Bangkok (Monday morning)
3. Mr Tom Beloe, Senior Social Development Adviser, DFID Bangkok
4. Ms Ryratana Rangsitpol, National Programme Officer, UNIFEM
5. Ms Jean D’Cunha, Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM
6. Ms Sally Moyle, Gender Adviser, AusAid, Australia
7. Ms Gillie Brown, Senior Social Development Adviser, World Bank, Bangkok
8. Ms Helene Carlsson Rex, World Bank
9. Ms Ines Smyth, Gender Adviser, ADB, Philippines
10. Ms Sonomi Tanaka, Senior Social Development Specialist, ADB, Philippines
11. Mrs Chanida Chanyatat Bamford, Deputy Director, Focus on the Global South

**CAMBODIA**

1. HE Mrs Keth Sam Ath, General Director, MoWA
2. Ms Nhean Sochetra, Director, MoWA
3. Ms Kroesna Kang, MAFF
4. Ms Mia Hyun, Poverty Specialist, World Bank
5. Ms Heng Sokun, CDC
6. Ms Ky Nimol, NGO Forum
7. Ms Uch Sarom, Project Management Adviser, MoWA
8. Ms Anna Collins-Falk, Senior Policy Adviser, MoWA, UNDP/UNFPA
9. Ms Helen Appleton, Social Development Adviser, DFID
10. Ms Samvada Kheng, Gender Advisor, Cambodia Resident Mission, ADB

## INDONESIA

1. Ms Jannette O'Neil, Technical Advisor MPS, GTZ
2. Dr Gertrud Schmidt-Ehry, Principal Advisor SISKES PLUS & HRD, GTZ
3. Ms Desti Murdijana, Chairwomen of PIKUL, NGO Forum
4. Dr Nardho Gunawan, Gender Mainstream Team in the Health Sector, Civil Society
5. Dr Hadiat, MA. Vice Director for Public Health, directorate of Health and Nutrition, Bappenas, Central Government
6. Ms Titien Supartini Djahari, Assistant Deputy for Gender Mainstream, State Ministry for Women Empowerment, Central Government
7. Ms Ferienawati A.R. SKM, Head Section for Family Planning Guidance & Evaluation, Dit. Maternal Health, DG Public Health, Ministry of Health, Central Government
8. Dr Reny Risjanty Bunyamin, Provincial Health Office, NTB in charge of Global Fund for HIV/STI

## TIMOR LESTE

1. Ms Milena Pires, Programme Coordinator, UNIFEM
2. Ms Terezinha Cardoso, Director, Caucus
3. Ms Maria de Fatima Dias Ximenes, President of Boad, Rede Feto
4. Ms Maria Domingas Femandes, Commissioner, National Electoral Commission
5. Mr Florindo Pereira, Director, National Institute for National Administration (NIAP)
6. Mr Arcangelo Leite, Director, National Directorate for State Administration (DNAT)
7. Ms Maria Jose Sanches, Director, Office of Promotion of Equality
8. Mr Charles Lathrop, Head of Mission, Irish Aid
9. Ms Robin Scott Charlton, Counsellor D.C., AusAid, Australian Embassy, Dili

## **VIETNAM**

1. Ms Than Thi Thien Huong, Social Development Adviser, DFID
2. Mr Ho Minh Chien, Director General of Labour Culture, Social Affairs Dept
3. Ms Tran Thi Mai Huong, Permanent Secretary, National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam
4. Mr Ha Binh Bon, Vice Director, Legal Affairs Department
5. Ms Elena Villalobos, Representative Peace & Development in Vietnam
6. Mrs Carrie Turk, Senior Poverty Specialist, World Bank
7. Mr Ger Steenbergen, First Secretary, Health and Gender, The Royal Netherlands Embassy
8. Mrs Doan Hoai Anh, Manager of World Bank Division, State Bank of Vietnam
9. Mr Phan Van Quyet, Translator

## **CONSULTANTS**

1. Ms Rosalind Eyben, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex
2. Ms Dipa Bagai, Bangkok
3. Ms Sofi Ospina, Australia
4. Ms Cheryl Urashima, Cambodia

## **ANNEX B THE CASE STUDIES**

1. Cambodia
2. Indonesia
3. Timor-Leste
4. Vietnam

## *Working Papers on Gender and Aid Effectiveness in Southeast Asia*

### **Mechanisms to Promote and Support the Integration of Gender into Mainstream Policies and Programmes to Achieve Gender Equality Objectives in Cambodia**

Assessment of a Royal Government of Cambodia-led initiative<sup>1</sup>

Cheryl Urashima, March 2007

#### **THE INITIATIVE**

Establishment of national mechanisms to promote and support the integration of gender into mainstream policies and programs:

- 1) A *Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G)* within the framework of the Government-Donor Consultative Committee (GDCC).
- 2) *Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAG)* in all government institutions. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) GMAG is presented as an example.

There are three aspects of gender and aid effectiveness which this initiative seeks to address:

- 1) Enhanced donor coordination and aid effectiveness in integrating gender into sectoral policies, programmes, and institutions under the leadership of the relevant government institutions.
- 2) Enhanced donor coordination and aid effectiveness in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming initiatives under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- 3) Increased engagement with civil society in the formulation and monitoring of gender-responsive national and sectoral strategies and programmes.

This assessment is structured around the five principles of the Paris Declaration. The sectoral example (Annex 1) seeks to illustrate to what extent working practice demonstrates a commitment to the different principles of the Paris Declaration.

#### **I. THE CONTEXT: AID MANAGEMENT IN CAMBODIA<sup>2</sup>**

Cambodia is a country of nearly 14 million people with an average annual income of USD 400 per person (GDP per capita, 2005). 35% of Cambodians live below the poverty line and rapidly increasing income disparities are a growing concern. Cambodia remains heavily dependent on development assistance at approximately USD 600 million per year (12 percent of GDP in 2004).

The Royal Government and its major development partners confirmed their commitment to the Paris Declaration principles in March 2006 and adopted a Harmonization, Alignment and Results Action Plan (H-A-R) which identifies priority activities for increasing aid effectiveness, and joint monitoring indicators (JMIs) and targets which are reviewed in annual Consultative Group (CG) meetings.

**Ownership:** *Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions*

Although still relatively weak, the government is taking an increased lead in the development of policies, processes and strategies and co-ordinating development actions: The National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010 (NSDP) is the national strategy; the CG mechanism is being replaced with the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF) chaired by the government; and the Government-Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) and 18 Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are government-led. Nevertheless, key challenges remain in aligning the annual budget, Public Investment Program (PIP) and Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) with the medium-term strategic priorities reflected in the NSDP.

**Alignment:** *Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures*

Systems for public financial management and procurement remain weak, however a long-term Public Financial Management (PFM) Reform Programme is underway which is expected to address fiduciary risks and support effective budget execution. Given the condition of existing systems, use of the country's financial management systems is low, at 10% of aid.

It will take some time to fully align donor support with the NSDP. The NSDP was only approved in May 2006 and many donor projects were already on-going or in the pipeline. Full alignment will need to take place within

<sup>1</sup> This is a condensed version of a paper prepared for the "Workshop on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness", Bangkok, 2-3 April 2007. This condensed version was prepared for analysis and discussion during the workshop.

<sup>2</sup> This section is based primarily on the Cambodia chapter of the OECD-DAC 2006 Baseline Survey on the Paris Declaration, March 2007 (draft).

the context of detailed sectoral strategies and plans as the NSDP provides only a broad framework of priorities. Sectoral plans have been/are being developed.

While the need for substantial capacity building is recognized by both government and donors, only 36% of technical assistance was fully embedded within the national strategy, and parallel implementation structures remain common. A significant proportion of well-aligned donor assistance is disbursed to local governments and NGOs but is more difficult to monitor against national priorities; 79% of aid was recorded on budget by the government and there was a 31% gap between scheduled and disbursed aid in 2005.

***Harmonisation:*** *Donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective*

24% of aid is provided to Cambodia in programmatic form and this is primarily in the form of sectoral support focused on education, health, decentralisation, PFM and private-sector development. 60% of country analyses has been coordinated, but only 26% of donor missions. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID and the UN engaged in a joint strategy process for their current country strategies (48 percent of aid in 2005). Other donors were not part of this dialogue, although all but China engage in harmonisation efforts at a sectoral level. The sectoral TWGs provide key mechanism for harmonising and aligning sectoral and cross-cutting activities.

***Managing for Results:*** *Managing resources and improving decision-making for results*

For the most part, planning is still being done on a project-by-project basis. Only the strategic plan for basic education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports can be considered a fully operationalized sector-wide, results-oriented plan.

***Mutual Accountability:*** *Donors and partners are accountable for development results*

The key mechanisms for mutual accountability are the JMIs and the H-A-R Action Plans. The JMIs focus on key actions which are assessed annually. In addition, the TWGs have their own plans of action with additional indicators which are reviewed in TWG meetings. Mechanisms are being put into place to systematically monitor implementation of the NSDP and the first NSDP Annual Progress Report (APR) is currently being finalized.

## **II. ASSESSMENT OF THE INITIATIVE**

### ***Background***

Although showing some signs of improvement, gender inequalities continue to persist in Cambodia reflecting deeply embedded cultural norms and traditions. This is reflected in unequal access to education and health services; unequal access to and control of assets and opportunities for income generation; fear of rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence; and unequal opportunities to influence decision making.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) was elevated to full ministry status in 1998. In 2001, the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) was established. CNCW brings together Secretaries of State from 12 line ministries and civil society representatives under the leadership of the Minister of Women's Affairs to coordinate and provide consultation to the government on advancing the status of women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

In 2004, a TWG on Gender (TWG-G) was established to promote a more streamlined approach to both sector-level planning and implementation. The TWG-G is chaired by the Minister of Women's Affairs with UNDP and JICA as co-donor facilitators. Its ToRs (Annex 1) are aimed at building overall government *ownership* of the responsibility for addressing gender disparities; *aligning* mechanisms, strategies and capacity building to support the mainstreaming of gender in national and sector policies and programmes; *harmonizing* resource allocations to support gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive action; and, providing a framework for *managing for results* and ensuring *mutual accountability* through the identification of indicators and targets.

In 2005, with the encouragement and support of the TWG-G, Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) began to be established in line ministries. The GMAGs provide a mechanism for developing and monitoring gender mainstreaming strategies and plans, and integrating gender-responsive measures into sectoral policies and programmes. Prior to the creation of GMAGs, advocacy for gender-responsive action within line ministries had been limited to two gender focal points in each of ten line ministries. By March 2007, GMAGs had been established in 21 of 26 line ministries plus the Council of Ministers and the State Secretariat for Civil Service, and Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAGPs) have been prepared and adopted by 9 ministries. The TWG/TWG-G/Line Ministry/GMAG structure is clearly complex (see Annex 1) as it attempts to effectively influence the various levels of policy formulation.

### ***Ownership***

The desire to build stronger national ownership for achieving gender equality objectives very much influenced the design of the TWG-G and GMAGs. The TWG-G is embedded in national mechanisms to enhance donor coordination and alignment with government policies and strategies. The creation of GMAGs responded to a

need voiced by gender focal points in line ministries for stronger support from line ministry senior management and technical support from MoWA.

National policies and international commitments provide a strong basis for integrating gender into policies and programmes. This includes the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)*, and the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* – which were greatly expanded to include additional gender-responsive indicators and targets. The Government’s NSDP identifies factoring “poverty reduction and gender concerns in all activities” as the first of nine overarching aspects which should govern all other actions to be pursued during 2006-2010. Cambodia’s major donors have gender policies which in various forms require that gender be taken into consideration in strategy and programme formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Although the gender policy framework is strong, structural inequalities and attitudes which support and perpetuate gender inequality persist and are mutually reinforcing. MoWA and the TWG-G are focusing their efforts on six areas: 1) gender mainstreaming; 2) women in decision making; 3) women’s economic empowerment; 4) women and girl’s education; 5) women’s health, including HIV/AIDS; 6) legal protection, particularly related to violence against women.

The government has limited capacity to conduct gender analysis, and there are very few Cambodian gender specialists. For the most part, the GMAPs developed to date focus on increasing gender awareness in their ministry and strengthening the capacity of women to assume higher level positions. The Minister of Women’s Affairs noted that gender-responsive action in relation to the technical aspects of line ministry mandates remain weak and recognizes the need for further assistance on sector-specific gender analysis.

*A Fair Share for Women: Cambodia Gender Assessment (CGA)* published in 2004 was a joint effort of donors in collaboration with MoWA. Although initiated to respond to donor requirements for a gender assessment and written by a team of international consultants, it is very much owned by MoWA and provided valuable input into efforts to integrate gender into the NSDP.

Preparation of a new CGA is part of the TWG-G action plan for 2007 and MoWA is taking the lead in bringing together donors interested in providing technical and/or financial support. Issues which remain to be addressed are the weak capacity of MoWA’s Department for Gender Equality to lead and support this process, particularly in light of an understaffed Policy Unit; the capacity of GMAGs and civil society to contribute to the preparation of the CGA; and the extent to which this process might be used as an opportunity to strengthen Cambodian capacity to undertake gender analysis.

UNDP support to line ministries in the preparation of the NSDP was instrumental in achieving the JMI on mainstreaming gender into the NSDP. When the TWG-G recommended that government institutions establish GMAGs in 2005, nearly all line ministries responded and guidance and support was provided to six GMAGs in developing GMAPs. Assistance is being provided to an additional four GMAGs in 2007. Most of this work is being carried out by UNDP National Consultants as the current staff of the recently created Department for Gender Equality are relatively young and inexperienced and lack the status and the technical expertise in sectoral areas needed to provide effective assistance to line ministry GMAGs.

While donor agencies are obligated by their own gender policies to mainstream gender they are erratic in their integration of gender into mainstream projects and programmes and in sensitizing their own staff. UNDP is providing gender training for its staff and developing a gender mainstreaming strategy for the agency. A recent DFID gender audit found that while gender has been well integrated into several of DFID’s projects, mainstreaming of gender is inconsistent and there is a need for training in gender concepts and tools, and better integration of gender into policy development and project cycle management.

### ***Alignment***

The development of sectoral strategies and plans presents both an opportunity and a major challenge in ensuring that adequate gender analysis is carried out in the strategy formulation process and the sectoral strategies and plans are gender-responsive. The TWG-G, is fully integrated into the government’s approach to promoting government-donor harmonization and alignment but due to limited MoWA capacity, TWG-G representation in other TWGs is limited (although MoWA participation in the TWG Decentralisation and Deconcentration has enabled advocacy on mainstreaming gender in the new law on decentralisation).

The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) has recently issued guidelines on the role and functioning of the TWGs which recommends that TWG membership should include focal points for gender mainstreaming in each ministry or agency.

#### *Donors align with partners' strategies*

At the national level, donors are increasingly aligning their objectives on gender equality within the framework of MoWA's strategic plan, which was not necessarily the case in the past. Approaches to working within the framework of the TWG-G, GMAGs and GMAPs are becoming increasingly more integrated.

Effective harmonization and alignment remains difficult with global or regional initiatives. As these are designed within global or regional frameworks they do not necessarily respond to the priorities of national or sectoral strategies. In addition, the donors involved are unlikely to be represented in the relevant TWG.

#### *Donors use strengthened country systems*

Widely varying administrative procedures amongst donors are a significant impediment to a harmonized approach to pursuing gender equality objectives. Although donors may work together on an activity, they need to ensure compliance with each of their own procurement, contracting and reporting procedures. A joint UN Agency activity supporting training for women candidates in the commune council elections was cited as an example of the administrative difficulties encountered in doing joint programming with a variety of procedures.

#### *Partner countries strengthen development capacity with support from donors*

MoWA, CNCW, the TWG-G and the GMAGs are the government's mechanisms for promoting gender equality. MoWA and CNCW receive their core funding from the government. Over the past two years, MoWA was one of six ministries to be invited to apply for Priority Action Program (PAP) funds indicating a gradual shift towards a fully operational Medium-term Expenditure Framework and results-based programming. The Gender Policy Unit was designated a Priority Mission Group (PMG) and thus eligible for salary supplements from the national budget. Other funds for program activities and technical assistance are provided by donors. The TWG-G secretariat based in the MoWA Department for Gender Equality is being supported by UNDP, JICA and UNFPA. The Department's technical assistance to the GMAGs being is supported by UNDP and UNFPA.

#### *Strengthen public financial management capacity*

It is recognized that the shift to results-based programming and budgeting under the PFM Reform Programme provides an ideal context for introducing gender-responsive budgeting principles. More immediately, the Minister of Women's Affairs suggested that line ministries should consider applying to the Ministry of Economy and Finance for PAP funds to support the activities of the GMAGs and/or applying to the Council for Administrative Reform to establish the GMAG as a PMG.

#### **Harmonisation**

Within the context of the TWG-G and GMAGs, there are two aspects to the Paris Declaration principle of harmonization: 1) harmonization of donor assistance to MoWA on mainstreaming gender, and 2) harmonization of donor assistance in responding to gender concerns within sectors.

CDC has the official government mandate of aid coordination, and chairs the TWG on Partnership and Harmonization, with donor co-facilitators DFID and UNDP. CDC has recently appointed a gender focal point responsible for liaising with the TWG-G. The Minister of Women's Affairs is the government champion of harmonisation related to gender equality, supported primarily by UNDP/PGE in these efforts.

The establishment of the TWG-G and GMAGs provided mechanisms for pursuing increased harmonisation around gender equality objectives. Interviewees stated that additional mechanisms are needed, however, to strengthen the harmonisation of approaches to mainstreaming gender at the sectoral level within the framework of sectoral strategies and plans. Varying approaches were suggested including GMAG representation in sectoral TWGs; donor champions for gender on sectoral TWGs; and/or sub-working groups on gender in TWGs. Concerns were expressed about the capacity of the GMAGs to engage with the TWGs as these are generally comprised of senior representatives from government and donor agencies.

#### *Complementarity: more effective division of labour*

UNDP and JICA as donor co-facilitators of the TWG-G have taken the lead on oversight of gender equality objectives. Donor assistance within MoWA has become increasingly harmonized with more frequent co-sponsoring of activities, particularly between UN agencies, and stronger delineation of responsibility for MoWA's sectoral initiatives amongst other donors (e.g., ADB for women's economic empowerment, GTZ/CIM for legal rights and legal protection, particularly related to domestic violence; IOM for counter-trafficking).

While the GMAGs provide the government mechanism for leading gender equality initiatives within line ministries, there are fewer donors taking the lead on gender at the sectoral level – although most major donors have included gender components in their sectoral projects.

#### *Incentives for collaborative behaviour*

For the most part, implementation of gender plans is project-driven, and salary supplements from donor-funded projects greatly overshadow official salaries, and the endemic system of political patronage undermines a shift

to merit-based recruitment and appraisal processes. There are thus limited incentives for collaboration, and few government or donor officials below senior levels are aware of the Paris Declaration or the commitments made by their governments to the Cambodia Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

### ***Managing for Development Results***

The global indicators for MDG 3 (Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women) were greatly expanded to focus increased attention on gender concerns which are particularly important in Cambodia including persistent gender disparities in literacy and education, poor access to maternal health services, increasing vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS, violence against women, under-representation of women in decision-making, and gender disparities in employment. The additional indicators reflected the priorities of MoWA's strategic plan.

The NSDP's 43 macro goals and critical indicators include three indicators related to gender equity: 1) mainstream gender in all spheres: all ministries have GMAPs by 2010, GMAPs are implemented; 2) increase female share of waged employment in all sectors to parity in agriculture and industry by 2010 and to 37 percent in services by 2010; and, 3) increase awareness of domestic violence as a crime to 50 percent by 2010. An additional six macro goals related to health and education are gender-sensitive.

The JMIs for 2005 and 2006 included gender-related indicators focused on gender mainstreaming (*i.e.*, mainstreaming gender into the NSDP and integrating gender into the Organic Law on Decentralization and Deconcentration) and legal protection (*i.e.*, domestic violence and trafficking).

Reporting on gender impacts is integrated into the overall reporting process on the NSDP, but implementation is weak: the initial draft of the NSDP APR had very little gender-related data, although MoWA's review of the original line ministry submissions showed that useful information was available. Recommendations were made for putting the gender-related information into the consolidated report.

Although the Ministry of Women's Affairs has a strategic plan, there are not yet any mechanisms in place for systematically monitoring the implementation of this plan and implementation remains mostly project-driven. MoWA and CNCW prepare annual reports which are submitted to the government and reviewed in annual meetings with the Prime Minister. The TWG-G prepares an annual plan which is reported on in GDCC meetings. Reporting on the development and implementation of GMAPs is done through quarterly meetings of all GMAGs, but the process is weak. CNCW is responsible for reporting on CEDAW and Cambodia's Initial, Second and Third Reports were produced in one volume in 2005 and defended in early 2006.

At the sectoral level, interviewees agreed that desired gender impacts should be integrated into monitoring mechanisms for gender-responsive sectoral strategies. Along with designing robust strategies and indicators, a further challenge is to broaden civil society and women's participation in monitoring national and sectoral plans.

The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), with technical assistance from UNDP, is working with MoWA's Department of Planning and Statistics to track gender in official development assistance. There is, however, some overlap between CDC's work with the Department of Planning and Statistics and related efforts of the Department for Gender Equality with UNDP/PGE support.

Attribution to the relatively new TWG-G and GMAGs mechanisms is difficult but two of the three gender-related JMIs for 2005 were achieved: mainstreaming gender in the NSDP and adoption of a law on domestic violence. The JMIs for 2006 were not achieved, primarily due to the fact that the required actions, while proposed by the TWG-G and agreed to by the GDCC, required action by other line ministries (*e.g.*, Ministry of Justice on strengthening legislation on trafficking in persons). It was noted that this is the main problem with moving forward on any gender issue.

### ***Mutual Accountability***

The government as a whole has assumed responsibility for accounting for progress on gender by integrating gender goals and indicators into national policy documents, and donors are responsible for ensuring that their support contributes to the achievement of the goals set out in the NSDP, including gender-related goals.

Line ministries are assuming responsibility for accounting for progress on gender as each of the GMAPs are approved by the relevant Minister. As gender-responsive sector-wide strategies and plans are developed, accountability for gender equality objectives should lie with the government institutions, donors and civil society organizations involved in implementing and monitoring the sectoral strategies and plans. In some cases, donors working in a particular ministry are providing financial and technical assistance to the GMAG. There is a recognized need for stronger feedback from monitoring and evaluation into policy formulation and implementation which will require strong links with the Ministry of Planning and National Institute of Statistics to ensure a more comprehensive collection of sex-disaggregated data.

Interviewees noted that little attention has been paid to building gender awareness amongst parliamentarians.

### **III. SECTORAL EXAMPLE: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES (MAFF)**

#### ***Ownership***

MAFF's gender policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming in the agriculture sector (the equivalent of a GMAP) was adopted in 2005 is recognized in the Minister's forward to this document as "a very important institutional framework for all stakeholders involved in the agriculture sector to align with". This policy and strategy has four objectives: 1) increase the gender awareness of ministry staff in the MAFF at every level of the agriculture sector; 2) integration of gender analysis and sex disaggregated targets and data into the planning of the agriculture sector; 3) increase the authoritative possibilities and number of women that have the adequate attributes necessary for leadership positions in the MAFF; and, 4) increase the ability of rural women to access and manage resources and agricultural services.

The MAFF GMAP makes a commitment to mainstreaming gender. Staff from six departments plus a representative from the MAFF women's association spend 40% of their time in a Gender Unit. This unit screens all programmes and projects to ensure that social development and gender equality issues are considered and provides recommendations. A checklist for screening projects is part of the gender policy document.

Support from senior management has been important to implementation of the GMAP. The Minister and other senior officials have voiced strong support for the gender policy and strategy. MAFF has prepared an Agriculture Sector Strategic Development Plan for 2006-2010. While there is no discussion of gender-related concerns in the situational analysis or discussion of progress to-date, the main objectives of the gender policy have been incorporated into the section on institutional framework. Also included in the ASDP are specific targets for involvement of women in capacity building.

#### ***Alignment***

The Gender Unit is asked to comment on new projects and places particular emphasis on ensuring that sex-disaggregated indicators are included in monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

#### ***Harmonisation***

Each of the projects has their own policies and goals related to gender. No attempt has yet been made to harmonise these. The gender unit does receive copies of all project reports and comments on these, particularly related to inclusion of sex-disaggregated statistics.

#### ***Managing for Development Results***

Reports are prepared annually and integrated into MAFF's annual report to the government. The Gender Unit's report is not presented within the framework of the MAFF gender strategy making it difficult to track progress towards the specific targets. However, progress was made in 2006, the first year of implementation in relation to gender training provided to new and existing MAFF staff; integration of gender into the curriculum of agricultural education institutions; dissemination of the gender policy; sex-disaggregated reporting; allocation of resources for the gender unit; and, an increase in the number of women in management positions<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Mutual Accountability***

The gender unit is responsible for compiling information on progress on implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy including its own activities, as well as the gender-related activities and sex-disaggregated reporting from line departments and donor-supported projects and programmes. This information is integrated into MAFF's annual report to the government within the framework of the NSDP. Civil society would be involved to the extent that they are engaged in activities with MAFF, primarily through donor-supported projects.

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<sup>3</sup> Department directors and deputy directors, office chiefs and vice chiefs, and provincial department directors and deputy directors.

### **III. RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness presents many *risks and opportunities for gender equality advocates and practitioners*. Within the context of the mechanisms for mainstreaming gender that are being put into place in Cambodia, the following questions should be taken into consideration.

**Ownership:** *Building ownership of gender equality objectives within government institutions*

*Risks*

- With the formation of GMAGs there is a risk that they will be assumed to have responsibility for ‘taking care of women’s issues’ within a ministry and put into a box – and gender concerns ignored by the rest of the ministry. How can this be avoided?
- As national ownership of the TWG-G, GMAGs and GMAPs has been built within the framework of government policy and mechanisms, how do gender advocates and practitioners respond to gender concerns which have not been well address in government plans (e.g., husband-to-wife transmission of HIV, affirmative action in the recruitment, promotion and training of civil servants)?

*Opportunities*

- How could the links between the GMAGs and sectoral projects be strengthened?
- How could the links between the GMAGs and sectoral strategy development processes be strengthened?
- Given its currently weak level of technical expertise in sectoral areas, how can the capacity of MoWA to lead gender mainstreaming efforts be strengthened? Or, should MoWA focus on mobilizing technical assistance and capacity building support for line ministries?

**Alignment:** *Facilitating alignment of approaches to mainstreaming gender within sectors*

*Opportunities*

- What other types of mechanisms/support are needed to ensure that gender concerns and GMAPs are integrated into sectoral strategies?
- In the absence of sectoral strategies, what mechanisms can be put into place to better align donor approaches to mainstreaming gender in donor projects with the GMAP? How can gender-responsive budgeting principles be better integrated into individual donor projects?

**Harmonization:** *Facilitating harmonization of donor support for gender mainstreaming within sectors*

*Opportunities*

- How could MoWA strengthen the harmonization of donor support for gender mainstreaming both within MoWA and at the sectoral level?
- How can increased harmonisation be promoted on gender analysis (required by all major donors in project formulation processes) at the sectoral level?
- How can technical cooperation/capacity building support of MoWA gender mainstreaming projects and gender mainstreaming initiatives within sectoral projects of line ministries be better harmonised?
- How can you best identify and nurture gender ‘champions’ within sectors (government/donor/civil society)?

**Managing for results:** *Integrating cross-cutting issues into results frameworks*

- What types of indicators have the greatest effect in advancing achievement of gender equality objectives (e.g., impact indicators, intermediate results indicators, process indicators, output indicators, participation indicators)?

**Mutual accountability:** *Nurturing mutual accountability for the integration of gender-responsive action.*

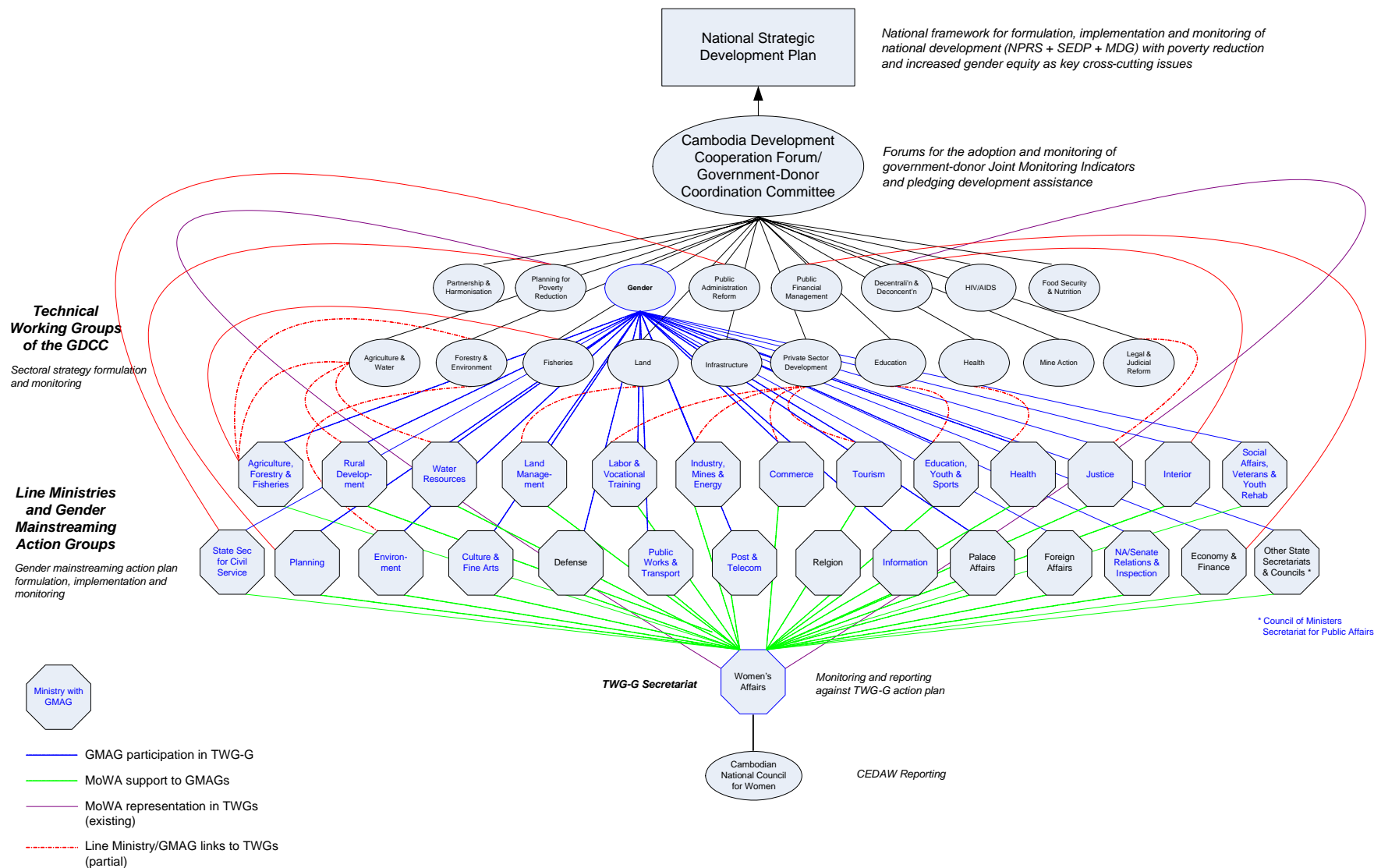
*Opportunities*

- In the context of a nascent women’s movement, how can civil society be enabled to participate in and contribute more broadly to the formulation and achievement of gender equality objectives?

**Implications for other cross-cutting issues**

- What to do with issues/priorities which are *not* included in government plans (e.g., donor support for civil society initiatives)?
- How can the Paris Declaration and the aid effectiveness agenda more broadly be strengthened to address cross-cutting issues, including the promotion of gender equality?

**Diagram of relationships involving the Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G) and Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs)**



**Box 1****Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G)****Terms of Reference**

1. To coordinate and advocate for the development and implementation of mechanisms and strategies to mainstream gender in all relevant national and sectoral strategies and programs, together with budget allocations.
2. To establish benchmarks, develop associated indicators and targets, and monitor progress in implementing gender-responsive strategies and achieving targets.
3. To build commitment to gender targets and indicators in other TWGs, and monitor progress in implementing gender-responsive strategies and achieving targets.
4. To identify gaps in provision and actions to address gender disparities and increase government and donor commitment and a capacity to address these issues in all sectors.
5. To identify gaps in knowledge and ensure a coordinated response in filling analytical gaps in understanding of the gender situation.
6. To identify and promote best practices for gender mainstreaming.
7. To coordinate and harmonize resource allocation and promote its efficient use through prioritization and reducing duplication.

**Box 2****Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAG) in Line Ministries****1. ToR of GMAGs:**

- Conduct a review of sectoral activities and analyze their differential impacts on men and women
- Review the current situation of female staff in their Ministry and make recommendations to promote women into decision making positions
- Draft policies/strategies/action plan on gender mainstreaming for their Ministry
- Send a representative to sectoral TWGs to advocate for a gender perspective and to be a member of the TWG-G
- Review and comment on new programs/projects in their Ministry from a gender perspective
- Promote awareness and advocate for gender responsive activities in their Ministry
- Mobilize resources for gender mainstreaming including financial support

**2. Membership of GMAGs:**

Leader: Secretary of State (ideally the official assigned as a member of CNCW)

Deputy: Director General/Deputy Director General

Member: One person each from all departments with technical expertise in their areas of responsibility

*As a group*, the GMAG should have:

- A balance of male and female members
- Knowledgeable, capable and expertise in the technical aspects of the public services provided by the Ministry (should focus on core functions and services within the mandate of the Ministry which are particularly important to women)
- Commitment to increasing gender equity in the Ministry's policies, programs, operations and management
- Understanding of basic gender concepts
- In a position to influence and advocate for gender mainstreaming
- Program development and planning skills
- Capacity as an advocate for gender mainstreaming in the Ministry's policies, programs and practices
- Inclusion of current gender focal points and staff who are currently involved in gender mainstreaming activities is desirable

*Note:* It is not necessary for each member to have all of these characteristics however all of these skills and characteristics are needed within the group.

## *Working Papers on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness in South East Asia*

### **SISKES PLUS Support to Making Pregnancy Safer in Indonesia Assessment of a GTZ-led initiative by Sofi Ospina, March 2007**

#### **Introduction**

Indonesia has a population of 242 million<sup>1</sup> (50.2% percent women) distributed across an archipelago of around 17,000 islands. There is considerable cultural and linguistic diversity and a plurality of religions, although 89% of the population are Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

With the decentralization process in 1999<sup>3</sup>, decision-making powers were given to the 440 district heads (*bupati*) to administer the local government, including planning and fiscal authority, as well as delegated functions in different sectors including health. Though decentralization presents opportunities to increase citizenship participation (including women's views and concerns) in decision-making at local levels it also presents high risks to women's rights. Some districts have reestablished the *adat* (local customs) and the Shari'a or Islamic law in which women's roles and rights are often presented as inferior to those of men.<sup>4</sup> This aspect of decentralization can have a major impact on women's access to, and use of, health care and, thus, on maternal and neonatal mortality, both major health priorities in Indonesia. To fight the high maternal and neonatal mortality the Ministry of Health (MoH) developed a National Strategic Plan on Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS) 2001-2010.

#### ***About this paper***

This paper discusses the advancement of gender equality through the GTZ-led multi-development partner support to Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS) through its SISKES PLUS project in Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Provinces. It is not an evaluation of the SISKES PLUS Project, nor of its MPS component, *per se* but an attempt ***to assess the extent to which gender objectives have been advanced or impeded by the application, or failure to apply, the principles of the Paris Declaration in the multi-donor support to MPS in NTT and NTB.***

#### **What is the GTZ-led SISKES PLUS Project?**

The SISKES PLUS Project - Improvement of the District Health System in Nusa Tenggara Timur and Nusa Tenggara Barat Provinces - is a partnership between GTZ and the Ministry of Health in Indonesia and the Provincial Health Offices in NTT and NTB with the financial contribution of the German (BMZ) and the British (DFID) government, under the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). It is also implemented in close cooperation with the German Development Bank (KfW) supported SPH (Sector Program Health) project in the same provinces. The Project is supporting the government program of Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS) through a health systems approach with the overall objective that the population of the two provinces, especially the poor, women and children, use quality health care services.

SISKES PLUS main components are: to develop and put in place an integrated health planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system; to strengthen a referral system able to handle maternal and neonatal emergency cases; to ensure that clinical services related to reproductive health and MPS

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist, accessed 23 March 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Indonesia Country Gender Assessment, 2006

<sup>3</sup> The laws were revised in 2004 with Law 32/2004 on Regional Administration (replaced Law 22/99 on Regional Autonomy) and Law 33/2004 on Regional Fiscal Balance (replaced Law 25/1999).

<sup>4</sup> Indonesia Country Gender Assessment, 2006, pp 37-44.

correspond to agreed national quality standards and complement effective health promotion activities; and to empower the communities, especially the poor, to access appropriate services.

The project is in its third phase of its 10 years implementation, but just finished its first year regarding MPS focus (January 2006 – December 2009). The total contribution of the German side for this phase amounts to €10,150,000 (4 Million BMZ, 6,150,000 DFID) through an implementation cooperation between Germany (BMZ) and the United Kingdom (DFID).<sup>5</sup>

## **Multi-donor support to MPS in Eastern Indonesia seen through the lens of the Paris Declaration's five principles**

### ***Ownership***

The Paris Declaration principle of ownership implies that the partner country sets the agenda and established the priorities. In this regard it can be said that ***government ownership for MPS is high***. Reducing maternal mortality through this initiative is the first priority of the MoH. This ownership is also reflected in the two provinces in Eastern Indonesia, where maternal and child mortality is high and MPS is given high priority by the provincial governments.<sup>6</sup>

Following a Presidential Decree on Gender Mainstreaming in 2000 and the lead of BAPPENAS (the Planning National Board)<sup>7</sup> ***the MoH has undertaken efforts to mainstream gender into its policies and programs***. Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in health were produced in 2000. A first ministerial decree<sup>8</sup> in 2002 led to a gender mainstreaming plan of action that included awareness raising at the highest levels of the public service and training of MoH staff. The Directorate of Maternal and Child Health has appointed a senior staff member as the as the gender focal point (GFP). ***The MPS was the first of all seven MoH priorities to be analyzed from a gender perspective, in 2004, and subsequently modified to be gender responsive.***<sup>9</sup> As an example MPS is now encouraging husbands to accompany their wives to ANC services, to be involved in choosing the site of birth, to participate in the delivery, to come with their wives to family planning and chose together a method they will use after the delivery. In 2006, a new ministerial decree<sup>10</sup> was issued strengthening the gender mainstreaming team and calling for appointment of senior staff as GFPs in all MoH directorates and units.

***At national level, in the MoH, there is a high level of ownership of and commitment to the promotion of a gender perspective in the health sector, including in MPS.*** The national MoH gender mainstreaming team has developed guidelines for gender mainstreaming<sup>11</sup> and has conducted training with all provinces. Other tools for gender mainstreaming include guidelines for service providers at the health centre<sup>12</sup> produced with the support of the AusAID-funded 'Women's Health and Family Welfare Project', that aim to make all health care providers, especially nurses and midwives, aware of gender concepts and tools.

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<sup>5</sup> SISKES PLUS, Annual Report 2006, pp 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> As an illustration the MMR in NTT is 554/100,000 compared to the National MMR of 307/100,000. The national target of Healthy Indonesia 2010 is MMR 226/100,000 whereas MDG 2015 target is 125/100,000 live births.

<sup>7</sup> The Indonesian Law no 25/2000 on National Development Programme 2000-2004

<sup>8</sup> The first ministerial decree on GMS No HK.00.SJ.1.1712 dated on 13 September 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Analisis Gender dalam Pembangunan Kesehatan. Aplikasi Gender Analysis (GAP) dan Berbagai Pengalaman. MoH, BAPPENAS, CIDA, Juli 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Ministerial decree No 878/Menkes/SK/XI/2006

<sup>11</sup> Profil Kesehatan Reproduksi, Pengarus-utamaan Gender dalam Bidang Kesehatan, 2000, 2005; Modul Pelatihan Pengarusutamaan Gender Bidang Kesehatan bagi Pengelola Program Kesehatan 2006; Status Kesehatan Masyarakat Berbasis Gender: Fakta Dari Hasil Survei Kesehatan Nasional, December 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Buku Pintar Gender. Panduan Pelayanan sensitive gender bagi petugas kesehatan. 2006.

Despite the development by the MoH of a range of tools and training materials for gender analysis and gender mainstreaming for the health sector in general, and MPS in particular, **most government officials and CSO representatives interviewed in NTB and NTT were not aware of the MoH efforts to promote gender mainstreaming. Senior provincial health officials consulted had little knowledge of gender concepts or available MoH tools** and in some cases little sympathy. One provincial health officer reacted in a rather agitated way saying: “Gender? Well, this is a foreign concept.”

In both provinces visited, some health staff reported receiving general gender training from the Women’s Empowerment Bureau and/or BAPPEDA but with none practical application to health or health planning. In fact, at sub-national levels the gender equality agenda, in general, appeared to be rather opaque to most people interviewed. People interviewed could talk in general about gender but most of the time equated it with women’s issues. **As MPS has women as the main target group and most of the concerned service providers (at least midwives) are women it is assumed that the program is already “doing gender” but in reality gender issues are not addressed per se or are simply overlooked.** Some staff interviewed in NTB recognized the importance of gender issues within MPS but did not identify how to put a gender perspective into practice.

The MoH gender mainstreaming team has recently completed training of 34 three-person provincial facilitator teams (consisting of representatives of maternal health, health promotion and planning from the provincial health office). The teams are expected to replicate the training with the districts but **lack of funding for gender and health training was identified by the provinces as a constraint as this was not put as first priority.** Therefore, the follow-up activities are likely to be restricted only to “socialization” using limited funds available from the deconcentration budget of the MoH. (Out of a total allocation to the Sub-Directorate of Maternal and Child Health of Rupiah 300 billion only 1 billion is earmarked for gender mainstreaming).

No health staff interviewed at provincial or district level had received specific training on gender and health and no-one mentioned the gender and health tools that have been developed at national level. Thus, **it cannot be said that the gender perspective of MPS is owned and has been explicitly implemented in NTT and NTB. Nevertheless, various dimensions of MPS that are designed to be responsive to gender concerns are being implemented without the health workers recognizing that they are engaged in gender mainstreaming,** for example, to involve husbands in reproductive health.

### **Alignment**

The Constitution of Indonesia includes provisions on equal rights for men and women. It was one of the first governments to ratify CEDAW (in 1984) and has signed other international agreements to promote gender equality such as BPFA<sup>13</sup> and the MDGs. The health sector also has a strong gender equality policy aligned with these international and national frameworks and this is reflected in the gender dimensions of MPS. **Policy developed by the central MoH is not, however, for various reasons, uniformly applied throughout the health system. There is, therefore, some lack of alignment of the government’s own activities with its national policies.**

This assessment has not attempted to evaluate to what extent overall development partner policies and practices in relation to gender are aligned with Government of Indonesia policies in this area. The focus is on gender dimensions of development partner support to MPS. The GTZ supported SISKES PLUS Project, under which support is provided to MPS in NTT and NTB, is fully aligned with the national

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<sup>13</sup> 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

policies for MPS. ***All development partners interviewed claimed strong commitment to MPS and alignment with the government policies in this regard.***

Gender equity as a crosscutting theme had been proposed for the implementation agreement signed by the *Bupati* and the District and Provincial Health Offices by the German side, but was not taken over by the Government partners.

SISKES PLUS supports the *desa siaga* (alert village) approach<sup>14</sup> aimed at empowering the community to ensure preparedness to deal with emergencies associated with pregnancy and child birth, including neonatal care, and also family planning.<sup>15</sup> The *desa siaga* was initiated in five villages in NTB by the AusAID-funded Women's Health and Family Welfare Project (2000-2006)<sup>16</sup> and was further adapted to Ministers concept by SISKES PLUS. In September 2006 SISKES PLUS started to support *desa siaga* and up to 35 villages are currently under implementation (15 more will start soon).<sup>17</sup> Gender is mainstreamed in the different components of the *desa siaga* Village facilitators VF training enabling participants to understand gender issues in pregnancy and child birth and all analytical tools have been designed to reflect gender issues. In NTT the *desa-siaga* approach is under socialization in the 6 districts covered by SISKES PLUS support. The Minister of Health decided in 2006<sup>18</sup> that *desa siaga* would to be rolled-out nationally. ***The SISKES PLUS Project commitment to desa siaga can, therefore, be seen as strong alignment with national policy.*** It should be noted, however, that the current national approach to *desa siaga* is some what different from the original concept and is being extended to issues other than MPS, such as reporting on epidemiological events and outbreaks, which may go beyond communities' possibilities.

The GTZ-supported human resource development project that complement SISKES PLUS has a gender equality policy that ensures equal access of both sexes to capacity building. Gender balance in capacity building and management upgrading is monitored. This program has been sensitizing the local

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<sup>14</sup> The DESA SIAP ANTAR JAGA (Prepare Bring Stand By) initially was launched by USAID project- Maternal and Neonatal Health Project in 3 districts in West Java Province. Then AUSAID adopted it in 2003 in 6 districts in NTT (Flores Island) and in 4 districts in NTB.

<sup>15</sup> *Desa siaga* is a bottom-up approach to preventing maternal and neonatal mortality from the hamlet level, building on the tradition of helping each other (known as Banjar). *Desa siaga* includes five systems set up through a consultation process and agreement with all members of the community. The process is facilitated by the *desa siaga* village facilitator (VF) in collaboration with a board composed of village chief, hamlet chief, puskesmas midwife, health volunteer and TBA. The five systems are: i) all pregnant women in the hamlet are identified and notified to the health system; ii) transportation and communication available for use in case of emergency is mapped; iii) a saving scheme collects small contribution from each family into a community fund to support deliveries; iv) reproductive health classes are held; and v) in preparation for any needed blood transfusion hamlets establish a list of potential donors and organize blood tests at the puskesmas, and the Red Cross manages the blood bank. A 'Desa-Siaga Network' ensures linkages between the community and the health system; training to support the network involves the VFs, the midwives and a staff of the district health office. Partnership between midwives and TBAs (who receive an incentive of around Rp 15000 for each pregnant woman brought to a midwife for delivery) is supported by the *desa siaga* approach.

<sup>16</sup> Independent Completion Report on this AusAID project highlights the gender empowerment component of the project that fostered a supportive environment for women to choose maternal health and family planning services. Changes in men's behaviour, supporting women during pregnancy and delivery, were reported in some villages where *desa siaga* was implemented.

<sup>17</sup> An evaluation conducted by the DHO Mataram of *desa-siaga* in the first five villages found that the response from the community and health providers was very good. The notification system is working; case finding of high risk women identified by the community and referral have increased. A comparison of 2005 and 2006 data in the five villages shows a decrease in the use of TBAs and an increase in the use of midwives.

<sup>18</sup> *Desa Siaga* was adopted by MoH on 2006 through the Ministerial decree No 564/MENKES/SK/VIII/2006

government (DHO, Bupati, MP) to give equal opportunities to women and men into senior management positions. ***This is consistent with the government's stated commitment to MDG 3 on promotion of gender equality.***

As explained in the above section on ownership, the implementation of gender policies in general, in the health sector and more specifically in MPS is limited at the sub-national levels. SISKES PLUS is a project that is supporting the government in the implementation of its policies and plans. ***It is difficult and may be too early to say more about alignment of the gender equality dimensions of the Project's work at this stage than that it is generally aligned with a government policy that is poorly implemented.***

### ***Harmonization***

GTZ, DFID, UNICEF and AusAID are working together in support of MPS in NTT and NTB. DFID has delegated its implementation role to GTZ and UNICEF and its monitoring and evaluation role to AusAID. MoUs have been signed covering this collaborative work. ***This four-partner agreement is a very concrete example of harmonization of MPS support.*** This work is carried out in the context of SISKES PLUS led effort to bring provincial and district governments and development partners together to conduct joint planning and budgeting for the health sector at district level, which includes now also other partners, such as ADB, UNFPA, and JICA in addition to KfW. Regular monitoring meetings under Provincial Health Office leadership are taking place in NTT and NTB with the participation of government, bilateral and multilateral donors and civil society organizations. At central level SISKES PLUS supports several activities and consultancies together with WHO at the request of MoH (MoU has been signed between GTZ and WHO in 2005 for overall cooperation in health) and supports MoH with a national senior staff to improve coordination between different stakeholders in RH/MPS.

The GTZ supported SISKES PLUS Project has also harmonized its efforts with two other German Government financed health projects.<sup>19</sup> Joint Project Coordination Units have been established at central, provincial and district levels to coordinate their programming and management procedures. These structures are open to integration of other bilateral and multilateral organizations working in NTT and NTB provinces.

These initiatives indicate good progress towards harmonization of most development partners efforts in the health sector in NTT and NTB. Despite this, ***some government officials interviewed did not consider that development partners' activities were sufficiently well harmonized.*** The head of the provincial health office in one province mentioned that while there was a large number of development partners, coverage across the 16 districts were uneven and inadequate, with some covering very limited areas. ***While coordination may prevent overlap, it does not ensure equitable coverage.***

Despite the efforts at harmonization development partners are not specifically working to address gender issues using a common framework. ***Therefore, it cannot be said that there is harmonization of gender equality policy within MPS.***

It is of interest to note a finding of an independent evaluation of MPS related activities funded by AusAID and DFID in Eastern Indonesia. It found that in two UNICEF-implemented projects although gender was addressed in the project proposals the explicit treatment of gender was limited. It was, for example, concluded that even though "both projects recognise the important roles men play in maternal health, their

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<sup>19</sup> Human Resource Development in the Health Sector (GTZ) and the Health Sector Program (KfW).

social mobilisation efforts do not seem to include messages that differentiate the roles of men and women”.<sup>20</sup>

### *Managing for results*

Quarterly joint reporting mechanism has been established for the SISKES PLUS Project together with the HRD and the SPH projects in NTB and NTT. Stakeholders come together to report on their achievements, and financial expenditure; to discuss possible solutions for identified constraints and to agree on activities for the following quarter. Currently the two provinces and their districts are discussing their plan of action and SISKES PLUS is providing support for an integrated FY 2008 planning and budgetary process. The government counterparts contacted for this assessment acknowledged the important role SISKES PLUS is playing to increase their capacity and strengthen government leadership and management.

***Gender issues have not, however, been explicitly addressed in the management meetings. Nor have gender related activities been integrated in the districts annual action plans.***

The incorporation of gender issues within management for results could be facilitated by three surveys being conducted in NTB and NTT. One is compiling a database on health providers; the second is a 7,000 household survey exploring users' views and experiences with health services; and a third is on reproductive rights and maternal and neonatal health (supported by GTZ through the DFID funding and in collaboration with WHO and conducted by local NGOs). The findings of these three pieces of research, expected to be available by June 2007, will be used to inform health policy and programme implementation, to develop a plan of action to improve women's situation and will provide ***an opportunity to establish baselines for better managing for results in relation to gender issues within the MPS.***

SISKES PLUS has been supporting the collection of sex-disaggregated data at *puskesmas* level. The GTZ supported program is providing technical assistance to improve and develop the health management information system in the two provinces. Routine data is being disaggregated by sex, age and income. ***This data will also serve to establish a baseline against which targets can be set and progress measured.*** It will also help to better assess the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys.

One gender indicator used by the GTZ supported human resource development project is ***the percentage of women in senior positions.*** A survey conducted in NTB showed that only 30 out of 113 echelon 2 and 3 health officers were women (26%). The highest position in the Provincial Health Office is, however, held by a woman. This baseline will help the project to set targets to improve gender balance in senior management in the health system.

Gender sensitive indicators are needed to monitor to whom and how MPS training is delivered and how MPS messages are tailored specifically for women and men and delivered through different channels. Another area in which more information and management is needed is ***power relations between predominantly male doctors and mostly female midwives.*** Male doctors may contest the decisions of midwives about treatment or referral even if they are inexperienced in obstetrics.

The national MoH gender mainstreaming team aims to develop a master plan on gender and health for 2008 to be disseminated to provinces and districts. ***A target has been set for 2009 to have 17% of the districts with a gender responsive action plans and budgets.*** The planning process and associated advocacy efforts will need to be carefully managed to achieve the targeted result.

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<sup>20</sup> Summary provided by Michelle Vizzard, First Secretary, Health, AusAID.

*Mutual accountability*

*As there is no common results framework within which government and donors are working on gender issues within MPS we cannot say that there is mutual accountability for progress on gender objectives.*

## What are the risks and opportunities for work on gender equality created by the Paris Declaration principles?

### Risks

General *promotion of gender equality without making clear the practical applications* and beneficial consequences of a gender-based approach to health, and specifically MPS, *may diminish its credibility.*

One major risk is that gender is perceived as a foreign concept. This perception is likely to be enhanced if gender considerations are seen to be pushed by a bilateral development partner and even more so if there is a group of western development partners actively promoting it with a harmonized voice. *It is essential therefore that the starting point for promotion of gender equality is the national policy* and that development partners are clear that their actions are aligned with this.

Similarly, working predominantly with women on gender issues, for example, in the context of MPS could provoke a backlash from men and be counterproductive for women's choices and outcomes in reproductive health. It is critical that work to support MPS gives emphasis to the involvement of men and is sensitive to the cultural context. Incremental progress is likely to be more realistic than radical change. *Attempts at radical change in relation to gender may be met by equally radical resistance.*

These risks may be exacerbated by the attitudes of some decision makers within the health sector at provincial and district level who have not yet been convinced that gender considerations are important. *Conservative values of a few key individuals may undermine even very active efforts to promote gender awareness.*

*Risks specific to MPS and gender in Eastern Indonesia* include:

- High staff turnover diluting the impact of staff training in gender awareness
- Male decision making in relation to health care for women, including in the case of emergency obstetric care, may weaken efforts to prepare the community for emergencies.
- Appointment of junior staff members as gender focal points may be ineffective and even undermine efforts to promote gender equality.

### Opportunities

The opportunities presented here are written for the Indonesian context but could have application elsewhere.

As GTZ support activities in the health sector include *empowering PHO and DHO to improve their management and planning processes* there is an opportunity to incorporate gender mainstreaming within this capacity building. This could start in districts where maternal and child mortality are high and *focus on the practical benefits in terms of service delivery and health outcomes of adopting gender-based changes* to current practices. This could be made

even more concrete by training in gender-sensitive budgeting. This will help ensure that the integrated planning and budgeting process will incorporate gender considerations into the district annual action plans.

Key people to sensitize in this regard are senior members of the provincial planning team (DHO, BAPPEDA and the *Bupati*). Further advocacy efforts are needed to sensitize members of parliament to gain their political commitment to gender as a priority in the development plan and ensure sufficient budget is provided to address gender and reproductive health issues. The presently conducted reproductive rights survey will give the base for further action and start to sensitize decision makers through involvement in the process during stakeholder meetings!

***A presidential decree (9/2000) on gender mainstreaming and two ministerial decrees for gender mainstreaming in the health sector provide a very favorable environment to move forward in the health sector.***

***A set of tools developed by the MoH and the training of three people in each province to replicate gender mainstreaming workshops in the districts provide an opportunity for all development partners to get behind a common approach and help to build a critical mass of gender advocates in the health sector at provincial and district levels.***

***Existing networks of gender experts (in NGOs and academia) could be used better to provide gender sensitization training to civil servants and other NGOs using the tools developed by the MoH on gender mainstreaming in health.*** Many universities in Indonesia have a centre for women studies that could be used to do analytical work and support training. (As examples, the Women Studies Centre of the University of Mataram has been used by BAPPEDA in NTB to conduct gender training and the Women Studies Centre of the University of Kupang has conducted a multisectoral sex-disaggregated study to be used by BAPPEDA for planning.) Revision of curricula for doctors and midwives in both pre- and in-service training provides an opportunity to introduce gender considerations.

***The commitment of influential leaders at local levels such as village and hamlet chiefs and Muslims leaders to the reduction of maternal and child mortality provides an opportunity to introduce gender-sensitive approaches*** that have a clear link with health outcomes. Particular attention might be given to addressing any misinterpretation of Islamic law in relation to reproductive health, gender relations and women's rights.<sup>21</sup>

Added impetus could be provided to promotion of gender equality through ***more committed and specific development partner support to this area of work***, in general and within MPS. This would be consistent with partners own policies. For example, DFID has a new policy on gender which includes indicators on how aid programs are contributing. AusAID has also recently adopted a new gender policy.

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<sup>21</sup> In NTB (West Lombok) NGOs have established a 'Gugus Gender' (network) and are working with Guru Mahal to revise Islamic teachings as the oppression of women come from the wrong interpretation of the Islam by men. This provides a window of opportunity to sensitize separately men and women towards a gender-sensitive interpretation of Islam.

The decentralization support facility<sup>22</sup> and the trust account for the districts may provide an opportunity to move forward the gender work. ***Some pilots could be established in which local governments and development partners, working in a single district plan, define gender outcomes and benchmarks to which the local government and donors are accountable.*** These pilots could be monitored to measure the impact of aid harmonization on gender indicators at local level. The Papua Government is undertaking an interesting approach in this direction that merits careful analysis.

The recent ***Indonesia Country Gender Assessment***<sup>23</sup> ***is a good analytical tool*** to be used by development partners and other stakeholders ***for advocacy and planning purposes.***

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<sup>22</sup> The DSF is a multi-donor (DFID, UNDF, WB, ADB, AusAID, Netherlands and other bilateral) initiative trying to implement the principles of Paris Declaration to increase aid effectiveness at sub-national levels.

<sup>23</sup> The CGA is a concerted effort of the ADB, The Asian Foundation, CIDA, the National Democratic Institute and the World Bank in close collaboration with the State Ministry for Women's Empowerment of the Republic of Indonesia. This is a concrete example of donors' collaboration towards harmonization.

## **List of People consulted and Interviewed**

Fieldwork to inform this assessment was conducted from 12 to 21 March in Mataram (NTB), Kupang (NTT) and Jakarta. Interviews and round table discussions were undertaken with representatives of the National and Provincial Planning Boards, Ministry of Health, Provincial Health Authorities and District Health Offices involved in the implementation of MPS, development partners and NGOs working on reproductive health, and representatives from the academia.

### ***Interviews in NTB (Mataram)***

Dr. Gertrud Schmidt-Ehry, Principal Advisor SISKES & HRD and Team Leader SISKES NTB

Dr. Janet O'Neill, Technical Advisor MPS NTT & NTB

Dr. Asmus Hammerich, Team Leader SISKES PLUS in NTT

Ms Rahmi, Desa Siaga Principal Adviser, SISKES PLUS NTB

Dr Gusti Rai Sukertha, Director, Provincial Planning Board (Bappeda), NTB

Dr. B Magdalena – Director, Provincial Health Office, NTB

Dr Gatot Soesanto, SKM, Mkes-Kasie Tenaga dan Sarana, Dikes, PHO NTB

Dr. Nyoman Wijaya, PHO NTB

Dr Supriyadi, Staff Yankes Gizi Dinkes, PHO NTB

Dr Ni Made Ardani Dana, Kasie Penyusunan Rencana Dinkes, PHO NTB

Dr Made Suadnya, SKM, MKes, Kasie Diklat Dinkes, PHO NTB

Dr. Astarini,- District Health Office West Lombok

Masnah, Desa Siaga, District Health Office West Lombok

Drs. H Lalu Burhan, Kepala BKKBN NTB (Family Planning)

Bp. Duddin Husein, UNFPA, NTB

Ir. Hanartani, SISKES, Researcher on Reproductive health

Ms Ruth Stela Thei, Director, Women Study-Centre, University of Mataram

Dr Renny Bunyamin, Global Fund

Dr Dianita Rahmi , District Health Office Mataram City

Dr Mustika, SKM. Mkes, District Health Office Mataram City

Dr Hj. Kustinah District Health Office Mataram City

Kasmiati – Annisa, Local NGO

Endang Susilowati , PPK (Perkumpulan Panca Karsa), Local NGO

Sri Lestari, YKSSI Local NGO

Ratna Refida - Santiri Local NGO

Diana-YPPL (Yayasan Pengembangan Perajin Lombok), Local NGO

DIAN, Yayasan Tunas Alam Indonesia Local NGO

Arif Mahmudi, YKPR (Yayasan Kerja Perumahan Rakyat) Local NGO

Yane, Solidaritas Perempuan Local NGO

Dr. Harman, PKBI (Persatuan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia) Local NGO

Sapruddin Zohry, LP2M Local NGO

***People interviewed in Kupang NTT***

Dr Stefanuss Bria Seran, Head, PHO, NTT

Dr Yuli Butu, Head of Section Family Health, Maternal Child Health Section, PHO, NTT

Pak Benny, Head of Health Promotion, PHO, NTT

Ms Alixia Dina, Staff Health Promotion, PHO, NTT

Mr Bupa Oni, Director BAPPEDA, NTT

Ms Tere Carvalho, BAPPEDA NTT

Mr Toby, BAPPEDA, NTT

Ms Magdalena Leo, Head of Data & Information, Provincial Women's Empowerment Bureau, Governor's Office

Liliane Amalo YTB, Acting Project Coordinator

Latifa Bay, Programme Officer, AusAID ANTARA

Dr Sophie D. Malela. Gender Coordinator, Yayasan Alfa Omega

Veronica Atta, Gender Specialist, LKBH Justicia, NGO

Ms Desti Murdijana, Executive Director, PIKUL

Ms Anna Joekana, Journalist “Cursor”, Newspaper Agency

Prof. Mien Ratu Udju, Gender Specialist, Lecturer Undana University

Prof. Mia Patty Niech, Lembaga Perlindungan Anak, GFP Education sector

Dr Teda Littik, Senior Adviser MNH & HRD, SISKES PLUS, NTT

***Interviews with National Stakeholders in Jakarta***

Ms Lenny N. Rosalind, Deputy Director for Women Empowerment and Child Protection, BAPPENAS

Dr. Trisnawati Gandawidjaja, Head, Sub-Directorate on RH Protection, Directorate of Maternal Health, GFP & leader of Gender Mainstreaming Team in the Health Sector.

Ms Marlim Ginting, Centre for Health Promotion, Ministry of Health

Ms Anita Dini Ingati, Sub-division of Planning, Bureau of Planning & Budgeting, MoH

Ms Laura Guarenti, MCH Advisor, World Health Organisation

Ms Shalini Buhuguna, Decentralization Support Facility, DFID

Ms Michelle Vizzard, First Secretary, Health, AusAID

Ms Anita Rahman, Lecturer on Reproductive Health, Women's Study-Post Graduate Program, University Indonesia

Ms. Atashendartini Habsyah, Women Health Foundation, Lecturer - Subject: post-graduate study in medical anthropology

Dr. Nardho Gunawan, Gender Mainstreaming Team in the Health Sector, NGO

Ms Joyce Smith, Adviser, Human Resource Development, SISKES PLUS

Dr Loesje Sompie, Reproductive Health Coordinator, SISKES PLUS, Jakarta

## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BAPPEDA	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (Regional Development Planning Agency)
BAPPENAS	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (National Development Planning Agency)
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development United Kingdom
DHO	District Health Office
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
HRD	Human Resource Development
KfW	Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPS	Making Pregnancy Safer
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non Government Organization
NTB	Nusa Tenggara Barat
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur
PHO	Provincial Health Office
RP	Reproductive Health
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VF	Village facilitators
WHO	World Health Organization
WB	World Bank

## *Working Papers on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness in South East Asia*

### **Supporting Women as Effective Leaders and Promotion of Women's Participation in Governance in Timor Leste**

**Assessment of a UNIFEM-led initiative by Sofi Ospina, March 2007<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

Until 1999, centuries of colonial rule meant that little was achieved in terms of economic, social and political empowerment of the nearly one million population of Timor Leste. Traditional values, in which women are portrayed as secondary citizens, are still widely prevalent especially in the 85% of the population that lives in rural areas; political, ritual and conflict mediation powers are the domain of men. Thus women have been traditionally deprived of participating in decision making and public life.

Since 1974, however, women have been fighting to change this paradigm. They participated actively in the three fronts of resistance in the struggle for independence and in the promotion of equal rights. During the 1999-2002 United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) they lobbied for the creation of a Gender Affairs Unit (GAU), promoted a 30% per cent quota for women in decision-making positions within UNTAET, organized a women's network (REDE Feto) to promote gender equality within government and society, and created a women's caucus (Caucus Feto Iha Politica, referred to simply as 'Caucus') to support women in politics. A major milestone in this period was the promotion of women's participation in the Constituent Assembly elections in 2001 resulting in their election to 27% of the seats.

#### **What is the UNIFEM-led Initiative?**

The UNIFEM-led initiative Supporting Women as Effective Leaders and Promotion of Women's Participation in Governance in Timor Leste was designed by the UNIFEM Country Office in Timor Leste in consultation with the Caucus and the Office of Promotion of Equality (OPE) which is within the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and is responsible for the formulation and implementation of gender equality policy and to promote gender mainstreaming across the government. It has its foundations in 2001 when a partnership was established between UNTAET GAU and UNIFEM to organize and conduct training for women as potential candidates to contest the Constituent Assembly elections. This led to the creation of the Caucus to support women candidates, replicate the training at local levels, and raise awareness of women as voters.

The Initiative aims to change gender relations and accelerate development in Timor Leste through the active involvement of women as effective leaders and to promote their participation in governance at central and local levels. It encompasses two programmes. The first is the three-year Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building in Timor-Leste (PERWL). The second is the Integrated Programme for Women in Politics and Decision Making (WIP) that aims to enhance women's capacity as effective and accountable electoral candidates, elected officials and legislators, and as informed voters.

PERWL has three components

- (1) Capacity building for women across the country in the concepts and principles of transformative leadership, politics and communities.
- (2) The development of materials and methods for promoting gender equality adapted to the needs of women at the grassroots level.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a version of a longer paper that has been shortened for the purposes of analysis and discussion at the Workshop on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness, Bangkok 2-3 April 2007.

(3) Research on women and poverty to assist in the formulation of evidence-based activities to address the socio-economic needs of rural women.

WIP complements PERWL with pre- and post-election activities, including promoting media's understanding and positive reporting of women in politics and decision making. It supports women in preparing for the 2007 elections and will support elected women officials during their 2007-2012 mandate.

PERWL has a total budget of Euro 625,000 funded by the European Commission (Euro 575,000), UNDP (Euro 18,750), and UNIFEM (Euro 31,250 in kind). Additional funding has been provided by UNDP (US\$ 100,000) and UNIFEM (US\$ 30,000). As the funding is due to expire by mid-2007, UNIFEM is seeking funding to continue its implementation.

WIP will complement PERWL as a five-year programme with a required budget of US\$ 2.9 million. Irish Aid and the Government of Norway have committed a funding of US\$ 248,000 and US\$ 331,900 respectively for 2007. UNIFEM is seeking funding to fill the outstanding requirements.

### **Assessing the UNIFEM Initiative in the light of the Paris Declaration principles**

Many stakeholders interviewed for this study felt the most important issue was that, with a few key exceptions, donors were not consistently engaged in the promotion of gender equality, in general, and the promotion of women as leaders and participants in governance, in particular. This situation prevails despite donors having strong policy statements in support of gender equality, as was reaffirmed by their representatives during interviews.

All those contacted agreed on the importance of gender equality and its special significance in Timor Leste at this time. As a NORAD representative mentioned: "it is a worthwhile and necessary to increase gender equity in the country and to support the fledgling democratic structures...Supporting women in the political arena is an important task in Timor Leste". A USAID colleague echoed this: "Mainstreaming gender perspectives in any area and at all levels of development is one of the main challenges...time and effort should be put at their maximum to promote women to be effective leaders".

### ***Ownership***

The activities of the Initiative were identified as a priority by the OPE which has strongly supported it since its inception and an OPE staff member is assigned to ensuring coordination with UNIFEM. OPE's Adviser on the Promotion of Equality co-chairs the PERWL Steering Committee that consists of the Caucus, the National Directorate for Territorial Administration - DNAT -, (responsible for decentralization and local governance and administering the elections) and the National Institute of Public Administration - INAP – (responsible for the administration of the entire public service and the capacity building needs of public servants). The involvement of these three entities ensures government involvement at a high level. The partnership with the district administrations has resulted in a great involvement of local governments and their sensitization to the Initiative's relevance.

Ownership is not limited to the government. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have also been involved since the outset. Caucus and REDE Feto, a network of women's organization composed of sixteen CSOs, have actively participated in both the Initiative's leadership and its implementation. However, while the initiative is "owned" by these CSOs it is clearly not owned by conservative sectors of society and some religious leaders because the initiative is challenging their values. Nevertheless, the 2005 local elections

showed a small but certain progress in the acceptance of women to hold positions as village and hamlet heads, a role traditionally assigned to men.

### *Alignment*

The Initiative can be considered to be aligned with the overall government legal framework on gender equality and the elements of policy for women's involvement in politics and leadership that already exist. Nevertheless, some activities of the initiative are in areas where policy is yet to be developed.

The policy framework for gender equality, in general, is quite strong. Articles 16 and 17 of the Constitution stipulate equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. Furthermore, Article 63 calls for the direct and active participation by women and men in political life stating that it constitutes a fundamental condition and instrument of a democratic system. The National Development Plan (NDP) considers gender equality as a prerequisite to reduce poverty. The GoTL ratified CEDAW and its Optional Protocol.

The policy environment for advancing women as effective leaders in Timor Leste has positive elements, and is improving, but still needs further development. Article 2 of Law No 2/2004 'On the Elections of Suco Chiefs and Suco Councils' stipulates that women and men can be candidates and elected without discrimination. Its Article 3 further specifies that Suco Councils must include two women and two youth, one of each sex. Thus, the local authorities' electoral law guarantees, at least, three female positions on each suco council. Also, the recently adopted electoral law for the 2007 elections has introduced a quota for women candidates; in each group of 4 candidates one has to be a woman. The electoral law provides for alternative names to be placed on the party list to allow for substitution if necessary and stipulates that any substitution of a woman has to be by another woman. The formation of a women's caucus in parliament is also a positive development. There are, however, areas that require improvement. For example, there are no targets for gender balance in the civil service at senior levels and no parliamentary committees on gender issues.

The Initiative's programme of transformative leadership and women's participation in politics and decision-making is a specific strategy to achieve OPE's objective of women's political empowerment. Alignment is further assured by OPE's full involvement in the coordination and some aspects of the implementation of UNFEM's work.

Another dimension of the Initiative's strong alignment with government activities is its support to strengthen the capacity of OPE and the development of its strategic planning. OPE has been sensitizing other government bodies on gender concepts and tools, set up gender focal points in line ministries and has developed sectoral gender check lists to ensure a gender perspective is integrated into line ministries' policies and programmes with the support of the Minister of Planning and Finance. OPE capacity to respond to all these tasks, however, is still limited. Thus UNIFEM is assisting OPE progressively to improve its capacity to help line ministries align with the government's own gender policies.

An indication of the strong link between UNIFEM and the GoTL was the government attendance at the "High Level Consultation on How to Ensure the Participation and Representation of Women in the Political Life of the Nation through the 2007 Legislative and Presidential Elections" organized by UNIFEM in partnership with OPE and Fokupers (a civil society partner) in March 2006. It was attended by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Parliament, the SRSG, all the ministers, members of parliament and leadership of political parties (in addition to UN agencies, development partners, ambassadors, civil society organizations, prominent intellectuals, women's advocates and the media).

Donor representatives contacted for this paper assessed UNIFEM to have a good interaction with the government and its activities to be strongly aligned with government policies. A bilateral donor representative stated that UNIFEM “has established an excellent dialogue with GoTL leaders at the top and a convergence of objectives....so buy in from government to UNIFEM programs has been great”.

### *Harmonization*

While the Initiative has enjoyed a certain level of ownership by government and CSO stakeholders and has been strongly aligned with government policies it has not yet had the benefit of a consistent and harmonized approach to the promotion of gender equality by donors.

Donor support for gender-related work has been mostly through bilateral projects or through multilateral organizations but without adequate coordination. The level of commitment of some donors has been intermittent. For example, AusAID funded a gender mainstreaming project that started in 2000 but stopped in 2002. The most consistent and long-term support has been from Irish Aid which has provided technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of OPE and the gender mainstreaming work in selected line ministries and the engendering of the planning processes within the Ministry of Planning and Finance and funded the gender specialist on the CSP monitoring and evaluation missions. USAID has been supporting women in leadership through direct funding to international and local NGOs to promote women’s participation in the political process and empowering women to have their voices heard.

Multilateral organizations initiated the promotion of women’s participation in politics and decision making and in local governance structures. The World-Bank-administered multi-donor funded Community Empowerment Project set the stage by mandating a gender balance in village councils established in around 450 villages across the country in 2000-2001. This created a precedent for the participation of women in local structures and prepared the ground for reserved seats for women in local authorities’ elections (see above). UNTAET and UNIFEM supported the promotion of women as potential candidates for the Constituent Assembly as discussed above.

The Ministry of Planning and Finance leads aid coordination with World Bank support. The Consolidation Support Programme (CSP) is a mechanism of government and development cooperation across a number of sectors in which policy dialogue is undertaken six-monthly. A results matrix specifies quarterly benchmarks to be monitored in critical areas defined through annual action plans. The promotion of gender equality in public administration has been included in the results matrix since 2005 and key gender issues have been raised across different sectors such as justice, police, health and education. Another mechanism is the Sector Investment Programs (SIPs) linking policies, programmes and expenditures for defined sectoral priorities. The GoTL assigned a permanent seat to OPE in the sector working groups to include gender concerns in each sector. One of the SIPs covers the Rights, Equality and the Justice Sector.

Despite the inclusion of “equality” as a topic in both of these coordination/harmonization mechanisms there has been no broader policy discussion on gender or the role of women in governance. As one bilateral development agency representative highlighted there is not “a critical mass of donor concern about gender inequities in all sectors”. In sum there are no overarching mechanisms of development coordination that actively include gender equality and the promotion of women as leaders as a core principle. However, bilateral donors have made a step towards harmonizing their approach to gender work. A first meeting in this direction, was convened by the AusAID Counselor at the end of January 2007. Irish Aid, Norway, NZAID, and the WB participated, as did the UN DSRSG.

A UN Consultative Group on Gender brings together gender focal points from all UN agencies to share information and network. Since the April 2006 crisis the group has not met regularly. UNIFEM is an

active member of this group as well as UNFPA and UNICEF (two UN agencies addressing gender issues within their programming).

UNIFEM has not, so far, attempted regularly to bring together donors to adopt and work on a common agenda on gender issues. Since the April 2006 crisis the group has not met regularly.

In this regard, UNIFEM's position is compromised by a lack of adequate funding. Interaction with donors is coloured by the need to mobilize resource, which may weaken its potential role as a coordinating body. As one donor put it: "We are much more likely to hear from UNIFEM when a project needs funding... than in relation to the coordination of programmes ...or sharing of information". Nevertheless UNIFEM is well respected for its active participation in broader donor coordination meetings, consistently raising issues, and meeting donors if requested. UNIFEM's relationship of trust with CSOs and government place it in a unique position to be the gender advocate and coordination body with donors. In a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, REDE states that UNIFEM's importance is being able to carry the vision of Timorese women. UNIFEM, reasonably, points out that it cannot play its role effectively without adequate funding.

UNIFEM is currently working with UNMIT and the GoTL on a ***High Level Gender Coordination Mechanism*** to ensure a coherent and coordinated gender strategy for Timor-Leste with sound coordination and communication. The mechanism is intended to meet quarterly and will be co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the UN Deputy SRSG for Governance Support, Development and Humanitarian Coordination, with representatives of government ministries, the chair of the National Parliament Women's Committee for the CPLP, key civil society organizations and key members of the UN system.

### ***Managing for development results***

The overall objective of the Initiative has been clearly understood by the different partners involved in the process but that this has not translated into clear targets.

Before the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections an attempt was made to identify the number of women in winnable positions. It was estimated that 30% of seats could be won by women and this "target" was almost achieved. During the 2005 local elections, analysis was undertaken to assess the participation of women. There were only 165 women candidates in the election for 2,228 "hamlet chiefs". No target was set for the number that could be won, the implied target being "as many as possible", so it was not possible to say whether the effort to promote women candidates was as successful as expected. In the event 27 women (16.3% of those who stood) were elected. The same comment can be made in relation to the election of local council members. There were 2,355 women candidates; at least 1,342 were elected as there were three seats reserved for women in each council. Of 1,265 women potential candidates trained before the elections through the initiative, 657 (52%) ran for elections and 365 were elected. These numbers allowed a quantification of outcomes and can serve as a baseline for future elections.

Some donors consider that there is inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of the activities under the Initiative. So far the monitoring is based on training needs assessment and post-training debriefing sessions with women participants including electoral candidates and non candidates. Genuine managing for results is likely to mean long-term follow-up of individuals and groups. It should be possible to follow participants to assess the extent they are practicing new skills and the barriers they face. As suggested by a UNDP representative, the effectiveness of women's election to suco councils could be assessed in terms of their active participation, and outcomes of their interventions, in suco council discussions.

Although all stakeholders in gender equality work recognize the need for sex-disaggregated data to set plan and monitor, it is not systematically collected making difficult to assess progress in many areas. What data is collected, and compiled by the National Statistics Office, seems to be not well known or utilized by line ministries or development partners to increase their understanding of gender issues and influence policy and action.

### ***Mutual accountability***

All partners involved in the Initiative are accountable for results within their specific roles and responsibilities: for example, UNIFEM and OPE for ensuring coordination, INAP training and materials, and DNAT coordination with the districts. Caucus is responsible for the implementation of training, contracting out other CSOs and managing the pool of trainers; UNDP provides programming support and monitoring and evaluation assistance and the EC, as the major funder, monitors biannually through regular reporting and contracting out mid-term evaluation missions. It was suggested that UNIFEM needs to strengthen efforts to involve its partners and establish good joint planning, coordination and communication mechanisms between them and provide more capacity particularly in the areas of reporting and financial management skills. This could be particularly important in relation to shared results and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. One bilateral donor representative said that the UN only reports on processes or activities conducted but not on indicators and outcomes in relation to targets.

There is no coordinating forum involving bilateral and multilateral development partners where the specific topic of promoting women as effective leaders is regularly, or even periodically, discussed. Neither is there a common framework of indicators and targets for women's leadership development. There are no localized targets for women's political participation under MDG Goal 3 nor in the SIPs. Therefore, it cannot be said that there is mutual accountability on the part of the Government and the development partners.

### **What are the risks and opportunities for work on gender equality created by the Paris Declaration principles?**

#### ***Risks***

The following risks, although identified through the examination of one initiative in Timor Leste could apply to work on gender equality in other settings.

Despite most development partners having policy statements on gender and the need to promote gender equality this is not sufficiently backed up with real commitment and resources; they do not hold themselves accountable for achievements, or lack of them, in this area. The problem with alignment is not so much a problem of alignment of development partners' actions with government policies but rather alignment of their actions with *their own* policies. Gender remains an area of lots of lip-service and inadequate commitment.

The principles of the Paris Declaration can only be applied to activities that are actually happening. Monitoring of the Paris Declaration does not of itself measure development partners' commitment to a particular area of work, even if it is a stated priority in their own policies. In fact, rationalization of the development work, with division of labor, may result in gender being the responsibility of one or a small group of donors, rather than of all donors as it arguably should be.

Gender equality is seen by some donors as "too hard" as it involves changing deeply rooted cultural values and social norms. There is a risk that this becomes an excuse for not tackling gender issues incrementally in the sectors and areas that they are working.

What appears to be missing is a genuine recognition that gender-equality is not just a good principle but is critical for aid effectiveness overall. There is a risk that references to gender mainstreaming in overall aid effectiveness discussions and documents is an excuse for not giving explicit attention to concrete outcomes in areas such as promotion of economic growth and governance, as well as in individual sectors.

On the Government side there is a risk that high level government support for gender equality by leaders exposed to discussions of its importance to development, may mask skepticism, inaction or even resistance at lower levels in the government. This may not be recognized unless clear measurable outcomes for gender equality are included in development effectiveness monitoring in all sectors.

One risk, in part associated with inadequate harmonization of the activities to promote women as leaders with other development (and gender equality) activities, is that women with potential as leaders may be identified, trained and supported but continue to be without the financial support or economic empowerment that would allow them to use the skills effectively. A focus on women as leaders needs to be complemented by activities to ensure that the same women have sufficient autonomy to function as leaders.

A particular risk of the current situation in Timor Leste or any other country with a similar level of political and social insecurity, is that male leaders, particularly those who are unsympathetic to gender equality, may not give women leaders as much space to exercise their role as they might in more stable times. Restoring the desired power balance and stability may be viewed by them as “men’s work”. Without stronger understanding, commitment, coordination and mutual accountability mechanisms development partners may also decide that working on gender is a “luxury” rather than a priority in the current context.

The current crisis in Timor Leste has demonstrated the gender-based power imbalance. Despite women being one of the most affected group, they have by and large been marginalised from formal decision making processes to resolve the crisis. Furthermore as the political environment hardens with the lead up to the elections it is the male power holders who again are the major players.

## **Opportunities**

### ***Opportunities specific to the initiative in Timor Leste***

A real opportunity exists immediately to improve *harmonization of development partner efforts* in promoting gender equality. All partners consulted for this working paper expressed an interest in harmonizing their work. There appears to be some momentum for further policy discussions and the establishment of targets and effective mechanisms. One or a few partners will need to assume a leadership role to ensure this happens.

It would be pertinent to involve other multi- and bilateral development partners, at least those more committed to the gender equality agenda in the High Level Gender Coordination Mechanism (GoTL, UNIFEM, UNMIT). **The UN Working Group on Gender could be expanded to include other development partners and be chaired by the gender adviser of UNMIT or by UNIFEM.**

Building on their stated commitment to the MDGs, including Goal 3 (for which one of the indicators relates to women in decision making bodies (legislative and local level), development partners could agree on targets for the involvement of women in the sectors in which they are working.

*OPE's* location within, and strong support from, the higher levels in the GoTL provide potential for it to play a ***stronger role in aid coordination and effectiveness mechanisms***, with appropriate support from UNIFEM and other development partners. OPE should take the leadership in policy dialogue with line ministries and ensure their donor partners are committed to key gender objectives. Capacity development to OPE in this regard will be of strategic importance.

***The CSP process could involve OPE in policy discussion and define gender objectives and outputs/outcomes.*** For example, CSP sectoral benchmarks could include women as effective leaders as a topic. The WB expressed support for more permanent and systematic advisory input to drive the dialogue on gender issues, build capacity, strengthen policies, monitoring, and communication among the many stakeholders. AusAID suggested another possible initiative in this direction: ***a periodic joint gender audit by development partners*** (possibly six-monthly) across all their respective development activities including reporting specifically on women assuming effective leadership roles in different sectors.

***The International Compact agreement*** between the Government and the international community ***is also an opportunity to ensure that common targets and indicators are developed in the selected five priority areas.***

#### ***Opportunities that may also be relevant to other countries***

***Multi-partner mechanisms for improving aid-effectiveness***, such as the CSP in Timor Leste, provide a unique opportunity to give gender equality a high profile and to set benchmarks, including for women in positions of leadership. Not to use this opportunity is likely to send the message that gender equality is not really a priority.

***Periods of political and social instability***, while producing risks, may also provide an opportunity for development partners to ensure that the promotion of women as effective leaders has a much higher priority on the aid (effectiveness) agenda. This could be done by providing examples of, or exposing opinion leaders to, the positive impact of involving women in peace-building in other countries.

***UN Working Groups (or Theme Groups) on Gender*** where they exist should be expanded to include other multi-lateral and bilateral development partners. Real coordination of gender related work is more likely to happen if there is a small group (perhaps one UN, one key bilateral, and one development bank) committed to leading it, in collaboration with the government.

## **Annex 1: List of people consulted and interviewed**

Due to a period of heightened security risk in Timor Leste in early March 2007 the consultant was not able to enter the country to conduct personally the interviews. Development partners were interviewed from Australia by email and/or by phone whereas government officials and civil society organizations were interviewed by a local consultant using interview guidelines provided by the consultant.

Robin Scott-Charlton, Counsellor D.C, Australian Embassy, Dili

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## Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Consolidation Support Programme
DNAT	National Directorate for Territorial Administration
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General
GAU	Gender Affairs Unit
GoTL	Government of Timor Leste
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
INAP	National Institute of Public Administration
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Government Organization
NORAD	Norway Aid Agency
NZAID	New Zealand Aid
OPE	Office of Promotion of Equality
PERWL	Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership
RDTL	Democratic Republic of Timor Leste
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIT	United Nations Integration Mission in Timor Leste
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WIP	Women in Politics

## **Working Paper on Gender and Aid Effectiveness:**

### **Gender and the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) in Vietnam:**

*viewed through the context of the Paris Declaration principles of aid effectiveness.*

#### **Part I:**

#### ***The PRSC and how it relates to the principles articulated in the Paris Declaration***

##### *Background*

The PRSC is a World Bank (WB) led general budget support operation designed to support the Government of Vietnam (GOV) reform strategy outlined in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), now the Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006 – 2010, and other key planning documents. The WB leads this process with donors co-financing the operations<sup>1</sup>. The co financing is through grants or parallel lending. The role of co financiers has evolved from providing finance to substantially engaging in the preparation of the operations and policy dialogue with the GOV. The number of donors engaged in the operation has increased from 4 in PRSC 1, to 19 at present. In 2005 the PRSC represented 10 percent of Official Development Assistance and 2.3 percent of total budgetary resources.

The first PRSC began in Vietnam in 2001, with PRSCs 1-5 comprising the first PRSC cycle. PRSC 1 was originally designed as a structural adjustment credit to support the GOV reform programme through implementation of the GOV Poverty Reduction Strategy that was then outlined in the interim-PRSP. The main focus was on an agenda for economic reform. The PRSC 2 was based on the CPRGS that had by then been completed. It included a policy matrix to reflect the CPRGS objectives, and the CPRGS three pillar format. Pillar I was transition to the market economy, Pillar II was social inclusion and Pillar III, governance. PRSC 3 and 4 also had the same broad sectoral coverage as PRSC 2. PRSC 5 added commitments on social protection.

##### *Ownership*

The Paris Declaration (PD) recognizes that credible national strategies are fundamental to ownership. The PD also recognizes the importance of program based approaches for promoting ownership. The PRSC initiative meets these criteria for country ownership. There is strong GOV ownership of the reform agenda on which the PRSC has been based. The PRSC policy matrix has been developed from the CPRGS, 2001-2005. In

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<sup>1</sup> PRSC 1 was a two-tranche operation with the WB providing USD 150 million for the first tranche with no co-financing. The second tranche was supported by USD 100 million from the WB and USD 22 m from co-financiers. PRSC 2 consisted of USD 100m from the WB and USD 23 million from co-financiers and PRSC 3 involved USD 100 million from the WB and 106 million from co-financiers. The WB committed USD 100 million to PRSC 4 and co-financiers USD 118 million, and USD 100 million to PRSC 5, with co-financiers committing USD 154 million, with grant element of 75 percent.

2006 the GOV merged its CPRGS with the constitutionally mandated SEDP. The SEDP will be used as the basis for the next PRSC cycle 2006-2010. The development of the PRSC 6-10 policy matrix will be derived from the SEDP and other key Government strategies and plans.

The PRSC does not contain any formal conditionalities, underlining the GOV ownership of the PRSC. The development outcomes and policy actions in the matrix are “triggers” linked to levels of disbursements.

### *Alignment*

The PRSC provides an effective mechanism to align with GOV policy and systems. The policy actions of the PRSC are based on the government’s own strategies and policy commitments. Donors use a set of conceptual filters to identify the kinds of policy actions that are appropriate for inclusion in the PRSC matrix:

- they should be derived from the Government strategies;
- they should involve a strategic commitment (above project level);
- they should be defined precisely enough to facilitate monitoring and review;
- they should be coherent with other policy measures;

Donors align with the GOV medium term development goals by identifying a sequence of actions designed to achieve these goals. These then become the policy priorities for inclusion as triggers in the matrix. The sequencing and timing of these policy actions prepared by the donors is then negotiated with the government.

The funds are disbursed to the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) through a WB administered Trust Fund and go into a State Budget. These funds support the implementation of the agreed set of policy actions, but are un-earmarked. Government systems are used for implementation, monitoring and auditing of expenditures. There are no additional tracking mechanisms, although individual disbursements from SBV are reported into the budget. The annual cycle of commitment and disbursements is further aligned with the national budget calendar.

### *Harmonization*

The PRSC supports harmonization through its design and its implementation. Policy actions are determined through discussions with government in each of the policy areas, and are jointly conducted with all the co-financiers and potential co-financiers with an interest in them. From the government’s perspective, this arrangement reduces transaction costs. From the donors’ perspective, it increases the coherence of the support to reforms. Donors jointly make key decisions, including whether a policy action satisfies the criteria required to be addressed through the PRSC process, whether triggers are met, and whether there is satisfactory progress towards attaining each of the development outcomes.

The number of donors involved has expanded from four in the case of PRSC 1, to nineteen in the present PRSC operation. As more donors have joined, it has become

possible to tap the technical expertise of several of them on specific issues. More line ministries and government agencies have been brought into the policy dialogue supported by the PRSC process. Donors have greater opportunity to harmonize their contributions. The current operation in the series covers 19 policy areas, involving more than 20 line ministries and government agencies. There is also a clear complementarity between the PRSCs and the analytical program developed by the annual Vietnam Development Reports. These are joint donor documents presented at the year end consultative group meetings. They update Government and donors on the development challenges faced by Vietnam.

Harmonization at the level of GOV itself has also been pushed by the PRSC. Both donor representatives and those from GOV have pointed to increased harmonization *within* the GOV as a result of an improved mechanism for discussion amongst the central Government and sector Ministries. This leads to increased clarity regarding government policy, accountability for specific policies, and enhancing the information sharing process at a Government-wide level.

### *Managing for development results*

A comprehensive system of indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact of economic reforms was not in place at the beginning of the PRSC process. The focus varied across government plans and strategies, and the definition of goals and targets was not always precise, or totally pertinent. As the scope of the PRSC expanded to cover an ever-increasing number of policy areas, these indicators were gradually compiled, and were spelt out for end 2006. Progress under the PRSC operation so far has been strong even though the achievements across policy areas are uneven. Differences in the quality and frequency of the available indicators also affect the assessment.

Progress against all triggers would lead to a higher volume of lending by the Bank (high-case scenario), progress on most fronts would lead to stable lending (base-case scenario), while any serious back sliding would lead to suspension (low-case). So far, performance has remained consistently at base-case. The PRSC process has influenced the adoption of policy actions conducive to higher economic growth and poverty reduction rather than simply rewarding policies that would have been adopted anyway. Moreover, the tight deadlines resulting from the annual cycle for the delivery of PRSCs have also established an incentive to complete the key policy actions on time.

### *Mutual Accountability*

Mutual Accountability is the least well understood amongst all the Paris principles. From a mutual accountability perspective, donors and GOV both find the PRSC to be a mutually useful and reinforcing instrument. The PRSC is an effective cost sharing arrangement between the GOV and donor community, and a platform for a continued policy dialogue on a broad range of issues with key Government counterparts. However, the contribution of PRSC is modest when compared to government spending at an aggregate level – less than 2% of total government spending in Vietnam. Donors are thus not in any position to “buy” economic reforms in this non aid dependent environment.

The donor community plays only a supporting role: building consensus between the two sides. Often on the basis of high quality analytical work, it successfully brings new policy initiatives into the process. The joint mechanism for the design and review of the policy matrix provides a good basis for the mutual accountability principle to be better mainstreamed by both donors and GOV.

## **Part II:**

### ***The pursuit of gender equality objectives in the PRSC and how it relates to the Paris Declaration principles***

#### *PRSC viewed from the Ownership perspective:*

The government strategy to promote gender equality is set out in the SEDP, and the CPRGS prior to the SEDP, and in several documents in addition to the SEDP. The 'National Strategy for the Advancement of Women to 2010', developed by the Women's Union and the National Committee for Advancement of Women (NCFAW), is supported by a five-year action plan which identifies priorities related to gender equality. The SEDP itself integrates gender equality considerations and indicators in areas such as agriculture, employment, environment management, education, and health, and spells out several goals related to gender equality.

The PRSC is based on the national agenda as articulated in the CPRGS, and now the SEDP. However, the gender agenda in these national strategies is broad, all encompassing, and articulated in very general terms. The gender goals therein do not easily translate into clear cut PRSC priorities, or meet the criteria for inclusion in the PRSC policy matrix.

Several donors and GOV representatives hold the view that the successful performance of the GOV on most gender parameters has actually made it more difficult to mainstream gender issues in the PRSC. While most stakeholders admit to the importance of making further progress on this agenda, there is acknowledgement of the progress that has already been achieved. Gender issues are not seen as a pressing policy priority to be addressed through the PRSC.

A difficulty for the WB and some other donors has been designing monitorable policy actions that respond to the criteria for inclusion in the PRSC policy matrix. Gender equality targets related particularly to equal economic opportunity are seen as appropriate policy actions for being incorporated in the PRSC, but there is a lack of necessary analytical underpinnings to enable such policy actions to be clearly identified.

An issue that impacts the ownership of gender equality objectives in this initiative is the lack of data on some of the most intractable gender issues, making it difficult to address them adequately. Donors and NGOs point out that good data is not available to provide a basis for designing/ defining appropriate policy actions. There has been more progress in generating raw household and enterprise data of a high quality than in analyzing it. Lack

of good data on labor market issues makes it hard to construct credible gender related policy actions and indicators on these issues. The research needed to address these issues, which could provide sound analytical underpinnings for formulating PRSC policy actions, is also lacking. Reliable data are not available to measure many other indicators important from the perspective of gender equality objectives, e.g domestic violence and sex selective abortions.

Some donors and NGOs feel that the NCFAW and the Women's Union do not the push boundaries of the gender agenda for GOV. They do not sufficiently respond to the concerns and needs of women to address the gender challenges in the present context. There is no specific department or ministry with specific responsibility for gender issues.

The traditional role of women and the values espoused by Confucianism have also contributed to the gender agenda not being pushed far enough, and fast enough.

The Capacity Development (CD) agenda related to gender analysis is not strongly led by the GOV. The CD initiatives are quite fragmented. There is no explicit mechanism for the PRSC in general, and for the gender agenda in particular, to identify the areas where CD is needed, and how it is to be delivered.

*PRSC viewed from the Alignment perspective:*

Specific Government programs or budgets aimed at promoting gender equality do not actually tie-in with PRSC. However, donors and GOV have a range of projects and programs dealing with gender equality objectives, which they address through separate programs and structures – e.g., gender equality programs and projects that are dealt with by line ministries. The agencies responsible for furthering the gender agenda of the GOV such as the Women's Union point to the lack of specific budget allocation for women's programs with gender equality objectives.

Some donors have pushed for inclusion of gender equality objectives within the policy matrix of the PRSC. In the absence of policy actions which fulfill the criteria of being included in the policy matrix of PRS, it is difficult for donors and GOV to find the basis for alignment.

Government programs for pursuing gender equality and their potential for alignment with the PRSC approach are at best limited. Gender has not so far been well addressed within the PRSC. A first attempt was made at including a gender related policy action in PRSC-3 to complete the re-issuance of all land-use certificates (LUC's) under the name of both spouses, but this was not implemented and was dropped from the policy matrix. Another attempt was made to include gender in PRSC 5 and remained an indicator for development outcomes. It was rated satisfactory in PRSC 5, since action was taken on issuing new LUC's in both spouses' name and not on reissuing old ones.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> One explanation offered for this was that GOV did not have sufficient available capacity to issue the new LUCs as well as to reissue the old ones. The GOV then preferred to prioritize the issuing of new LUCs.

The World Bank maintains that it is not for lack of willingness that gender policy actions have not often been seen in the PRSC matrix. However, some donors feel that the World Bank only pays “lip-service” to gender equality objectives in the PRSC. The Women’s Union and NGOs want the inclusion of gender equality objectives in the PRSCs, and have participated in the discussions on PRSC priorities. They acknowledge though, that they did not have the knowledge and the capacity to participate meaningfully in the PRSC discussions, and in reporting progress on gender equality objectives.

A potential focus for alignment with government comes from the recently approved law on gender equality, and provides donors the leverage for addressing some of the most pressing issues. The law redresses gender disparities in existing legal documents, calls for gender mainstreaming in public administration and legislates for the inclusion of temporary measures, such as targets and quotas for women’s participation in decision making. A proposed law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control provides another opportunity to address a problem that is believed to be widespread. With this overall policy and legal framework to promote gender equality taking shape in Vietnam, effective enforcement and accountability mechanism need to be put in place.

According to the NCFAW and the Women’s Union, when donors are engaged in large cross sectoral programs, like the PRSC, they lose sight of gender equality objectives. However, when they are engaged specifically in gender related projects, they align broadly with the government strategy for the advancement of women.

Government and civil society based approaches to promote gender equality have fed into the PRSC dialogue only sporadically. While one of the strengths of the PRSC process is the wide-spread participation in the policy dialogue, the civil society organizations admit that they need to be more engaged in the process, but have so far not taken advantage of the opening up of the policy dialogue.

*PRSC viewed from the Harmonization perspective:*

Some donors are particularly active in pursuing the gender agenda and include DfID, CIDA, Spanish Aid, Irish Aid, Netherlands, WB, ADB and the UN. There does not seem to be an explicit division of responsibility on gender issues amongst donors. The role of DfID as a ‘driver of change’ in pushing the gender agenda in the PRSC, and the UN’s efforts in coordinating the work on gender, are acknowledged by stakeholders. Some donors feel that general willingness to coordinate notwithstanding, very little joint work is done on programs.

Donors have not been very successful in harmonizing their own objectives and integrating their approaches on gender equality. A clear focus for the reform agenda or consensus on an underlying strategy and implementing framework is lacking. The Partnership Group on Gender is not very active, and some donors suggest linking the different Partnership groups in providing inputs to the PRSC.

The interest of donors in this agenda has to a certain extent been conditioned by the availability of human and financial resources within donor agencies. Several donors said it was possible to remain engaged with the gender agenda only when good quality human resources were available on the ground. The NCFAW and National Committee for Population, Family and Children similarly feel that availability of financial and human resources has had a limiting effect on the way donors and governments have dealt with gender issues. While donors have expressed support for the gender agenda it has not always been backed with resources. Donors have sometimes not had the right gender specialists on their teams, particularly those equipped to handle more complex issues. More time and attention from donors is required in pushing the gender agenda. The World Bank, UN, DfID and Spain also want to see a more rigorous analysis of gender issues to enable their inclusion in the PRSC, but point to the human resources limitations.

The success of the PRSC itself offers strong incentives for donor harmonization. The PRSC provides a ready-made vehicle to further the Paris principles and almost compels donors to participate. Some donors said that it would be difficult to justify non-participation. The gender agenda offers a good entry point into the PRSC dialogue. The “repeated rhetoric” of gender not being well represented in the PRSC provides them with the “cause”. In addition, it allows “small donors a seat at a big table” – co-financing the PRSC gives them the opportunity to jointly participate in a high level policy dialogue with the government. For some donors, an agency level political commitment to donor harmonization has in fact been translated into a field level imperative in Vietnam.

On the other hand, within - agency incentives for harmonization are still weak for some donors, and not all donors get the needed support from headquarters. The real incentive for donors is to “get the business done, and pushing the gender agenda in the PRSC is not the most effective way to do so.”

There is a recognition of the role of champions for harmonization in the donor agencies, especially in the context to gender equality objectives, and DfID, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and Ireland were repeatedly identified.

Implementation arrangements also affect harmonization and the pursuit of gender equality objectives. Much of the donor financing is still channeled through projects and the largest donors in Vietnam including France, Japan, DfID, ADB and the World Bank<sup>3</sup> all use the project modality in large measure. Donors generally insist that individual projects funded by them pass through the gender filter. However, it has been extremely challenging to harmonize donor projects and the gender approaches within these projects. Some donors, and some parts of GOV, point out that the aid effectiveness agenda in Vietnam has not really touched upon gender issues. Putting in place the nuts and bolts for harmonization has been such an intensive process that it has left donors with little time and energy for harmonization on cross cutting policy issues such as gender.

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<sup>3</sup> The World Bank has a global cap of 30% of IDA resources being channeled through budget support??

On the other hand, the implementation arrangements of the PRSC provide an implicit and effective harmonization mechanism. But the PRSC does not have a specific mandate or arrangements to focus on gender issues, and to harmonize donor policy around that. One GOV representative pointed out that when donors are engaged in smaller projects they are better able to keep a gender perspective. When it comes to big programs like the PRSC in particular or budget/sector support in general, the gender perspective often gets buried in the complexities of these modalities.

### *PRSC viewed from the perspective of Managing for Development Results*

The results of the PRSC in relation to gender equality objectives are limited by its nature. The limited gender policy actions that were included in the PRSC have not been properly measured and there is a lack of rigorous assessment of their impact on women.

Another perspective on results is provided by some donors who have concerns about the assessment process. There is no clear baseline for many indicators, and the assessments produced by the World Bank are subjective in nature. Moreover, many of the institutional reforms necessarily have a long time scale for implementation. These are not easily assessed on an annual cycle. There are concerns that the assessment is not linked to a country-led review process such as Annual Progress Report or a monitoring system for the national development strategy. Another limitation in measuring the results of the PRSC is the tight annual preparation timetable which does not allow for proper consideration and debate on the complex assessments that need to be made.

Other donors were satisfied that the decision process for deciding on progress towards the policy actions that act as triggers is now undertaken through voting by co financiers, regardless of financial contribution.

On the question that the gender policy action on issuance of LUCs in the name of both spouses was dropped from the policy matrix in the earlier PRSCs without satisfactory progress being reported, the World Bank's view is that the process cannot be held up in the face of general overall satisfactory progress. Moreover the triggers are not to be interpreted as conditions, and indeed their evaluation involves an element of judgment in the spirit of a bottom line assessment. It is important that the results measurement processes not get bogged down in details, keeping the big picture in view. It is in this spirit that broad based progress is reported and rewarded.

The NCFAW argues that the results assessment consider the implementation difficulties and challenges of the gender policy actions, and thus not be overly critical of the pace of progress.

A GOV view on the gender impacts of the PRSC is for the PRSC results to not be seen through a gender filter, since that has so far not been an explicit focus of the PRSC. However in subsequent PRSCs, a tight alignment of the PRSC policy actions with the SEDP outcomes and monitoring indicators will lead to better measurement of results

including those on gender. Some donors and NGOs see the creation of policy space to bring to the table issues of domestic violence, trafficking etc., as a significant development result in itself.

An evaluation of budget support in Vietnam concluded that the PRSC is designed to reinforce Government commitment to its own reform program but not to generate commitment in areas where it is lacking<sup>4</sup>. This view is also echoed by some donors who feel that the PRSC makes a limited contribution to policy reform. The PRSC is a loan instrument at its core, hence, the consistent base-case scenario assessment which continues to allow for quick disbursement. Because donors are disbursement oriented, this instrument offers an efficient way of channeling resources, not necessarily for policy reform. On the other hand several donors and representatives of GOV agree that even though it is difficult to fully attribute success in the attainment of specific development outcomes to specific policy actions under the PRSC process, the latter is making an important contribution.

#### *PRSC viewed from the perspective of Mutual Accountability*

There is little understanding of the mutual accountability principle in general, and from a gender perspective in particular, on the part of both donors and the GOV. All stakeholders agree that more work is needed to establish mutual accountability for gender objectives, first to have them more fully integrated into the PRSC, and then for both donors and GOV to review progress on gender.

The Women's Union were concerned that it was not possible for them to find out what impact the PRSC policy actions were having on women. Lacking both knowledge of the process and capacity, they could neither monitor the results nor challenge the policies. Some donors and NGOs also shared the concern of inadequate capacity to take advantage of the Bank's openness in inviting them into the PRSC planning and review process.

#### *Some initial conclusions*

The organic evolution of the PRSC instrument and its implementation modalities, have not implicitly provided for gender to be built in. As a high quality broad based reform programme, underpinned by robust analytical work, it is always faced with the considerable challenge of staying focused and developmentally useful, maintaining its momentum, and keeping the right direction. One of the consequences of this burden of expectation (and design) is its inability to fully take on board important cross cutting issues such as gender.

Some stakeholders regard it as an instrument for economic reform, not for social change. It is seen as narrow, and self-limiting. It does not push policy reform but rather locks it in. This has negative implications for higher order and complex gender equality objectives, which go beyond basic gender equality indicators.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Evaluation of general Budget Support 1994-2006; Vietnam Final Country Report draft January 2006

There has not been an attempt so far to mainstream gender issues within the PRSC by including any comprehensive initiative aimed at gender, or at examining the gender impact of PRSC policy actions. The gender policy actions that were included in the past were not carried forward because of the design limitation of the PRSC that entails that if a policy action included in the matrix is not successfully achieved/implemented, it is not followed up in the subsequent PRSC.

The PRSC initiative presents both significant risks and opportunities for the pursuit of gender equality objectives.

The strong national ownership of the PRSC means that there is relatively less scope to influence policy making. However the policy dialogue space that this process creates offers scope for influencing policy content. The GOV does not push for 'radical' gender equality objectives, and the donors and other stakeholders have to find creative ways to include them in the policy dialogue and widen the debate while working within the parameters provided by strong ownership of the initiative by the GOV.

The focus on aligning with the systems and processes that are responsible for managing the initiative also determines the scope for promoting gender equality objectives. Donors and other stakeholders have some difficulties in engaging in the policy process because of the systems and processes in place. The PRSC and the working groups which discuss policy are designed to provide inputs into GOV policy, and suggestions for implementation. The GOV does not fully engage in all the working groups, thus leading to certain issues not being as well addressed as others. One of these is gender. The World Bank has clearly backed GOV priorities, whereas certain donors have wanted it to provide a bigger push with GOV on issues such as gender. With the ever increasing number of co financiers, some with their own agendas, coordination will become a bigger challenge, as will accommodating donor priorities, and will impact how gender objectives are pursued in the future.

The PRSC initiative calls for adequate and appropriate human resources to engage meaningfully on gender issues. These have not always been available with the donors and with the GOV. A case in point is the sophisticated research capacity that is required to bring in gender related policy actions into the PRSC matrix, if they have to meet the criteria for inclusion.

An additional layer of human resource requirements is added by the elaborate structures for harmonization. Effective participation imposes high human resource demands on smaller donors, and intra agency coordination demands on the bigger donors, even though they may not be constrained by human resources. The PRSC requires an effective and harmonized coordination mechanism in order to be delivered on an annual basis. The broadening of the scope of the PRSC has created overlaps between the teams involved in the policy areas and other partnership groups. There are at present more than 40 formally established groups and sub groups. It is important for GOV and donors to review the existing structures and design a more effective partnership architecture that supports

better harmonization and rationalizes the pressures on human resources, and yet responds to the need for better inclusion of cross cutting themes such as gender.

The reporting mechanism only provides for an assessment of the policy actions that are included in the PRSC matrix. Thus gender concerns are not reflected in any assessment of results and outcomes if they do not find their way into the policy matrix.

All this has important implications for gender strategy and working practice of gender policy makers and practitioners. In order to further the gender equality objectives in the PRSC, better and more focused analytical work on some key issues will be needed. These have been identified in several strategic documents and studies such as the Vietnam Development Report 2007, and a study on forward- looking strategies to promote gender equity in Vietnam<sup>5</sup>.

The legal framework to support gender equality is gradually being completed, and can contribute to the achievement of gender equality objectives. The necessary institutional arrangements for implementing the government commitments to gender equality are now needed, including effective accountability mechanisms. The existing arrangements lack influence, resources and creativity. Adequate and appropriate human and financial resources are needed to implement mandates and to monitor progress. Gender policy makers and practitioners now need to follow up on these developments.

The aid effectiveness agenda in Vietnam has been called a “ bureaucratic movement that is developing its own momentum”. The risk of fatigue among participants is a risk to guard against. The value added from pursuing the aid effectiveness agenda must be clearly demonstrated. Some misunderstandings, which have developed around the Paris Declaration –and the Hanoi Core Statement – need to be cleared. (e.g. all PMUs are to be abolished). The understanding of the Paris Declaration is not uniform in the GOV either. Demystifying the PRSC is suggested as a further means to strengthen the PRSC and aid effectiveness, particularly in the pursuit of gender equality objectives. The aid effectiveness processes, and the PRSC process, do not converge, although similar themes are now starting to be looked at jointly. This will require further rationalization, both for aid effectiveness as well as the effective pursuit of gender equality objectives.

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<sup>5</sup> Preparing for the Future: Forward-looking Strategies to Promote Gender Equity in Vietnam (December 2005)