

Proceedings of the International Workshop on Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals

Jointly sponsored by the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the
OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the
Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender

November 19-20, 2003, World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Table of Contents:

Introduction.....	1
Objectives.....	1
Participants.....	1
Summary of Proceedings.....	2
Opening Session.....	2
Working Group 1: Engendering National Planning Processes, Policies and Interventions to Achieve Progress towards the MDGs.....	3
Working Group 2: Building Political Momentum and Mobilizing Grassroots Support for Gender Equality.....	4
Working Group 3: Gender-Sensitive Monitoring of Progress Towards the MDGs.....	5
Closing Session.....	6
Annex 1: Workshop Agenda.....	8

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Introduction

Achieving gender equality is not only important as a goal in itself, as spelled out the third of the Millennium Development Goals; it is also as a path to achieving all the MDGs. In an effort to determine how gender specific actions can be better integrated into policies and interventions intended to achieve the MDGs, the World Bank and UNDP jointly organized a high-level international workshop on *Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*. The workshop, which was hosted by the World Bank and took place in Washington DC on November 19 and 20, 2003, was a collaborative effort co-sponsored by the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender.

This document gives information on the workshop objectives, participants, and presents a brief summary of the proceedings. Presentations, speeches, bios of presenters, and additional information is available at the workshop website:

<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/mdgworkshop/>

Objectives

The goals of the two-day workshop were to:

- i. Identify concrete operational and analytical examples of how gender issues can be integrated into MDG policies and interventions;
- ii. Identify processes and tools that will encourage greater accountability for addressing gender issues in MDG implementation strategies; and
- iii. Promote coordination among development agencies in their efforts to integrate gender issues into the MDGs.

Participants

The workshop brought together more than 200 people from the UN system, bi-lateral organizations, civil society, the private sector and developing countries. In addition, about 20 people from Yemen and Turkey, including government officials, staff from development agencies and civil society, participated in the opening sessions via video links. The workshop included over 25 presenters, including senior government officials from Albania, Honduras, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia. Also participating were the President of the World Bank, *James D. Wolfensohn*, *Zephirin Diabre*, the Associate Administrator, UN Development Programme, and *Noeleen Heyzer*, Executive Director, UN Development Fund for Women.

Summary of Proceedings

The workshop comprised an opening session with presentations by a panel of experts; a keynote luncheon speaker; three concurrent working groups meeting on both days of the workshop; and a closing session. The opening speakers provided the framework for the workshop, highlighting different aspects of the MDG debate and setting the stage for the subsequent working group discussions. The three working groups focused on strategic entry points for integrating a gender perspective into MDG policies and interventions. The entry points were:

- i. Engendering national planning processes, policies, and interventions to achieve progress towards the MDGs;
- ii. Building political momentum and mobilizing grassroots support for gender equality; and
- iii. Gender-sensitive monitoring of progress towards the MDGs.

At the closing session, presentations were made on the main issues raised and specific actions for follow-up that arose from working group discussions were identified.

Opening Session

Carolyn Hannan, Director of the UN's Division for the Advancement of Women, welcomed the participants and alerted them to the timeliness of the workshop. Ms. Hannan stated that in 2005, member states of the United Nations will meet to review the progress achieved in implementing the commitments of the Millennium Declaration, based on a report prepared by the UN Secretary General's office. This meeting will coincide with the appraisal of ten years of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +10). Ms. Hannan emphasized the urgency of both integrating gender into the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and establishing clear links with Beijing +10.

Ms. Hannan's opening remarks were followed by speeches by *James D. Wolfensohn*, the World Bank's President and *Noeleen Heyzer*, UNIFEM's Executive Director. *Zephirin Diabre*, Associate Administrator for UNDP, and *Peter Heller*, Deputy Director of the IMF's Fiscal Affairs department, also made remarks. All the speakers reiterated the importance of a gender perspective for all the MDGs.

Mr. Wolfensohn called for concrete actions and a process for accountability to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in the achievement of all eight goals. He stressed that without greater attention to gender issues, it will not be possible to achieve the MDGs.

At the opening, Mr. Diabre stressed that the MDGs would not be achieved unless gender equality becomes a central issue in their implementation and accountability. "Unless women in developing countries are mobilized to advocate for gender equality and demand accountability, unless we all broaden our specific action with coordinated responses, we will have once again failed on our promises," said Mr. Diabre.

Ms. Heyzer emphasized that "it is important to recognize that women's rights play an important part in achieving development goals. The power of the MDGs is that they provide a global consensus and commitment to bring about a world freer from want and

fear.” Ms. Heyzer also gave an overview of the online discussion on gender and MDGs that preceded the conference. The summary of the on-line discussion can be found at:

http://www.mdgender.net/upload/monographs/MDGenderNet_Summary.doc).

Following the opening speeches, presentations were made by Her Excellency, *Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika*, Ambassador of Zambia to the United States; *Mayra Buvinic*, Chief, Sustainable Development Department at the Inter-American Development Bank; *Naila Kabeer*, Professor at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex; and *Phil Evans*, Senior Social Development Adviser, UK Mission to the UN and Chair of the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality. Those presentations covered some of the key issues for discussions at the working group meetings, including the political obstacles in attempting to attain the MDGs, questions of responsibility and ownership at the national and regional levels, the MDG’s relevance to middle-income countries, and the opportunity cost of ignoring gender issues in MDG policies and interventions.

In her keynote remarks, *Mamphela Ramphela*, Managing Director of the World Bank, stressed the importance of gender equality for poverty reduction and called on the participants to move away from a silo-mentality to development and instead work together across sectors to achieve the MDGs.

Working Group 1:

Engendering National Planning Processes, Policies and Interventions to Achieve Progress towards the MDGs

Presentations and discussions for this working group focused on lessons, good practices, and promising approaches to engender national planning processes, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and budgets; the synergies that exist between the different goals, and how countries have addressed gender equality across all the goals.

The first day’s presentations were on PRSPs, national budgets, and the Millennium Development Project. *Mark Blackden*, World Bank Lead Economist in the Africa region, identified challenges in integrating gender issues in PRSPs, especially the dilemma the World Bank faces in integrating gender in a country-owned and led policy instrument. *Winnie Byanyima*, a Ugandan parliamentarian, described Uganda’s gender budget project. While the project had yet to make an impact on the country’s budget, it had brought media attention to gender issues in the budget process and increased collaboration between civil society groups and civil servants. *Caren Grown*, Director, Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth team, International Center for Research on Women, and member of the Millennium Development Project’s task force for goal three, shared the task force’s proposed five critical gender and development issues for national governments to focus on. The critical issues included secondary education, reproductive rights, property rights, informal employment, and violence.

The second day focused on how countries have addressed gender equality across the different MDGs, and on synergies between the various goals. Presentations were made on gender and health issues in the MDGs and experiences of engendering MDGs in Vietnam and India. The WHO’s *Claudia Garcia-Moreno* noted that reproductive health and gender-based violence issues are not clearly addressed by the MDGs. *Tran Thi Mai Huong*, Permanent Secretary of Vietnam’s National Committee for the Advancement of

Women (NCFAW), described the opportunities and challenges her organization faced in engendering the MDGs. Vietnam's gender-responsive national development goals, the country's national strategy, and plan of action for women helped to engender the MDGs in the local context. In addition to buy-in at the highest level, experience from Vietnam showed that organizing early and prioritizing a few issues contributed to success. However, Ms. Mai Huong said that staff in her organization needed training on gender mainstreaming, and more sex-disaggregated data to monitor progress were required. *Douglas Barnes*, Senior Energy Specialist, South Asia, World Bank and *Mitali Sen* from the University of Maryland made a joint presentation on the recent research on the household energy sector and demonstrated the significant impacts of different patterns of energy usage on women's health and time-use. The presentation highlighted the synergies between the different MDGs and further demonstrated how the MDGs are mutually reinforcing.

Working Group 2:

Building Political Momentum and Mobilizing Grassroots Support for Gender Equality

This working group sought answers to the following questions: What strategies can be used for building local ownership, commitment and political will for achieving the MDGs, and how can we ensure that gender equality is an integral component of such strategies? How can grassroots support for gender equality be mobilized as part of achieving the MDGs? And how should governments be held accountable for ensuring that gender equality is integral to policies and interventions for the MDGs?

Discussions on the first day followed from a joint presentation made by *Glenda Gallardo*, Senior Economist at UNDP, and *Maribel Suazo Madrid*, Programme Advisor with the Honduras office of the Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA). The presenters described the work done by UNDP and JICA to promote the MDGs at the local level in Honduras. The organizations arranged a number of highly successful workshops in municipalities with participants from local governments, religious institutions, parent-teacher associations, and other groups. The Honduras workshops generated support for the MDGs among key local actors and participants came up with agreements on gender issues, including developing a proposal to set-up a municipal center for women and using the MDGs to raise local awareness about gender inequalities.

Comments on the presentation led to a discussion of ways to create ownership of gender and MDG concerns among different actors, especially donor-country politicians. Members suggested focusing on the costs of gender inequalities, especially for economic growth, raising awareness in national finance ministries, and targeting the national budget process. There was also a discussion on connecting the PRSP and MDG processes at the national and local levels through workshops and awareness-raising campaigns.

On the second day, the working group participants discussed civil society's role in mobilizing around the MDGs. Informal presentations were made by *Joan Ross Frankson*, Communications Director, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and *Asma Lateef*, Senior International Policy Analyst, Bread for the World. *Amanda Ellis*, Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, World Bank and *Julie Weeks*, Executive Director of the US Women's Business Council, offered informal remarks on how the private sector can be mobilized around the MDGs.

Even though NGOs, activists, and civil society organizations were mobilized around the Beijing platform, there is less ownership of the MDG framework, which most members of the working group feel is a missed opportunity. They noted that though the MDGs could be elaborated to include reproductive health and violence issues, civil society organizations could still use the goals as a tool to create momentum both locally and nationally on gender equality and development. Moreover, through the media and other means, civil society organizations could hold governments accountable to their commitment to meet the MDGs.

**Working Group 3:
Gender-Sensitive Monitoring of Progress Towards the MDGs**

Members of this working group discussed lessons and promising approaches for integrating gender perspectives in national MDG reports and other national monitoring and accountability processes; and strategies for addressing data gaps and strengthening national capacities for collection, production, and dissemination of gender sensitive and sex-disaggregated statistics.

Kalyani Menon-Sen, Gender Advisor with UNDP's Human Development Resource Center, reported findings of a gender-based review of national MDG reports. The review [*Millennium Development Goals: National MDG Report a Look Through a Gender Lens*](#) found that discussions on gender in the national reports were primarily confined to Goal 3 (gender equality), Goal 5 (maternal mortality), and Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS). There was a 'ghettoisation' of gender issues within women-specific sectors. Following Ms. Menon-Sen's presentation, *Anila Tanku*, Chief of Cabinet for Albania's Deputy Prime Minister, described lessons learned from integrating gender in Albania's monitoring and accountability processes.

Working group participants discussed the key issues that emerged from both presentations. Participants debated the importance of preparing a minimum set of standard indicators for gender-sensitive monitoring of the MDGs to overcome variance in standards among donor agencies, international organizations, and governments. Ms. Menon-Sen's presentation also proposed increasing the participation of women's groups in the monitoring process and in report writing. The challenge was in both convincing the women's movement to become engaged in the process in a timely way and convincing governments to open up the process to a wider group of constituencies.

Other practical barriers to engendering MDG monitoring were identified, such as the emphasis on keeping the list of indicators small, the limited gender-related capacity of national statistical agencies, and the costs for reporting on gender that countries face to comply with international conventions, in addition to the MDGs (for example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW).

On the second day, participants discussed data availability and collection issues that arose from presentations by *Sonia Montano*, Chief of ECLAC's Women and Development Unit, on ECLAC's strategies, and *Pierella Paci*, Senior Economist for the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia office, on building capacity for gender monitoring in Kosovo. While a number of countries do not have statistical offices, there are many countries with

statistical offices that do not collect sex-disaggregated data, which makes it hard to do gender-sensitive monitoring of the MDGs beyond Goal 3. The raw data best suited for analysis are not readily available and there are methodological inconsistencies across sources for the data that are available.

The working group discussed recommendations for overcoming data availability and collection shortcomings. Statistical conferences are one way to expose national statistical agencies to the need for, and methods to collect, sex-disaggregated data. Supplemental data and information of regional interest could be collected locally to reduce divergence in use of indicators and data quality. Participants also discussed building capacity for data collection through technical exchanges between countries, and regional training exercises. The working group heard that experience showed that improving existing mechanisms, such as strengthening an inter-ministerial committee in Kosovo so statistical arms of the different ministries could communicate, could significantly improve gender-related data collection and availability.

Closing Session

Representatives from each working group made presentations at the closing session on the key issues and follow-up actions discussed at their working group meetings. The specific actions should be viewed as good practices and suggestions, and each agency can apply these as appropriate.

These key issues and actions were briefly discussed before the workshop was closed by *Karen Mason*, Director of the World Bank's Gender and Development, and *Aster Zaoude*, UNDP's Senior Gender and Development Advisor in the Poverty Group.

The specific actions for follow-up from each working group are listed in Table 1 below. Full presentations are available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/gender/mdgworkshop> .

Table 1. Actions for follow-up from working group discussions

Working Group 1: Engendering National Planning Processes	Working Group 2: Mobilizing Grassroots Support	Working Group 3: Gender-Sensitive Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize women’s participation in decision making at all levels and in all MDG-related areas. ▪ Strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender equality (such as women’s machineries) for oversight and accountability. ▪ Establish incentives for national and sub-national governments to focus on gender in the MDGs. ▪ Build capacity of institutions and individuals to address gender equality as a crosscutting issue. ▪ Link sex disaggregated data to action and advocacy around the MDGs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2005 the Beijing +10 outcomes should be factored into the subsequent review of the MDGs. ▪ Governments and the World Bank need to formalize an ongoing mechanism for consultation with women and civil society organizations. ▪ Build partnerships around key strategic breakthrough areas: engendering economists and finance ministers and unbundling national budgets. ▪ Arguments need to be framed in terms of opportunity costs and economic gains. ▪ Women’s and civil society organizations should be actively consulted in the preparation of national reports on the MDGs. These reports should be widely disseminated to communities (especially through radio) so that government action can be tracked. ▪ By 2005 engender all MDG goals by adding new indicators, specifically indicators on land rights, poverty and gender equality, reproductive health/rights, violence, and male participation in domestic responsibilities. ▪ Strengthen the guidance to country teams for addressing gender equality in country reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a task force to engender MDGs to: develop a minimum set of MDG indicators to monitor gender (2005) and work towards establishing a comprehensive gender database which would incorporate gender indicators related to major conventions (including process indicators). ▪ Task force to link with the inter-agency expert group and the UN Statistical Commission to prepare international norms and standards for gender sensitive indicators. ▪ UN Development Group (UNDG) to prepare a tool kit to guide country teams in ‘engendering’ MDG reports process across goals (practical tips, indicators, best practice) ▪ Improve analytical capacity in gender issues by improving the work of existent networks (sharing results, methodologies, and analysis). ▪ Strengthen national systems of statistics: better dissemination of information (transparency, public good); coordination of data producers at country level (national statistical offices, administrative records, donor coordination); and support regional and sub-national mechanisms to collect and analyze information.

[Annex 1: Workshop Agenda](#)