

**International Colloquium on Woman's Empowerment, Leadership Development,
International Peace and Security**

Millennium Development Goal 3

UN agencies and other actors share practical experiences on initiatives for moving from *policy to practice* in achieving gender equality especially in the areas of women's political and economic, decision making, income earnings for women, girls education, easy access to reproductive rights and services and resources for women and men. Panelists addressed centrality of gender and effective strategies for achieving gender equality and mainstreaming. They also reiterated the need for better partnerships among actors: government ministries, women organizations and the private sector to realizing gender equality by 2015. Basic questions included:

- Why is implementation of declarations and commitments on gender equality lower and slower than expected?
- What else can actors do to scale up current achievements and good practices on gender equality (government ministries, civil society, the private sector, communities and the attitudes of women and men themselves)?
- What lessons have been learned on reaching MDG 3 across regions and adapted to the Liberian and other countries in conflict and post conflict.

The MDG 3 Theme Panels included;

UNDP/UNIFEM

Panel 1: From numbers to influence: women in politics, increasing women's economic opportunities

UNIDO

Panel 2: Women equality through income-earning opportunities: the need for bottom-up growth strategies

UNFPA

Panel 3: Strategies to guarantee sexual and reproductive health and right MDG 3- Empowered linkage: How Quality Primary Education for all Girls and Boys (MDG 2) supports Empowerment of Women (MDG 3) for Leadership, Peace and Security

UNICEF

Panel 4: Empowered linkage: how quality primary education for all girls and boys supports employment of women for leadership, peace and security

MDG 3 Theme
Key outcomes and recommendations

Panel 1: From numbers to influence: women in politics, increasing women's economic opportunities

- While few countries have made commendable progress in increasing the numbers of women in national parliaments, for the majority of countries the numbers of women in political office remains very low. It is therefore recommended that initiatives to increase the numbers of women in parliaments and in local government structures.
- In order to convert the numbers of women in parliaments into influence on policies for economic empowerment for women, there is urgent need for enhancing the capacities of women parliamentarians in the following areas:
 - Economic and financial literacy in order to contribute to influence national economic and financial policies, including budgets.
 - Alliance building and advocacy to gain support from male colleagues in particular.
- It was recommended that partnerships between women in parliament and civil society organizations be created and strengthened to support women in parliament. Such support should include research, policy analysis and briefs.
- There is a need for women politicians and gender equality advocates to study parliamentary structures (for example, standing/functional committees) and development/implement strategies for strengthening them to mainstream gender and women's empowerment.

Panel 2: Women equality through income-earning opportunities: the need for bottom-up growth strategies

- The meeting endorsed "bottom-up growth strategies" to assist women entrepreneurs but emphasized that this should be done in a holistic manner, in particular including education and related matters.
- The meeting recommends that micro-credit schemes for micro enterprises be established, building on the lessons learned globally on the operation of such schemes; development banks as well as venture capital schemes be established or strengthened with particularly focus on small and medium enterprises; and, most important of all, a supportive policy and institutional environment with effective linkages to commercial banks and the broader financial system be developed in which micro and small entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs can thrive;

that enabling policies to revise land titles and other forms of collateral for loans be developed;

- The meeting recommended that business support services be provided in the areas of: business incubators for women and mentoring schemes, specialized training (business management, entrepreneurship training, ICT, particularly market and management information systems; energy access, particularly renewable energies for productive activities.
- The meeting recommended that strong value-chain linkages be established and/or strengthened to enable small and medium enterprises to penetrate regional and international markets through the establishment of quality, standardization schemes to develop market niches in the provision of services and intermediate products for large enterprises; building up clusters and association of firms and viable networks of associated firms and suppliers and support institutions.

Panel 3: Strategies to guarantee sexual and reproductive health and right MDG 3- Empowered linkage: How Quality Primary Education for all Girls and Boys (MDG 2) supports Empowerment of Women (MDG 3) for Leadership, Peace and Security

To support the attainment of MDG goal 3 - we emphasize the full implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action (2007), the re-enforcement of the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA) and the recommendations from the International Colloquium on Women's leadership, Empowerment, Peace and Security.

We emphasize the importance of integrating STI/HIV/AIDS, and sexual reproductive health and rights programmes and services, including reproductive concerns such as teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, repositioning of family planning as an essential part of the attainment of health related MDGs and the provision of quality, affordable and comprehensive youth friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and information including RH commodities to promote Safe Motherhood, child survival, maternal, newborn and child health, especially targeting adolescent girls and women who come from the most marginalized groups;

We emphasize the need for increased capacity and training of national health care providers and systems to be able to provide a comprehensive, quality and affordable reproductive health services, reduce health inequities, and empower girls and women to exercise their right to reproductive health and rights;

We emphasize the need to promote culturally sensitive approaches in working on traditional and harmful practices, including prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), including the need for addressing sexual and gender based violence, through multidisciplinary prevention and response strategies and activities.

Panel 4: Empowered linkage: how quality primary education for all girls and boys supports employment of women for leadership, peace and security

- As gender gaps and barriers in education exist, specific strategies are necessary to promote girls education ensuring access for success, taking into account:
 - scholarships,
 - recruitment of gender-sensitive female teachers,
 - safe and protective school environments including dormitories,
 - school sanitation and infrastructure including menstrual hygiene,
 - school feeding,
 - curriculum that is competency-based, gender-sensitive and promotes active learning including sexual and reproductive health and issues of environmental sustainability,
 - peer support and mentoring programmes,
 - programmes for marginalized children including pregnant and nursing young mothers and migrating children,
 - cultural barriers that continue to discriminate and stigmatize girls.
- Parental involvement is also key to access for success in achieving gender equality in education, so parents must be engaged; in addition, women must also have access to educational opportunities for their own empowerment.

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