



**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-ninth session**

Resources for gender equality: Good practices and strategies for action/the way forward

PANEL DISCUSSION

by

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*The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

Distinguished guests, I am delighted to be here today as we turn our attention to an agenda that has long been a personal passion: financing the “unfinished business” of gender equality and women’s rights.

Never has there been a more opportune time for this conversation. It has been remarkable to have seen such a high priority placed on achieving gender equality in negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals. Several of you in this room were responsible for that.

Political commitments must be matched with the resources required to get the job done. Achieving gender equality will require the mobilisation and effective use of **all** sources of finance – public, private, international and domestic. This can only be achieved through partnership.

I am a firm believer that money is available. There has been an **extraordinary upward trend** in aid for gender equality since the MDGs. While aid will only be part of what is needed to deliver the SDGs, it remains a crucial part, especially in least-developed countries and in fragile states. We need to keep focused on **closing gaps in donor spending** in priority areas for women and girls such as economic rights, family planning and ending the scourge of violence against women and girls.

But achieving gender equality cannot be funded through aid alone. The **most important** source of finance is **countries’ own domestic resources**. In 2012, tax revenue in Africa was **ten times** the volume of the development assistance provided!

What will really make the difference are **government budgets** that are **responsive to women’s specific needs and interests**, and **aid** that is **aligned with national efforts to advance gender equality**.

We have seen what strong national ownership can achieve. I have found it very inspiring to hear today from Morocco about their success in **increasing domestic resources for gender equality**. Many of you have supported country-led efforts such as these, including UN Women, international financial institutions, and bilateral donors, who are using aid “smartly” to build the capacity of states to carry out their own gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

One way in which we are supporting these country-led efforts at the OECD is through the **Global Partnership indicator on gender equality**. Developed in collaboration with UN Women, this is one of 10 indicators to monitor progress in the implementation of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. The indicator provides data on whether governments track allocations for gender equality and make this information public. It is an **entry point for ensuring that domestic resource allocations benefit women and men equally**.

The strong take-up of the indicator is a clear **sign of the strength of government commitment to financing gender equality**. Of the **35** countries that reported on the indicator in 2013, **12** already have systems in place to track and make public allocations in support of gender equality. Many countries without a system reported dedicated efforts to develop one. The OECD is committed to working with UN Women and others to continue to expand the number of countries engaged in monitoring the gender equality indicator.

Civil society, especially women’s organisations, are critical partners in these efforts to increase accountability and transparency in domestic resourcing for gender equality. Their work is key to ensuring that money is spent in the right way on the right things at the right time. I was delighted to hear that a successor to the innovative Dutch FLOW fund is planned, and even more pleased to hear that other governments are coming on board. We’ve seen the extraordinary impact that these funds

have had in supporting the vital work of women's organisations – **just imagine what could be achieved when donors join together.**

Generating the serious money required to achieve gender equality will also require **forging new partnerships**, including with the private sector, and ensuring that their investments are **aligned with national gender equality priorities**. Agreed standards, such as the Women's Empowerment Principles developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, could help to foster common values as the basis for public-private partnerships. Here, donors could play an important role as **bridge-builders**.

No matter what our role is, we need to become more courageous about holding our governments – as well as private actors – to account for gender equality results. Several years ago I asked a senior Finance official in Zambia whether he could have told me what the Government spent on gender equality in each of the priority areas of its national development plan. His answer: **"Yes – but nobody ever asked me!"**

One platform that holds much potential for bringing together diverse partners in support of country-led initiatives for financing gender equality is the Global Partnership's **initiative on gender equality**. Launched in Mexico at the first High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership, the initiative brings partners together around four critical actions to support country-driven initiatives to finance the achievement of gender equality:

1. **Support** countries to strengthen systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's rights;
2. **Encourage** donors to increase their support to partner countries, UN Women and women's organisations to strengthen and monitor the effectiveness of the responsible institutions;
3. **Deepen** inclusive and democratic multi-stakeholder dialogue on gender equality and women's rights at the country and regional level; and
4. **Increase** the number of countries engaged in monitoring of the Global Partnership gender equality indicator.

You are all invited to join this initiative.

I am very struck by the **diversity of actors in the room**, all of us committed to financing gender equality. If we joined together, our impact could be very great indeed. I am imagining just that at the United Nations' International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa this July.

July is a **historic opportunity to act**: to work together to shape a financing package that is fit to deliver on both long-established and newly-won commitments on gender equality. I am optimistic about what we can achieve together.

We have waited too long to achieve gender equality. Let's ensure that this year – my last ever year at the CSW! – provides the **foundation for some great advances**.

Thank you.