

Informal Interactive Hearing for Civil Society
The Third International Conference on Financing for Development 9 April 2015
Trusteeship Council Chamber

11:45-1:00pm - Roundtable Discussion 2
International public finance, including ODA and innovative sources of finance

Intervention by Mbathio Samb, DAWN and WWG on FfD at the Roundtable Discussion 2
International public finance, including ODA and innovative sources of finance

My name is Mbathio Samb, I am part of the DAWN team and I am speaking on behalf of the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development.

In times where economic inequalities among and within countries are increasing and worsen by structural patterns of intersecting social, geographical and economic inequalities based on gender, age, race, etc., the principle of international cooperation remains a key duty of developed countries in the framework of the global partnership for development. While welcoming the reference in the FfD Zero Draft to increase the Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2020 (para 56), I would like to highlight several concerns: 1) The need to ensure additionally and predictability of ODA flows, 2) the need to remove policy conditionality and strengthen ownership of development strategies 3) the need to agree on strong regulation and accountability mechanism before promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and 4) the need to enhance the role of the UN in the monitoring and compliance of development cooperation commitments.

1. Ensure additionally and predictability of ODA flows

Studies have shown that development cooperation is decreasing in countries with large numbers of people living in poverty, that there is an insufficient priority given to and significant underinvestment in gender equality and in the realization of the human rights of women and girls. Moreover, it is important to draw attention to the volatility of development assistance flows as well as the new attempts to change the definition of ODA with the aim to inflating aid or leverage private sector (i.e para 58), or leverage private sector, or including various types of costs in it or shuffling funds from an old to a new item without any real topping up of finances or counting debt relief as part of ODA. Those trends are likely to negatively influence the capacity of developing countries to achieve long-term equitable and sustainable development patterns. So at the FfD Conference developed countries should "commit" to meet the 0.7% of GNI by 2020 with clear and "binding" timetables. Additionally, the share of ODA for achieving gender equality and women's human rights should be scaled up ensuring that there are year-to-year increases by some agreed upon level and new and additional official funding should be secured to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As well, the increase in ODA should not lead to a cycle of debt for the recipient country. Rather the major increase in ODA should be felt in the grants component of aid rather than in the loan component.

2. Remove policy conditionalities and strengthen ownership of the development strategies for Developing countries including LDCs, MICs, etc

It is important to remember that Developing Countries including MICs, LDCs, and others can no longer bear the conditionalities of aid which to some extent hijack their policy space to pursue structural transformation towards sustainable, equitable and gender-just development patterns. For instance, macroeconomic conditions associated with ODA impose constraints for tax and monetary policy which have a detrimental effect on equitable development. Ownership of the process of development aid negotiations by developing countries and inclusive and meaningful participation of civil society organizations is of paramount importance, mainly for ensuring compliance with the internationally agreed commitments (Beijing Platform for Action, ICPD, CEDAW, etc.), without resorting to impositions and conditionalities. So we support the reference in the FfD Zero Draft “to fully untying aid, strengthening its results orientation and use of country systems” (Para 72). However without an explicit commitment to set up an inter-governmental accountability and follow up mechanism, this remains rhetoric. Country development planning systems must be strengthened and engendered for more effective use of development support.

3. Agree on strong regulation and accountability mechanism before promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships

The Principle of International Cooperation and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities is eroded when at the “international public finance” chapter of the FfD Zero Draft paragraphs to promote multi-stakeholders partnerships in specific areas such as health, education and food (Para 69, 70, 71) are included. Before promoting the multi-stakeholders approach, it is necessary to establish an open, transparent, and participatory intergovernmental space for oversight, monitoring and review of any partnership developed within the framework of the United Nations. It should set criteria for eligibility as well as dismissal taking into account accountability, gender equality, human rights and environmental ex-ante assessment and criteria including the appropriate safeguards to reduce risk and long-term costs and to ensure that target beneficiaries are being met. It should be supported by public disclosure and conflict of interest policies. In the same way, we appreciate that “as negotiations among Member States on the establishment of such an entity reflected significant differences and a lack of consensus, the Secretary-General no longer wished the Committee to consider or take action on proposals relating to United Nations Partnership Facility”, and that UNWOMEN has also dropped the proposal of partnership with Uber.

4. Enhance the role of the United Nations in the Coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the compliance to and quality of development cooperation commitments

The establishment of a framework for monitoring and evaluation of compliance to and quality of donor countries' commitments proves to be more than necessary to make them binding. Moreover, such a framework will allow: (a) monitor that what is not ODA is not recognized as such to avoid swelling the numbers without reaching commitments; (b) centralize coordination of ODA for the purposes of assessing the achievement of

SDGs; (c) avoid duplication and overlap; (d) ensure additionally and build overall consistency. This will be go along with gender-sensitive indicators, tools and methodology of assessment of the effectiveness of the contribution of aid on development. The impact of ODA to reduce structural inequalities, including gender inequality and poverty must be demonstrated at all levels while remaining within the framework of respect for the key principles of transparency and accountability under the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum.

Thank you for your kind attention.

* * * * *

For more information, visit www.dawnnet.org ; www.wgonffd.org