

Gender and Development Network submission to the Department for International Development consultation on the DFID Business Plan, January 2011

The Gender & Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Our role is to support our members by sharing information and expertise, to undertake and disseminate research, and to provide expert advice and comment on government policies and projects.

Following correspondence from GADN member organisation One World Action to Liz Ditchburn (dated 28 October 2010); the Network welcomes the opportunity to respond to the information strategy section of DFID's Business Plan. GADN has been pleased to see DFID's ongoing support of and commitment to women's rights. The priority given in the Business Plan to improving maternal health, and the inclusion of the related outcome measure, are very encouraging. We are pleased that this is further supported in DFID's recently published framework for results for improving reproductive, maternal and newborn health in the developing world, which promotes a much-needed integrated approach and extends beyond maternal health in addressing women's whole lifetime of reproductive health.

More broadly, we have warmly welcomed DFID's focus on promoting gender equality as a departmental priority, in line with the commitment to put women's rights at the heart of the UK's aid efforts. DFID is to be commended on its strong commitment to empowering women and girls in the Business Plan; however, GADN would like to see the inclusion in the Plan of impact indicators, beyond maternal health, to support these commitments.

DFID's Business Plan commits to increasing the number of girls completing secondary and primary education; promoting economic empowerment of women and girls through jobs and access to financial services; and piloting new approaches to eliminating violence against women and girls. These commitments are all integral parts of the Plan, yet there are no impact indicators for these actions. GADN would like to reaffirm the suggestion of the following indicators, laid out by members One World Action and ActionAid:

- **Violence against women and girls:** The percentage of women and girls (over the total number of women and girls) who have experienced physical violence during the last year. This indicator should be disaggregated by severity (moderate/severe);

perpetrator (intimate/other relative/other known person/stranger/state authority); and frequency (one/few/many time(s)).

- **Economic empowerment:** The proportion of women in wage and self employment, by type.

GADN also supports ActionAid's call for the following input indicators:

- DFID spend on empowering and improving the lives of women and girls.
- Proportion of DFID-funded research and projects with a focus on empowering women and girls.

High level commitments to gender equality will only be realised where the accountability, delivery mechanisms and resources are in place to implement them. Tools such as gender audits and gender budgeting can help track the gaps between promise and practice. In addition, gender budgeting tools would also help DFID to monitor the added contributions of other areas of the Business Plan to women's empowerment. All data should therefore be disaggregated by gender, including the impact indicator 'Number of poor people better able to cope with climatic shocks'.

We recognise the challenges entailed in developing robust indicators on women's empowerment which are able to capture the less tangible, more qualitative, and longer-term changes in women's lives – for example, those relating to women's sense of agency and self-worth, perceptions of personal security, or meaningful participation in decision-making. The commitment in the Plan's Vision to strengthen women's voice and engagement in decision-making is extremely positive. However, GADN would like to see concrete actions and indicators on women's voice and decision-making incorporated into the Plan to show how DFID aims to reach this vision in practice. These crucial dimensions of empowerment must not get squeezed out as increasing weight is placed on demonstrable results. We therefore support One World Action's call for DFID to develop a broader range of appropriate indicators to measure women's empowerment and incorporate them into results frameworks at all levels.

The Gender and Development Network would be more than happy to support the process to develop longer term indicators. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you would like our input on this over the coming months, before the final plan goes live in April 2011.

Yours sincerely,



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