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NOTES ON THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE MONTERREY CONSENSUS[1]

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Background

Though studies, debates and agreements on development and its financing have been present in international negotiations for decades, they have gained particular importance in recent years as a result of the urgent challenges posed to governments and societies by the complex range of economic, political, social and cultural phenomena known as "globalization".

The information technology revolution and the ever increasing flow of goods, services, capital and people throughout the world are only some of the most evident manifestations of globalization. In this process of constant and accelerated transformation, power relations between different actors and at different levels (international, regional, national and local) have been deeply affected with a varying range of results, depending on the type of transformation and the actor in question.

Nevertheless, large segments of the world population, especially within the medium and less developed countries, have experienced a significant deterioration in their standards of living. Many people have not benefited from the advancements and opportunities that globalization offers and, in numerous instances have been negatively affected by it - in this context women are one of the most affected groups.

Although important progress has been made since the First United Nations Conference on Women (Mexico, 1975), women, especially those belonging to the poorest and most marginalized sectors, still live in disadvantaged conditions that limit the free exercise of their rights and their capacity for development. Thus, there is a need for the implementation of concrete actions to rectify these conditions and guarantee women's development and by extension, the development of their societies.

In the negotiation and implementation of international agreements relating to development, it is essential to promote the participation of not only national and international agencies but civil society organizations dedicated to the advancement of women, in research and monitoring activities. Two tasks are particularly urgent: 1) integrating the principles and actions contained in internationally agreed instruments on women's empowerment (Cairo and Beijing conference outcome documents) in agreements on financing for development; and 2) monitoring the progress made on the implementation of the first task from a gender perspective.

As will be demonstrated, the existing international agreements on development, especially those known as the "Monterrey Consensus" include very limited commitments to gender equality. It is thus important to strive for a greater introduction of measures to strengthen gender equality in conceptual, financial and operational terms, while also assuring the implementation of already accepted measures.

Framework

In the last four years, the international community has participated in reaching three fundamental agreements on financing for development: the Millennium Development Goals - MDGs (2000); the IV Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), better known as the Doha Round (2001), and the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Financing for Development (ICFfD), known as the Monterrey Consensus (2002). These three agreements are not only closely related to each other, but their recommendations and commitments are, to some degree, reflected in the Monterrey Consensus. It is thus worthwhile to review the scope, limitations, and plan of action of the Monterrey Consensus, in addition to evaluating its direct and indirect effects on women.

This document is divided into three sections. The first section contains a review of the Monterrey Consensus from a gender perspective that underlines the negative effects on women of many of the recommendations, and points out the omissions that hinder gender equality and the empowerment of women in the financing for development process. The second section looks at two of the follow-up documents to the Monterrey Consensus, in which the absence of a gender perspective in the implementation of polices and commitments is notable. The third and final section sets out the areas in which UN-INSTRAW wishes to stimulate dialogue among stakeholders (government, international institutions, and civil society organizations) to ensure that gender becomes a cross-cutting theme in debates, policy formulation and follow-up related to financing for development.

The Monterrey Consensus

The International Conference on Financing for Development (ICFfD), convened by the United Nations (UNO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) took place in Monterrey, Mexico, on 18-22 March 2002. The main objective of the event was to bring together the mechanisms to guarantee the financial resources required to meet the development goals assumed by national governments through different international agreements on development, including the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The preparatory process for the Conference included the participation not only of representatives from governments and international institutions, but also from many civil society organizations (CSOs) and from the business sector. Initially, the expectations raised by such pluralistic participation were very high, as there seemed to be an opportunity to agree on and define innovative mechanisms for the pursuit of greater equity and cooperation among states themselves and between states and international organizations.

However, by the end of the process it became clear that the expectations of numerous states and CSOs would not be met. The approved version of the Final Declaration was limited in scope, did not re-invent the economic and financial paradigms that structure the definition and search for solutions in financing for development, and did not define measures to commit developed and medium-and less-developed countries in an equivalent manner

The Monterrey Consensus suffers from omissions and ambiguities that erode its capacity to respond to those urgent needs which brought it to life and which can be verified through its six main areas:

1. Mobilization of Domestic Financial Resources for Development

The Monterrey Consensus emphasizes the need for governments to implement "sound macroeconomic policies" and assign "priority to avoiding inflationary distortions and sudden economic fluctuations" (paragraph 14). To focus the responsibility, which in principle is a positive move, and the burden of the implementation of such policies on medium- and less-developed countries will inevitably lead to serious problems in terms of scarcity of financial resources. These will apply not only to the implementation of the policies themselves, but also to the compensation or social redistribution needed to combat poverty. For instance, the document overlooks the fact that macroeconomic policies, in their search to create stability and a favourable climate for private and foreign investment, erode the tax base and place the burden of raising financial resources needed by the State upon citizens.

From a gender perspective, the first problem that arises is the cutback of basic services that governments must implement in order to comply with the strict deficit control strategy. As a result, health and education services will suffer severe losses which, in turn, will negatively affect the most vulnerable groups. Within these groups, women tend to be especially hard hit since they absorb, in greater proportion than men, the burden of household maintenance costs and the costs of pursuing economic activities outside the domestic sphere.

Moreover, in recommending greater financial liberalization in order to mobilize domestic savings, the Monterrey Consensus overlooks the need to apply corrective measures to those financial practices that exclude women as beneficiaries of loans and other financial products. This is true especially for the poorest women and for those women whose economic activities take place outside the formal economy. The document therefore fails to consider the serious inequalities between men and women in accessing resources, both financial and those that are usually their prerequisite, such as property, leaving women with very few financial alternatives.

Although the Monterrey Consensus makes explicit reference to the value of establishing credit and micro-credit programmes for women (paragraph 18) it does not address women's lack of access to these programmes. Although academic studies show that women tend to save more money than men, and use it for the wellbeing of their families, most women work in the informal economy and are not covered by micro-credit programmes. It should also be noted that several of these programmes strengthen the stereotypical gender division of labour (female and male tasks).

Micro-credit programmes are not the only type of financial services that women require. Insurance, savings mobilization and technical assistance are indispensable for women's integration and maintenance in economic activities such as microenterprise.

2. Mobilization of International Resources for Development

In terms of the mobilization of international resources, the Monterrey Consensus underlines the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as an agent of development, since, according to the text, it "…contributes towards financing sustained economic growth over the long term. It is especially important for its potential to transfer knowledge and technology, create jobs, boost overall productivity, enhance competitiveness and entrepreneurship and, ultimately, eradicate poverty through economic growth and development" (Paragraph 20). Thus, governments must create a favourable environment for the rise and growth of both national and foreign enterprises, through the implementation of sound macroeconomic policies.

In reality however, few countries benefit from FDI, even if they do implement the policies prescribed for them. Objectives related to the attraction of FDI such as capital formation, knowledge and technology transfer, and ultimately, economic growth and eradication of poverty, are therefore far from being met by the majority of governments.

Moreover, the norms that many governments put in practice to attract FDI such as fiscal exemptions, networks of sub-contracted employment, and the deterioration of employment standards; especially in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), carry severe social consequences such as the deterioration of workers' bargaining power and the reduction of real levels of income.

From a gender perspective, the particularly damaging effects of these policies on women can be verified. It is true that a considerable number of employment opportunities are created in the countries benefiting from FDI, especially for women that work in EPZs. However, standards such as minimum wages or the right to strike are suppressed, debilitating the bargaining power of female workers. Likewise, temporary contracts or subcontracts deprive women of labour rights such as access to healthcare, creating an overall climate of instability and unpredictability. Similarly, recent studies show that the effects of knowledge and technology transfers are also very limited, as women tend to be excluded from those areas that offer the potential for upgrading skills.

3. International Trade as an Engine for Development

In terms of trade, the Monterrey Consensus starts from the premise that an "…open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can substantially stimulate development worldwide, benefiting countries at all stages of development" followed by the "commitment to trade liberalization and to ensure that trade plays its full part in promoting economic growth, employment and development for all" (paragraph 26). Similarly, the document includes the acceptance by the signatories of the development objectives stipulated in the outcome document of the Doha Round.

Nevertheless, the most evident objection to this approach is the lack of commitment from developed countries to the liberalization of their trade regimes, especially in the areas of agriculture and textiles. The protectionism created by import duties and export subsidies deny the medium- and less-developed countries the supposed benefits of trade liberalization. To make things worse, when governments comply with liberalization standards, national production sectors are left helpless vis-à-vis cheaper imported goods in terms of competition for the domestic market.

The Monterrey Consensus makes no reference to the implications of trade from a gender perspective. Academic studies documenting the links between trade and gender coincide in asserting the existence of negative effects for women in terms of employment and labour displacement, specifically in employment conditions, earnings, job security, and workers' rights and benefits. In addition, the assignment of government priorities towards exports leaves the non-export sectors of the economy with little or no support.

Women who participate in informal economic activities and in small and microenterprises face losses due to the introduction of low-priced imported goods. Similarly, women who participate in agricultural activities are often forced to abandon the rural sector due to the lack of competitiveness of domestic agricultural products, indirectly fostering an increase in trafficking, prostitution, and child labour that entail worsened living conditions for women and children.

4. Increasing International Financial Cooperation and Technology for Development

The implications of official development assistance (ODA) recognized by the Monterrey Consensus are varied and positive: "[ODA]…plays an essential role as a complement to other sources of financing for development, especially in those countries with the least capacity to attract private direct investments. ODA can help a country reach adequate levels of domestic resource mobilization …while human capital, productive and exportation capacities are enhanced. …ODA is also a crucial instrument for supporting education, health, public infrastructure development, agriculture and rural development and to enhance food security" (paragraph 39) .

Although it is encouraging that the document explicitly highlights the need for ODA and the benefits which may arise from its adoption, the document limits itself to "urging" the developed countries to adopt measures conducive to dedicating 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) as ODA for developing countries. This percentage has been accepted in previous international commitments but many countries are far from meeting this goal. It must also be mentioned that alternative forms of channeling resources to less-developed countries, such as the Tobin Tax, were rejected in the negotiation process of the text. This has substantially limited the financial resources urgently needed by various countries, especially the less developed countries. Moreover, the allotment of ODA was determined on the basis of specific political interests rather than clear and transparent criteria.

From a gender perspective, the document also fails to discuss the relationship between ODA and gender. It omits the need to guarantee equal benefits from ODA for men and women and the need for more resources to be channeled to projects aimed at the promotion of gender equality. It is true that various United Nations agencies and other international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have developed and implemented these types of projects, but the Monterrey Consensus represents a significant missed opportunity.

5. External Debt

On the topic of External Debt, the Monterrey Consensus recognizes that "noting the importance of re-establishing financial viability for those developing countries facing unsustainable debt burdens, we welcome initiatives that have been undertaken to reduce outstanding indebtedness and invite further national and international measures in that regard, including, as appropriate debt cancellation, and other arrangements" (paragraph 48).

It is clear that the mere mention of the possibility of arriving at the cancellation of a country's external debt, especially of a highly indebted country, is an important achievement. However, the tone with which this statement is made raises the possibility that the cancellation never occurs, and that debt restructuring programmes will continue. This will not only require highly-elevated amounts of money - limiting the capacity of governments to maintain social policies required to reduce poverty and to provide health and education services - but will also subject countries to the conditions of international financial organizations in relation to the implementation of structural policies, subordinating development objectives and the fight against poverty.

From a gender perspective, the lack of real relief from debt payment commitments for developing countries, especially for the most indebted, translates into yet greater limitations on governments for the provision of social services. Women are thus particularly affected by the lack of or discontinuity in health care and education services, as well as the growing burden of household maintenance and economic participation in the labour market.

6. Systemic Issues: Enhancing the Coherence and Consistency of International Monetary, Financial and Trading Systems for Development.

The Monterrey Consensus begins by acknowledging the "urgent need to enhance coherence, governance and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems. …With the same purpose, efforts should be strengthened at the national level to enhance coordination among all relevant ministries and institutions" (paragraph 52). Similarly, it highlights the international work being carried out to reform the international financial architecture, which should be characterized by “a greater transparency and the effective participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition” (paragraph 53).

As with the issue of External Debt, mentioning the need for a new international financial architecture is in itself an improvement. However, the lines of action in this section concentrate only on some topics, such as combating corruption, terrorism, and money laundering. Other topics of high priority for developing countries are neglected, such as: new or renewed institutions of global financial governance, regulation of international capital flows to avoid instability and financial crises, reforms to the international trading system, the growing imbalance between rich and poor countries, and the adoption of measures of re-distribution in the international arena.

From a gender perspective, the main deficiency of this group of issues is the omission of the need to incorporate a gender perspective in the design of proposals for a new international financial architecture. Furthermore, the need to involve Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in this process is not taken into account, even though organizations dedicated to the advancement of women could contribute to the achievement of the above-mentioned objective. Without this participation, the social costs imposed on women, especially the poorest women, may remain hidden, and even worse still, may be exacerbated by this concealment.

Review of the Achievements in Financing for Development

In the section entitled “Staying Engaged“, the Monterrey Consensus stresses the need to increase inter-governmental and inter-institutional cooperation in order to advance the implementation of the agreements reached and achievement of the goals. Among them stands out the call to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) for a better evaluation of the annual progress in financing for development. Similarly, the Consensus recommends to the Secretary General the preparation of an annual report on the follow-up to the conference and, to the different agencies of the United Nations involved in the process, their participation in the follow-up to the Monterrey agreements.

Taking the above-mentioned commitments as a starting-point, different reports have been prepared and various meetings have been convened to evaluate the progress made within the framework of the Monterrey Consensus, and more generally, the achievements in terms of development. This section will review two of the documents most relevant to the discussion: the “Global Follow-up Report 2004: Policies and Actions for Achieving the MDGs and Related Outcomes”, developed jointly by the World Bank and the IMF; and the summary that has been presented by the President of the 58th General Assembly of the United Nations, Julian Robert Hunte, at the "High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development" held in November 2003.

In the first document, certain points are highlighted that indicate not only the emergence of perceptions but also of commitments that the World Bank and the IMF have reached among themselves and with other entities like the United Nations. Similarly, the strategy of using the MDGs as orientation criteria for evaluating the achievements made in financing for development is strengthened, just as the Monterrey Consensus states in paragraph 71: “We recognize the link between financing for development and attaining internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration”.

Although the joint report identified the expanding gap between the MDGs and the advances made in their achievement - underlining the existence of indicators that point towards the possibility of meeting the MDGs - the document presents recommendations based on the principle of shared responsibility, suggesting priorities for action in both developed and developing countries. While this principle is valid and accepted by the majority of states, there are nevertheless, as was discussed above, a considerable number of developed countries that are far from fulfilling their commitments for development support, especially in terms of reducing tariff barriers and subsidies to agriculture, and reaching the goal of 0.7% of GNP their contribution to Official Development Assistance (ODA). Thus the report suggests on the one hand continuing the implementation of sound macroeconomic policies in developing countries, and on the other hand reducing subsidies and increasing official assistance in developed countries. However, this overlooks the deepening of inequalities in the past four years that was generated by the lack implementation of the latter policies by developed countries.

The report thus sets forth four main areas of recommendations for developing countries:

1. Improving the Enabling Climate for Private Sector Activity

According to the report, developing countries have made considerable advances in the implementation of sound macroeconomic policies and trade liberalization, but that these have not been accompanied by a proportionately equal improvement in "structural and institutional reforms essential for the betterment of an enabling climate for the private sector activity". Thus the report suggests strengthening the advances made by "solidifying progress on macroeconomic stability, further reducing barriers to trade, and shifting emphasis from regulating business operations to strengthening market institutions… Strengthening property rights and the rule of law are the key areas for attention with respect to the institutional environment".

2. Strengthening Public Sector Capacity and Improving the Quality of Governance

According to the report, this is the area where fewer advances have been noted and where more attention is needed for the achievement of the MDGs, especially in the areas of transparency, accountability and control of corruption, as well as management of public financial resources. The report recommends intensifying efforts to implement effective policies in these areas as well as in fiscal management, since the achievement of the MDGs depends on "improving the efficiency of existing spending, economic growth, and external resources". In this regard, the report classifies the *New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)* as "promising", which raises the possibility for African countries to make substantial advances in this area.

3. Scaling Up Investment in Infrastructure and Ensuring its Effectiveness

The report acknowledges that investment in infrastructure is insufficient to achieve the established objectives, which require at least double the recorded investments of the 1990s, corresponding to 3.5-5% of the GNP of low-income countries and 2.5-4% of middle-income countries. The report suggests stimulating private investment in infrastructure through improvements in the institutional and regulatory environments. However, the same report recognizes that certain sectors such as health and water tend not to receive private investment, and suggests therefore an increase in foreign aid so that governments may cover the required investments in sectors where private investment is not available.

4. Enhancing the Effectiveness of Service Delivery for Human Development

On this point, the report underlines the importance of establishing more effective programmes in areas such as education, health and social assistance to the poorest sectors, that will overcome obstacles related to governance and motivate the participation of communities in these sectors. Nevertheless, the report recognizes that the quantities invested in programmes of this kind are alarmingly lower than those agreed upon in international commitments. It mentions, for example, that only 6 million of the US$170 million initially committed to the programme "Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) have been disbursed. Given this situation, the report ends by suggesting that "swifter action is needed on the part of both donors in providing funds and recipients in addressing implementation constraints".

Thus far we have reviewed the recommendations addressed to developing countries. We will now turn to addressed to the developed countries.

1. Sustaining Stable and Strong Growth in the Global Economy

On this point, the report emphasizes the need to rapidly translate the Monterrey Consensus into concrete actions that correspond to developed country advances in two main areas: trade and cooperation. Notwithstanding, the report also underlines the importance of implementing measures to guarantee the sustainable growth of developing countries. The control of the public deficit in the United States, and the implementation of structural reforms, specifically in employment and social security systems, in Europe are necessary measures to guarantee the stable and strong growth that the global economy requires. Similarly, the document suggests the need to reform the international financial architecture in order to make capital flows more stable and thus reduce the likelihood and severity of financial crises worldwide.

2. Ensuring a Successful, Pro-development, and Timely Outcome to the Doha Round

The report here is conclusive: "High-income countries, given their weight in the system, must lead by example". In this regard, the document identifies measures that developed countries must put in practice such as: "complete elimination of tariffs on manufactures products; complete elimination of agricultural export subsidies and complete decoupling of domestic agricultural subsidies from production, and reduction of agricultural tariffs to, say, no more than 10 percent;…and (establish) commitments to ensure free cross-border trade in services delivered over telecommunications links, complemented by actions to liberalize the temporary movement of workers". Similarly, the report notes the need of many developing countries for adequate aid in order to support the costs of the adjustments imposed by economic liberalization policies.

3. Providing More and Better Aid

The report stresses that Official Development Assistance (ODA) should be increased, and its effectiveness strengthened through a more adequate allocation to developing countries. In this sense, and desspite additional aid committed post-Monterrey, at least US$30 billion per year are required in investments in order to attain the MDGs. In some cases, countries such as Denmark devote more than the 0.7% to ODA. Nevertheless, the salient point is that it is fundamental to assign more aid to meet the incremental costs of achieving the MDGs. With regard to a more appropriate allocation of resources, the report underlines the need to adjust ODA to the development strategy and priorities of each country. Similarly, the report expresses concern about the policy conditions that developed states attach to the allocation of ODA, and calls for their elimination. The report also mentions the need to provide additional aid to heavily indebted countries in an attempt to promote their sustainable debt management. Moreover, the report underlines the need to continue reducing the burden of external debt servicing for developing countries, particularly those that are heavily indebted. Lastly, the report calls on developed countries to provide support to developing countries for the improvement of environmental practices.

4. Improving Policy Coherence for Development

The report explicitly points out the need for all actions related to meeting the MDGs “to be part of a coherent overall approach to supporting development”, and mentions that the results of a programme can often be limited or even nullified due to policies and programmes implemented in opposite directions, with one canceling out the advances of the other. It is for this reason that the report points out that “putting in place processes that enable an integrated assessment of the coherence of policies that affect development –trade, aid, foreign investment and other capital flows, migration, knowledge and technology transfer, environment—would help avoid such outcomes”.

As previously mentioned, this section also refers to the summary presented by the President of the 58th General Assembly of the United Nations, Julian Robert Hunte, at the "High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development" (November 2003), which brought together representatives from 190 governments, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as civil society organizations, and the business and academic sectors.

The summary lists various reservations and proposals made by government representatives about the need to redouble efforts in order to stimulate financing for development processes. In general, the document highlights two main concerns: 1) the need to establish a more precise monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Monterrey commitments; and 2) the challenge of creating the political will required to commit to the objectives of the Monterrey Consensus.

With regard to the specific topics related to financing for development, the summary emphasizes the following:

1. Mobilizing Domestic Resources

There is consensus among the developing countries that they are primarily responsible for implementing the necessary actions to guarantee development. For this reason the summary stresses the importance of mobilizing domestic resources for financing for development. Nevertheless, the need for foreign aid to support public investments in areas such as health and education is equally emphasized given the scarcity of resources faced by governments, especially those of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.

2. Private Capital Flows

The summary underlines the importance of private capital in achieving development goals indicating that clear institutional frameworks must protect these flows from the political risks linked to investing in certain countries. Similarly, the significant role that international financial institutions can play in the promotion of foreign investment in developed countries is also emphasized. In this regard, participants discussed the benefits of improving information flows to identify investment opportunities, as well as the possibility of intensifying investment projects with private-public partnerships. Lastly, a call was made to developed countries to carry out better policy coordination with the aim of eliminating macroeconomic imbalances that cause volatility in exchange rates and capital flows, thus allowing capital flows to be channeled to developing countries in a stable and sustained manner.

3. International Trade

In line with what was established in Monterrey, the document underlines the need for developed countries to reduce their tariff barriers in textiles and agriculture and eliminate agricultural subsidies. Similarly, a call was made for a real commitment towards developing trade negotiations, as well as resuming the Doha Round commitments, in light of the disappointing outcome of the Cancun Conference. A call was also made to make WTO procedures more transparent and establish closer institutional links between the WTO and United Nations.

4. ODA and Other Resources

The positive outcomes from increases in ODA observed in recent years were acknowledged in the summary. However, the document reiterates the significance of developed countries' meeting the goal of allocating 0.7% of GNP to ODA. Without this, achieving the MDGs becomes an impossible task. Moreover, it is necessary to favour development aid over other types of government donations, such as military aid. Similarly, given the unfeasibility of meeting development objectives with the available resources, a call was made to seek alternative forms of financing. Lastly, a special call for the recognition of differentiated and special aid was made by the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.

5. External Debt

Participants coincided in recognizing debt un-sustainability as an impediment to the attainment of the MDGs. It was mentioned that the initiative for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) operates too slowly in alleviating the debt burden of the countries benefiting from it - for which creditor countries stated their disposition to evaluate and improve the HIPC initiative, should it be necessary. Similarly, it was proposed that the most indebted countries receive international financial aid in the form of grants, as opposed to loans, and that a greater number of countries should benefit from the HIPC initiative. Lastly, it was recognized that the indebtedness of middle-income countries demands the development of an adequate sovereign debt restructuring mechanism.

6. Systemic and Institutional Issues

The majority of Monterrey participants believe that the greatest challenges reside in "improving the international financial architecture, including matters related to symmetric surveillance, liquidity and crises prevention, and enhancing overall coherence". Similarly, the need to increasingly involve the United Nations in providing for more coherence and consistency in economic, financial, trading, social and environmental policies at an international level was underlined. The same was also said about increasing cooperation between the United Nations and financial and trading organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. Lastly, different representatives from governments and civil society organizations made a call to increase the participation of developing countries in the decision-making processes, particularly of the international financial institutions.

Suggested Actions from a Gender Perspective

As mentioned in the previous section on the Monterrey Consensus, there are omissions and ambiguities in the agreements and key mechanisms on financing for development in terms of gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women, as well as in making these issues more visible.

The documents referenced in the previous section not only continue along these lines, but accentuate the absence of a gender perspective in financing for development processes. In the summary presented by the President of the 58th General Assembly, for instance, the issue is not even mentioned, while the document prepared by the World Bank and the IMF states that "cutting across the policy agenda is the empowerment of women, by removing barriers to their fuller participation in the development process, and the need to ensure environmental sustainability. These cross-cutting concerns should be fully integrated into policymaking." Although this recommendation is positive, it is under any circumstances insufficient because it assumes the positive effects of the relationship between development and women's empowerment and gender equality, without making any specific proposals for their achievement.

It is therefore clear that efforts must be made, in a series of different areas, to include a gender perspective and women's empowerment in development processes. It is evident that organizations working towards the empowerment of women put these objectives high on the agendas of national governments so that they can discuss and follow-up on the issue in debates and international negotiations. It is also of the utmost importance that these organizations participate in monitoring international commitments to influence the design and implementation of development policies and programmes. Lastly is need to organize of fora to openly discuss financing for development processes in order to rectify financial limitations that current international agreements impose in terms of equality and women's empowerment.

For this reason, UN-INSTRAW is promoting a dialogue among all stakeholders (governments, international financial institutions, civil society organizations) to ensure that gender becomes a cross-cutting theme in all debates, and in the formulation of and follow-up to financing for development policies.

Proposals

UN-INSTRAW promotes collaboration among different stakeholders in the following areas:

1. Research

- Collect, systematize and disseminate studies on the impact of macroeconomic policies on women; particularly those that analyze the inter-relations between gender, ethnicity, age, economic status, schooling, and geographic location that are produced by academia, civil society organizations, international cooperation agencies, governmental institutions and United Nations System agencies (DAW, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM).
- Develop, collect and disseminate gender statistics on the population impact of macroeconomic policies, trade agreements, public spending, and debtservicing, among others.
- Develop and collect conceptual frameworks and methodologies for the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of economic policies and development strategies from a gender perspective.

- Carry out case studies to evaluate economic policies and development strategies from a gender perspective and in different contexts.

2. Training/Capacity-building

Carry out, promote and disseminate trainings and workshops that target government, civil society organizations, international organizations and businesses:

- Strategies for mainstreaming gender in the political and economic agenda
- Methodologies for gender diagnostics in international organizations, governmental institutions and civil society organizations.
- Strategies for including gender issues in the design of public policies.
- Methodologies for analysis and follow-up of the implementation of economic policies and their impact on women.

3. Advocacy

- Promote the inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting theme in discussions of economics and financing for development in international forums, generating specific spaces for reflection on the impacts, risks and opportunities that economic, trade, and financial policies pose for women and other vulnerable groups such as rural and indigenous populations, children and ethnic minorities, among others.
- Motivate the participation of all stakeholders in these discussions (civil society organizations, international cooperation agencies, governmental institutions, United Nations System agencies, and private sector) particularly those that promote gender equality, and develop mechanisms for coordination among them.
- Develop inputs and organize meetings with these stakeholders in order to develop strategies and methodologies for action at international meetings.