

REPORT

from the

Online discussion on Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

**Organized by
Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations**

18 June to 15 July 2007

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I. Background

1. The online discussion “Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women”, was organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) from 18 June to 15 July 2007, Ms. Rosa G. Lizarde moderated the discussion and contributed to this report.
2. The online discussion covered the following themes during a four-week period:
 - Week 1: Public finance – using budgets for promoting gender equality;
 - Week 2: Bilateral and multilateral assistance – the way forward for promoting gender equality;
 - Week 3: Funds and foundations – mobilizing private and public resources for gender equality;
 - Week 4: Other issues.
3. The Division for the Advancement of Women invited interested individuals and groups to participate in the online discussion. Over 1,300 individuals (88.5 percent women and 11.5 percent men) from 145 countries registered for the discussion. The organizational distribution showed the greatest percentage of participants from the NGO sector (39 percent), followed by governments (16 percent), United Nations (16 percent) and the private sector (5 percent). Geographically, Africa (25 percent) had the highest representation, followed by Asia and the Pacific (24 percent), North America (22 percent) and Europe (19 percent).
4. During the discussion, a total of 257 messages were posted. More statistics concerning the online discussion and the geographical distribution of the discussi

15. Participants discussed the roles of Ministries of Finance and national machineries for the advancement of women, and emphasized the limited capacity of both bodies to carry out gender equality research and analysis. Lack of financial resources was also frequently cited as a limitation. Tools and training applications, as well as sensitization of stakeholders on gender-responsive budgeting, could assist in overcoming these challenges. The sharing of knowledge, lessons learned, and good practices was crucial for making progress in this area.

16. Other challenges raised included lack of political will by governments to prioritize gender-responsive budgeting and women's under-representation in decision-making processes. Participants called for stronger advocacy campaigns, development of the capacity of women's organizations' to lobby for change, and promotion of women's participation in the budgetary decision-making process.

(i) Gender-responsive budgeting as a mechanism for promoting gender equality

17. The discussion indicated an overwhelming support for gender-responsive budgeting as an effective mechanism for ensuring attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in national policies and programmes, including the MDGs. Ferdinand Mouanga of the Ministry of Planning, Democratic Republic of the Congo underscored that: "*Gender perspectives have to be integrated into all policies and programmes of all ministries and all budgets.*" Adam Weiner of the Population Council, United States, emphasized that: "*Using the MDGs as a frame of reference, without gender equality it will be near[ly] impossible to achieve any of the health, education and poverty-related MDGs. [I]t is crucial that [gender equality] be a top priority and that gender-responsive budgeting be one of many strategies ... employed towards this end.*"

18. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Coordinator of femLINKPACIFIC, Fiji, quoted Rhonda Sharp, University of South Australia, speaking at the 10th Triennial Conference on Pacific Women (27-31 May 2007) to emphasize how important it was to incorporate gender-responsive budgets into national budgets: "*Budgets turn policy commitments (paper promises) into concrete programmes and processes, so it is critical to focus on the national budget. Unless it is funded it is still a matter of theory, it is the budget that is the test. The budget tells us the priorities of a country – what is valued, who is valued, who is missing out.... If you do gender [-responsive] budgets, you become more transparent, accountable and it is essential that civil society and women's groups participate in the budget process.*"

19. Kaputo Liyani, Women for Change, Zambia, supported the view that attention to gender perspectives in government budgets leads to increased transparency in budgetary processes. She remarked that: "*A gender [-responsive] budget is an approach which can be used to highlight the gap between policy statements and the resources committed to their implementation, ensuring that public money is spent in more gender equitable ways.*"

20. Other participants called for a designated percentage of budgets to go towards gender equality. For instance, Sabina Anokye Mensah of the GRATIS Foundation, Ghana, suggested: "*A concerted effort must be made by national and international communities to come out with initiatives that will ensure that specific budgetary allocations are reserved for programmes ensuring gender mainstreaming. For instance, 20 percent of some budgets could be allocated to gender mainstreaming activities, ... International agencies, the private sector and national governments must be made to set aside budgets towards enhancing capacity building programmes especially tailored for women and men.*"

(ii) Progress made, challenges encountered, and impact of gender-responsive budgeting in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women

21. Participants stressed that the approach to gender-responsive budgeting varied from region to region and from country to country. Whereas gender-responsive budgeting was a relatively new concept in some countries, including several in Africa, in others such as Australia, it was relatively well-established. Stella Amadi, Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), Nigeria, emphasized that: *“Gender-responsive budgeting is relatively new in this part of the world but I would say from the ... work we have done so far that it is definitely a tool for facilitating the empowerment of women.”*

22. Participants shared specific examples and successes in integrating gender perspectives into budgeting processes in various countries. Margaret Waitherero Mburu, Country Programme Manager, Youth Challenge International, Kenya, noted: *“Women in Kenya have achieved pretty much in that we lobbied the current government and got a 15 percent reduction in tax on sanitary towels. In the Kenyan budget the sananowelJthe Kehtonte*

mainstreaming in new policies and plans. However my impression is that they never proceed ...to translate the theories in practical issues. One may ask then what is missing. From my understanding, lack of funds is the main challenge. But again I wonder is it really gender equality priority for most of [the] governments in our countries.” Jane Durgom-Powers, International Federation of Family Associations of Missing Persons from Armed Conflicts, United States, and Josephina Deng Fashoda of Women Development and Child Care Organization, Sudan, argued that gender equality was not given priority and that priority issues were usually politically or economically motivated.

27. Participants highlighted the urgent need for regional and country-specific tools and training applications for advancing and promoting gender-responsive budgeting. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, femLINKPACIFIC, Fiji, cautioned against using a ‘one size fits all’ approach: *“There should be specific tools and training applications that are relevant to each regional and national context. For example, there are clearly unique challenges for Pacific island states which means that you cannot and should not “cut and paste” initiatives.”*

28. Participants emphasized that sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices was crucial for promoting gender-responsive budgeting at the national level, both through South-South and North-South cooperation.

on gender equality,... should be knowledgeable on proposal writing and budgeting and to be able to [assist] the Budget and Finance departments to have an insight to why [the] budget or increase in [the] budget is necessary to promote gender [equality].”

III. Theme two: Bilateral and multilateral cooperation – The way forward for promoting gender equality

A. Background

32. The United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development (ICFfD), held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 discussed how financial resources could be mobilized to fulfil the international commitments agreed to at previous United Nations conferences and summits, as well as the MDGs. Pledges were made in the Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the ICFfD, for meeting the target of 0.7 percent of GNP for Official Development Assistance (ODA). In the Monterrey Consensus, the international community highlighted gender equality as critical for achieving sustained and equitable economic development, declaring, “in the increasingly globalizing interdependent world economy, a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of finance for development – sustainable, gender-sensitive and people-centred – in all parts of the globe is essential”. The Monterrey Consensus encourages gender-mainstreaming in “development policies at all levels and in all sectors” as one of the actions to strengthen the effectiveness of the global economic system’s support for development, (para 64) and mentions gender-responsive budget policies (para 19).

33. At the United Nations 2005 World Summit, world leaders renewed their commitments to achieving development goals, and the outcome highlighted the importance of gender equality as essential to achieving sustained economic growth, democracy, peace, security and development.

34. Also in 2005, through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, new political commitments on development cooperation reform were outlined by 35 donor countries, 56 recipient countries, and 27 multilateral agencies. 14 civil society organizations also signed on to the Paris Declaration. The Paris Declaration forges a partnership between donor and recipient countries and aligns development assistance with ioen-ordoutli4

B. Summary of the discussion

36. The Moderator started the second week with a set of questions soliciting participants' views on attention to gender equality in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and the impact of the new aid modalities on gender equality. Issues raised included conditionality, problems with delivery due to corruption, and the need to engage men in the promotion of gender equality in all development proposals.

37. Participants emphasized the centrality of bilateral and multilateral assistance in financing

NGOs are not involved in it so far.” She stressed an unexpected result of the European Union (EU) accession by Eastern European countries: the weakening of the women’s movement in the region. Since joining the EU, the financial situation of women’s NGOs in these countries has dramatically worsened, as non-EU donors withdrew from the region. Assumptions that EU funds would be available and that democratic mechanisms would be in place, however, were not well founded. In addition, she explained that because of limited experience with EU application procedures, NGOs from Eastern European countries had much lower chances (in comparison with NGOs from ‘old EU member states’) of receiving EU funding.

44. A number of participants expressed concern about the limited consultation with civil society organizations despite governments’ commitment to the principle of mutual accountability. Stuart Halford of the International Planned Parenthood

gender equality], on conditions that there are clear and strong requirements (i.e. gender equality as essential to achieving sustained economic growth) in the EU documents as well as in the monitoring system.”

(iv) Corruption

50. Many participants drew attention to the issue of corruption with regard to development assistance. Risto F. Harma, res.8(TD- Tc-0.05g2214.785yhe 6h6)a23ga1281to owthChil pan UK,4 Tdicated:

fundraising strategies and alternative funding sources, such as corporations, churches and other

60. Alwin Khafidhoh of Bandung Institute of Governance Studies, Indonesia, pointed out the need to adapt to the shifting donor landscape and emphasized efforts to engage mosques, religious organizations, and local women's organizations in raising funds for gender equality. He also noted that corporations could do more to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, including by producing medicines targeting women's health needs.

61. Jayne Cravens, UNDP Afghanistan, noted how moving from dependency on the State to private funding is possible, and recommended that NGOs focusing on gender equality and human rights seek private funding from corporations. She advised NGOs to invite private corporations and funders to visit their workplaces so they could see first-hand what work they were doing, as well as have the opportunity to examine their financial records. She also shared a document, prepared together with other volunteers from the AidWorkers Network, to help small NGOs in developing countries raise funds.

(ii) Role of international NGOs in funding for gender equality

62. Some participants noted the value of the larger, media-attracting international funds in raising awareness of key issues in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly acknowledging the potential of the star power and celebrity persona of the leaders behind some funds. Risto F. Harma, formerly of Global March Against Child Labour, India, and Save the Children in the United Kingdom, highlighted that: *“Large funds – such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Fund on HIV/AIDS and Bono's Product RED [campaign which] sell[s] various goods like mobile phones [and] donate[s] a percentage of [the*

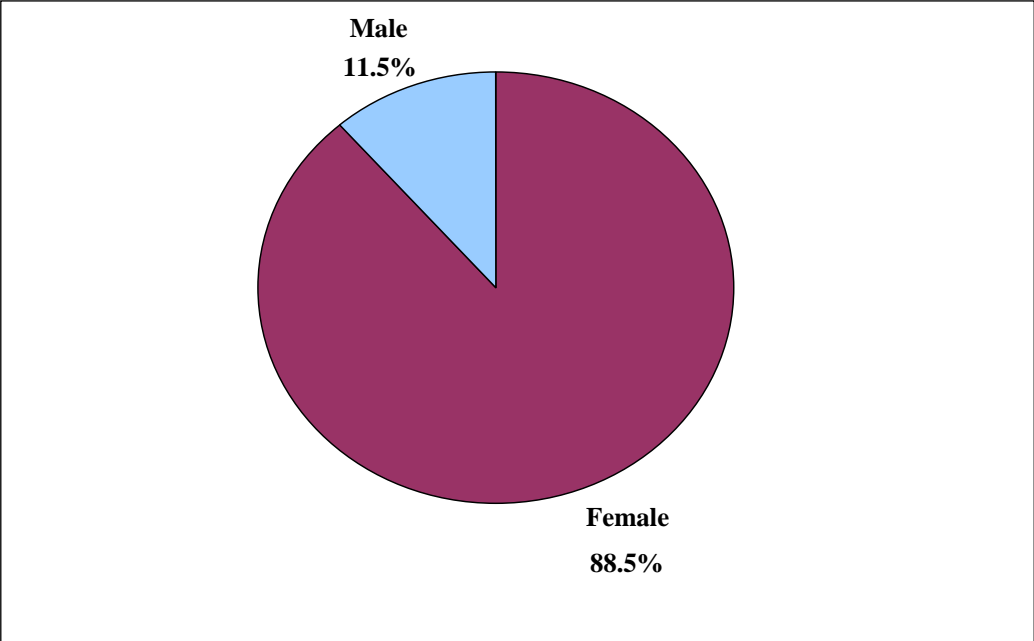
65. Nadia Johnson, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), United States, asserted that since corporations were the drivers of globalization, their interests had enormous influence on both global economic decision-making and national development strategies. She claimed that women bear the brunt of human rights violations of transnational corporations, and that these corporations tended to exacerbate existing gender inequalities in social, political and economic arenas. This was echoed by Nirmala Nababsing, Government of Mauritius, who pointed out that: *"The profit motive is so high in this globalized economic environment where competitiveness and productivity are the key business concepts, that gender*

Joyce Bediako, University for Development Studies, Ghana, asked the question: “*How do we involve women in fund raising to fight the cause of women?*”, including raising funds from churches. Mercia Selva Malar, India, pointed out that: “*The church can be the first source of funding for women development projects... Church leadership internationally and at national level has done some amount of fund raising to develop women.*” However, she conceded that the church could do much more in helping to achieve the MDGs and gender equality.

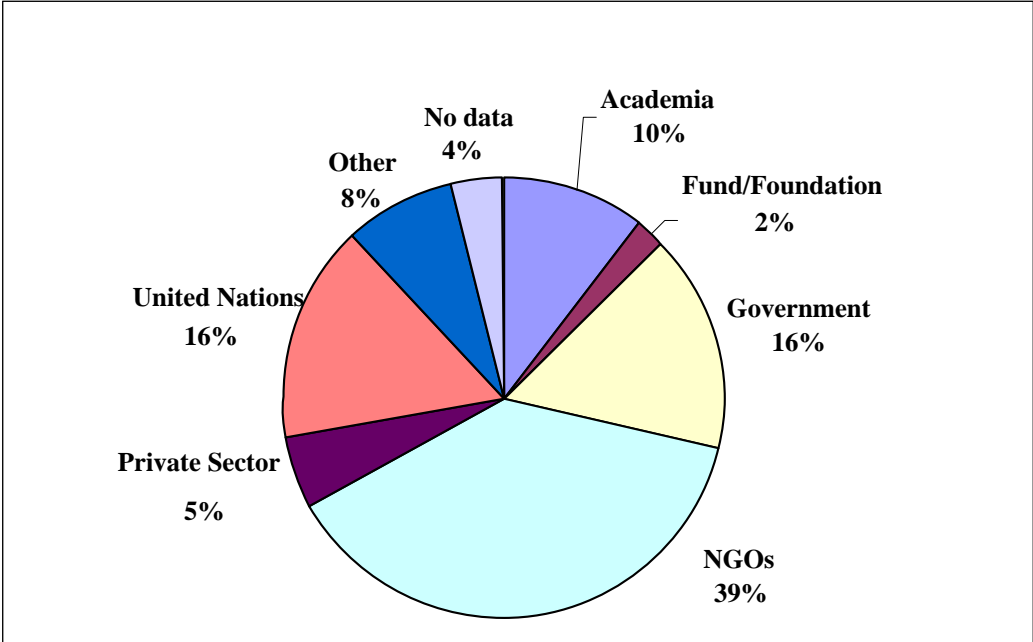
70.

Annex 1: Statistics on participation

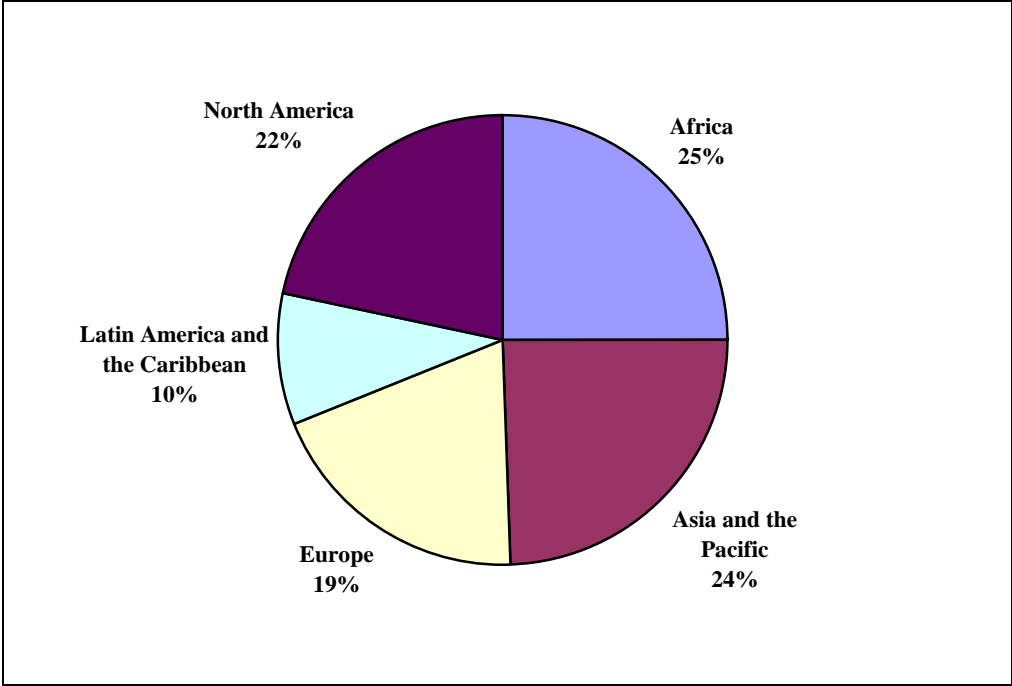
Participants by sex



Participants by affiliation

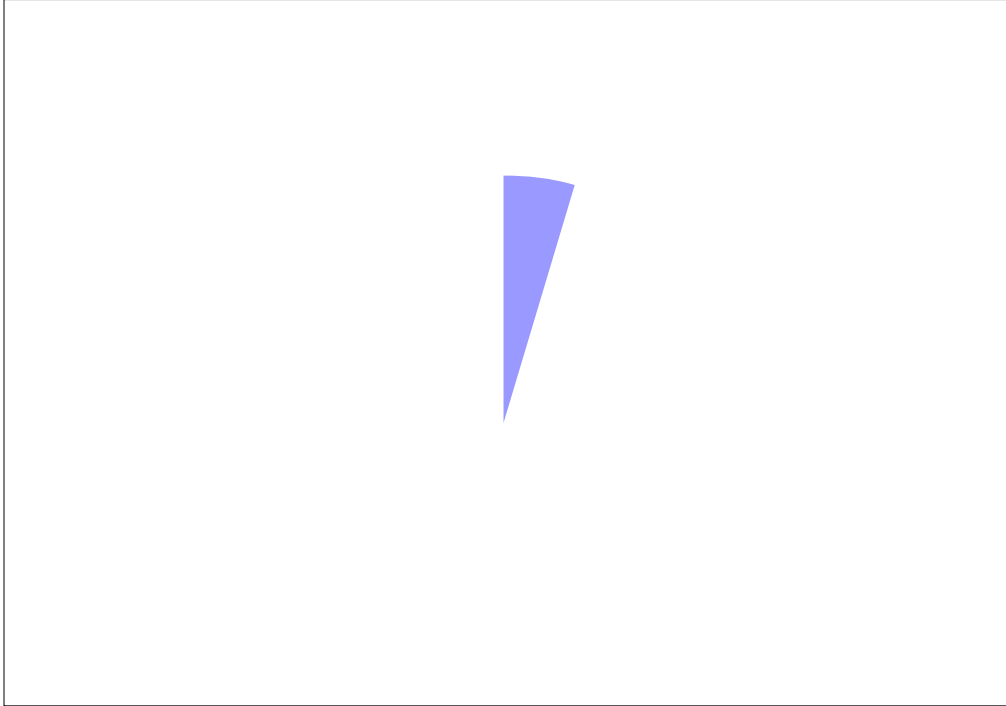


Geographical distribution of participants*

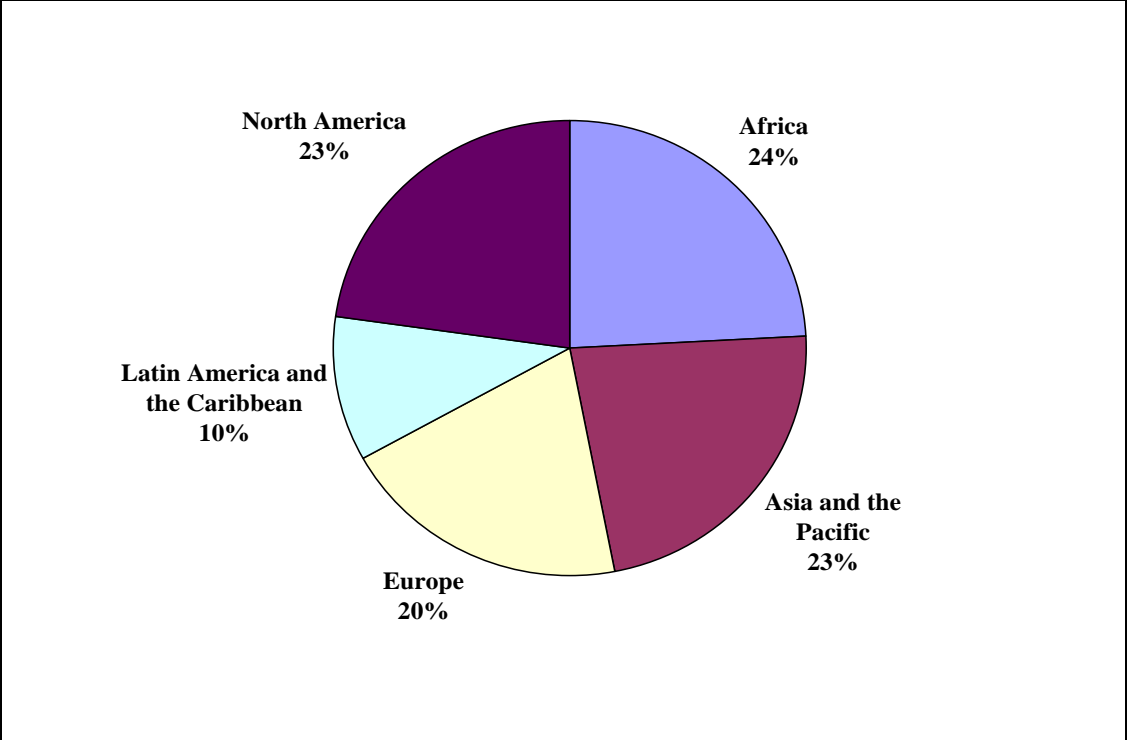


**Please note that this is an unofficial geographical grouping of countries.*

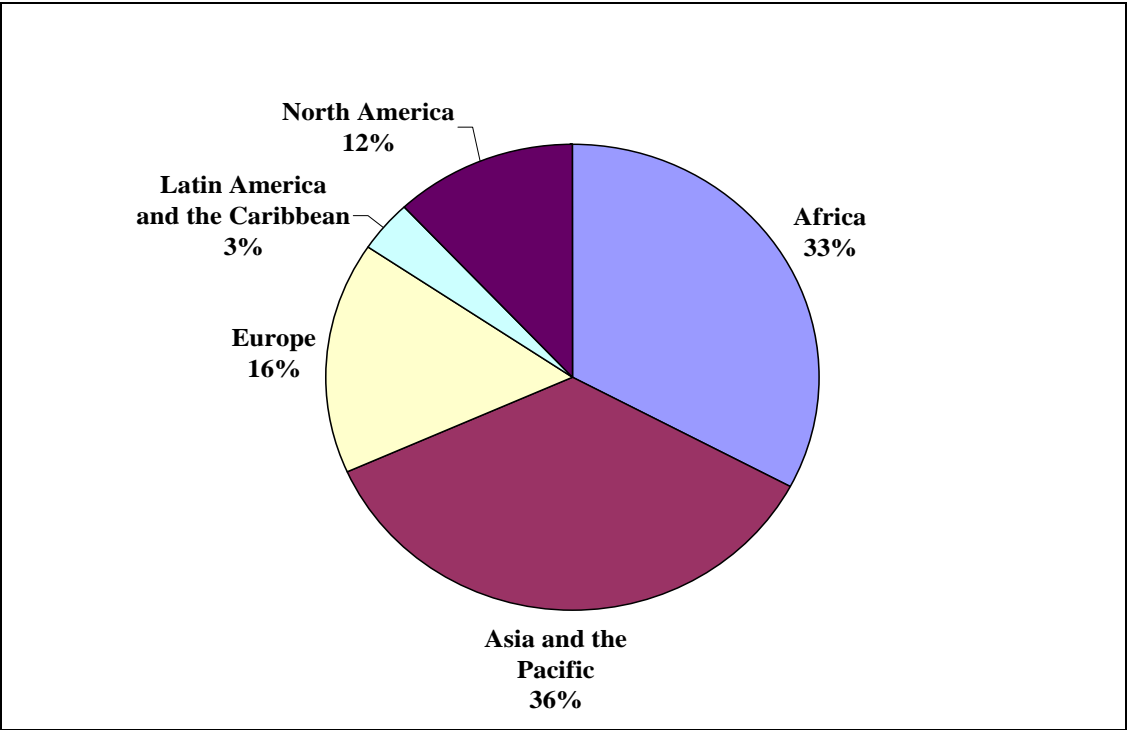
Participants by age



Geographical distribution of female participants



Geographical distribution of male participants



Annex 2: Number of participants in online discussion by country

	Algeria	2
	Angola	1
	Benin	3
	Botswana	1
	Burkina Faso	1
	Burundi	3
	Cameroon	12
	Congo, Republic of	2
	Côte d'Ivoire	5
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	3
	Djibouti	1

	Afghanistan	3
	Australia	29
	Armenia	1
	Azerbaijan	4
	Bangladesh	12
	Cambodia	1
	China	2
	Fiji	7
	Georgia	7
	India	93
	Indonesia	10

	Albania	2
	Austria	5
	Belgium	6
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2
	Bulgaria	12
	Croatia	1
	Cyprus	5
	Czech Republic	3
	Denmark	2
	Estonia	1
	Finland	4
	France	12

	Argentina	5
	Bahamas	2
	Barbados	1
	Bolivia	2
	Brazil	10
	Chile	3
	Colombia	9
	Costa Rica	2
	Cuba	1
	Ecuador	4
	El Salvador	3
	Grenada	

Annex 3: List of related web links

The following list of links is compiled from links mentioned in the online discussion and/or sent by discussion participants to the discussion moderator by email.

“Public Finance: Using budgets for promoting gender equality.”

Task Force on Gender and Financing for Development

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tffinfdevelop.htm>

UNIFEM www.gender-budgets.org

Financing Gender Equality: Commonwealth Perspectives 2007

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/165726/200607newbook.htm>

Oxfam Gender-Responsive budgeting

http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/oxfam_edPaper7.pdf

“Bilateral and multilateral assistance: The way forward for promoting gender equality.”

Updated information and guidance on how civil society can get engaged in EC aid programming:

Asia(www.asia-programming.eu),

Africa, Caribbean, Pacific (www.acp-programming.eu)

Latin America (www.la-programming.eu)

European neighborhood (www.enpi-programming.eu)

UN Financing for Development

Monterrey Consensus, A/CONF.198/11, International Conference on Financing for Development, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/indexDocuments.htm>

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, High Level Forum, Paris, 28 February – 2 March 2005.

(Para 42 on gender equality)

<http://www1.worldbank.org/harmonization/Paris/FINALPARISDECLARATION.pdf>

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

www.oecd.org OECD-DAC Network for Gender Equality: www.oecd.org/dac/gender

OECD 2007 “Gender equality and aid delivery: What has changed in development co-operation agencies since 1999?” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/0/38773781.pdf>

The Challenges of the European Development Consensus and the current EU aid agenda

Helen O'Connell, One World Action, WIDE's Annual Conference 2007 "New aid, expanding trade: What do women have to say?" 15 June 2007

<http://62.149.193.10/wide/download/The%20Challenges%20of%20the%20European%20Development%20Consensus%20and%20the%20current%20aid%20agenda.pdf?id=397>

The Reality of Aid, *Reality Checks* – official newsletter (January 2007 issue). Provides an overview of the Paris Declaration and highlights donor commitments that purport to improve aid effectiveness. The papers present critiques to the Declaration and pose challenges to donor countries, local and national governments as well as civil society organizations working towards aid effectiveness.

<http://www.realityofaid.org/rcheck.php> (download January 2007 issue)

Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships

UNIFEM Discussion Paper – March 2006

http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11429447581PromotingGenderEqualityInNewAidModalities_eng.pdf

Owning Development: Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships, UNIFEM conference website, November 2005

http://www.unifem.org/news_events/event_detail.php?EventID=31

Financing for Development: Aid Effectiveness and Gender-Responsive Budgets

Background paper prepared for the Commonwealth Secretariat, June 2007

by Debbie Budlender, Community Agency for Social Enquiry, Cape Town, South Africa

http://www.thecommonwealth.org/shared_asp_files/GFSR.asp?NodeID=164468

Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy, The Eighth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, 11 to 14 June 2007

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/164331/papers/>

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

Policy statement on Aid Effectiveness <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/aideffectiveness>

Eurostep

Four websites on country strategy papers that form the basis of aid in the recipient country: *Asia*: www.asia-programming.eu; *Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific*: www.acp-programming.eu; *Latin America*: www.la-programming.eu; and *Europe*: www.enpi-programming.eu.

“Effective Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality: How can we increase the likelihood of women benefiting equally from development activities? What strategies have proven to be effective in the field?” Hunt,

Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE)