

United Nations
Division for the Advancement of Women
Expert Consultation on the 2009 World Survey on
the Role of Women in Development
Copenhagen, Denmark
17-19 February, 2009

I. Introduction

1. The World Survey on the Role of Women in Development is presented to the Second Committee of the General Assembly at five-yearly intervals and is focused on development issues affecting women. It has been prepared since 1986 to provide critical input for enhanced attention to gender perspectives in regard to economic and development issues. The relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on 'women in development' have provided guidance to the Secretariat on the theme of the World Survey.

2. The 1999 World Survey focused on globalization, gender equality and work, while the 2004 World Survey addressed women and international migration. The General Assembly Resolution A/RES/59/248 adopted in 2004 requested the Secretary-General to update the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session; noting that the survey should continue to focus on selective emerging development themes that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels.¹

3. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly decided that the theme for the sixth survey would be "Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance".²

4. An Expert Consultation on "Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance" was organized by DAW in Bangkok, Thailand, from 12 to 14 November 2008, hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The meeting provided the opportunity for experts and observers to provide guidance and recommendations for the development of the World Survey.

5. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is organizing an Expert Consultation on the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 17 to 19 February 2009. The meeting will be hosted by the Government of Denmark. The Expert Consultation is part of the Division's preparation of the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance.

II. Conceptual Framework for the Expert Consultation

A. Background

6. Women's access to financial and economic resources was addressed at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), and other intergovernmental processes, including the Millennium Summit (2000), the 2005 World Summit, and International Conference on Financing for Development (2002). A number of ILO Conventions and international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International

¹ A/RES/59/248, para. 2.

² A/RES/60/210, para. 38

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Righ

11. In its agreed conclusions on “Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women” adopted at its fifty-second session in 2008, the Commission noted the growing body of

16. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights require State parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic rights set forth in the Covenant. It includes a specific provision on fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value for women.

17. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted a number of Conventions of particular relevance to gender equality, in particular the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

B. Issues to be addressed

18. At the first Expert Consultation in Bangkok, Thailand experts provided guidance on the issues to be covered in the World Survey. A consultant, Ms Naila Kabeer from the Institute for Development Studies in Sussex, UK, has been commissioned to prepare the report on the basis of consultation with a broad group of experts in the area of women's economic empowerment. Inputs have been received from United Nations entities, including the regional commissions.

19. The World Survey will address women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance, within the broad framework of the economic empowerment of women. There is increasing recognition that women's economic empowerment is a key strategy for economic development. Increased access to and control over resources and opportunities for women not only improves the economic status of women themselves and their households and communities, but also creates a multiplier effect for economic growth. The lack of economic empowerment for women both jeopardizes growth and poverty reduction and leads to less favourable development outcomes for women and their children.¹⁵

20. The World Survey will focus on what has been achieved so far in terms of women's economic empowerment. It will identify the remaining gaps and challenges, and address some of the key constraints that have hindered progress in achieving women's economic empowerment. It will also explore the unrealized potential of women's economic empowerment and provide strategies for moving forward.

21. The following issues will be covered in the World Survey:¹⁶
opportunities for and constraints and challenges to women's economic empowerment at micro, meso and macro levels, as well as the interlinkages between the different levels;
the impact of policies covering a wide range of areas, including, inter alia, agriculture, migration, urbanization, poverty reduction and trade;

activities of women and their recognition in the gross national product" and "Equality in marriage and family relations".

¹⁵ "Gender equality as smart economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007–10)" (September 2006).

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of the issues to be covered in the World Survey, please refer to the Note by the Secretary-General on the "Preparation of the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development" (E/CN.6/2009/14).

28. The Expert Consultation will also be attended by a number of observers.

Documentation

29. Documentation for the Consultation will include:
A draft of the World Survey on the role of women in development (prepared by the consultant);