United Nations Nations Unies

!
!
!

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-sixth session
27 February – 9 March 2012
New York

!
!

INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL

Review theme: Evaluation of progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions of CSW 52 on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Panel 3:

I. Introduction

Distinguished guests, it is an honor for me to be here with you today to share my perspective on progress made towards financing for gender equality and recommendations on how to prioritize our future actions.

result, the Bank has created openings for debate on how to achieve goals that can enlarge the policy space for gender equality. We therefore see more intellectual space for discussing roadblocks to gender equality in international institutions.

In another example, March 1, 2012, USAID will unveil a new gender equality policy that will serve to better integrate gender equality and female empowerment into USAID's work. The challenge is that targeted measures to promote gender equality can be undermined by macro-level policies that increase economic hardship and worsen the competition for scarce resources and jobs. It is not clear that international organizations have made progress in coordinating their gender policies with their macroeconomic policies, a topic I discuss in more detail below.

There is, therefore, more work that needs to be done. I discuss here three constraints and thus challenges to be addressed, followed by recommendations on how to respond to them.

III. Coherent Framework for Prioritizing Gender-Enabling Expenditures

Financing for gender equality requires a well-targeted approach that strategically uses resources capable of leveraging change in multiple domains. In order to do this, we need to be clear about what our precise gender equality goals are. Over the last several years, a conceptual framework has emerged that identifies three domains of gender (in)equality: *capabilities, economic opportunities* (access to and control over resources), and *empowerment* (or voice in decision-making).

Indicators of *capabilities* include: education, access to health care, reproductive care, and support for care work. *Economic opportunities* can be measured by wage equality, share of paid employment, access to credit and technical assistance, and women's land ownership rights and access to land. *Empowerment/voice* is illustrated by women's share of political and civil government positions, and their share of professional, managerial and supervisory jobs.

For governments to effectively allocate financing to promote gender equality, it will be essential to begin by prioritizing among the many alternative potential budget allocations. How do we do that? While the priorities will depend on country-specific conditions, those goals that can leverage change in other domains

! %

This policy framework has forced countries to scale back on education and health expenditures. Thus, while gender budgeting strategies may help to allocate *existing* resources in an optimal way, this approach alone cannot address the macroeconomic constraints that contribute to binding limits on the *levels* of public expenditures and household incomes. Macroeconomic policymaking can suffer from too narrow a focus on financial rather than social and economic outcomes.

In addition to the policies that constrain growth, incomes,

inflationary pressures by raising interest rates, thus discouraging borrowing and spending. This approach attempts to solve the problem of inflation by reducing aggregate demand but at the cost of slower growth and higher unemployment. For many countries, however, the problem of inflationary pressures is related to low productivity due to widespread health problems such as HIV/AIDs, poor transportation networks, and constrained food

! '

specifically identify the investment character of gender expenditures and quantify their contribution to productivity growth. If well-targeted, gender-equalizing expenditures can "crowd in" private investment, stimulate growth, and generate a stream of revenues in the future to pay down the costs of the initial investment. This approach helps us to avoid the erroneous argument that governments lack