

UK GENDER & DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The GAD Network
c/o WOMANKIND Worldwide
Development House
56-64 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4JX

22nd May 2006

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London, SW1P 3AG

Cc: Tessa Jowell, Minister for Women;
Meg Munn, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women and Equality

Dear Chancellor,

At the 2005 World Summit, the UK and other governments reaffirmed that gender equality is “essential to advance development and peace and security” (para 12) and undertook to “strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender” (para 59).

The UK **Gender and Development Network** - a network of more than 220 UK-based organisations and individuals working on gender and development issues ¹ – welcome this commitment, but believe it will not be met unless gender equality and women’s machineries are an integral part of the UN reform process currently underway.

In the recent report of the UN Secretary-General “Mandating and Delivering: Analysis and Recommendations to Facilitate Review of Mandates” he notes his intention to ask the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence to include in its work an assessment of how gender equality, including through gender mainstreaming, can be better and more fully addressed in the work of the United Nations, particularly in its operational activities on the ground (para 131).

We urge you to use your membership of the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence to ensure that gender is integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the work of the panel and to make strong recommendations in the final report for more effective UN mechanisms to achieve gender equality in development, humanitarian affairs and environment, as well as in human rights and peace-keeping. We also urge you to ensure that the panel hold consultations with civil society organisations, including those working on women’s rights, in order to ensure the differential impact of any proposed reforms on women and men are taken into account.

¹ See www.gadnetwork.org.uk for further information

Organisations and networks such as our own have been strong supporters of the UN and have actively contributed to its work on gender equality, human rights, development, the environment and peace and security. However, mechanisms and processes dealing with UN reform have failed to display a visible and consistent commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, the number of women represented in senior UN posts has stagnated and, at some levels, has actually decreased.

The UN reform process is an important opportunity to ensure that this marginalisation of women's machineries and the obstacles to women's empowerment within the UN are tackled. While we are not, at this stage, endorsing any particular proposal, past experience clearly indicates that women's empowerment and gender equality will not be advanced without a dedicated entity within the UN that has the powers and financial and technical resources to push for the implementation of these goals. In the meantime, we would like to see a commitment to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the needs regarding both women's machineries and gender mainstreaming as part of the work of the Coherence Panel.

We are ready to work with you to achieve this and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss in more detail the various proposals currently being debated.

Yours sincerely

Brita Fernandez-Schmidt
Chair of the UK Gender and Development Network
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Members of the GAD Network include:

AAA Consultancy Services
ABANTU for Development
ACORD
Action Aid International
ActionAid
Angela Dale Consultancy
Anona Development Consultancy
AWISE Association for Women in Science and Engine
BDP Media Group Ltd
BESO (British Executive Service Overseas)
Big Lottery Fund
Birkbeck, University of London
Body shop
BOND
BRIDGE (gender and development information unit)
BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies
British Council
British Council, Commonwealth Secret, AWEPA etc
British Red Cross
WOMANKIND Worldwide
Café Direct

CAFOD
CAMFED
CamFed (Campaign for Female Education)
CAMFED International
CARE International
CARE INTERNATIONAL UK
CARE UK
Central America Women's Network (CAWN)
CHANGE
ChildHope UK
Christian Aid
Churches Together in England
CIIR
Commonwealth Secretariat
Criminology in the New Millennium
DfID
DfID, Latin America Department
DFID, Social Development Dept
Domestic Violence Intervention Project.
European Union of Women, British Section
Families and Social Capital ESRC Research Group
FORWARD (Found for Women's health Research & DEV)
Gender Action
HelpAge International
HelpAge International - EU Office
IDS
IFAT
Institute of Development studies
Institute of Education
Interact Worldwide
Interact Worldwide
International Alert
International and Rural Development Dept.
International Forum for Rural Transport and Dvpt
International Gender Studies Centre
International Health and Medical Education Centre
International Labour Research and Information Group
International Planned Parenthood Federation
Intrac
IPPF/SARD
Jaipur Limb Campaign
Latin American Women's Rights Service
London Metropolitan University
London School of Economics and Political Science
Marie Stopes International
Mifumi UK
Minority Rights Group International
Mothers Union
MRG
NAWO
One World Action
Oxfam
Panos Institute
Plan International HQ
Population Services International/Europe

Promote Mifumi Project (PROMPT)
RAINBO
Save the Children
Save the Children UK
School of Business and Social Sciences
Simmons College Boston
Tower Hamlet Community Empowerment Network
Training and Consultancy for Development
Transform Africa
UK SRH Network
University of Essex, Dept. Sociology
University of London, Institute of Education
University of Warwick
University of York, Department of Politics
VSO
WaterAid
Westfield Consultancy
WIDE
Widows for Peace and Reconstruction.
WILDAF (WOMANKIND Partner)
Women's International League For Peace and Freedom
Women's National Commission (poss future members)
World Vision UK
WSP International Management Consulting