

Two Perspectives on Gender Equality Discourse in the Context of International Development: the Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) vs. the Economic Approach

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Abstract

This paper outlines how gender issues have been discussed from the Fourth UN Women's Conference, the Beijing Conference, to the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF-4) on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea in 2011. From a historical overview on gender issues, two different perspectives are identified within the context of development. One is the economic approach taken by the OECD and World Bank, and the other is the human-rights approach as typified by UN institutions and civil-society organizations (CSOs). Analyzing issue papers, articles and reports released from both perspectives and featuring gender and development in their titles, this paper investigates the different standpoints on whether gender is a means to or an end for development and aid effectiveness, in order to ascertain the meaning and implications of gender agenda as an outcome of HLF-4. Although gender has recently been addressed as a cross-cutting issue in the development context, it is difficult to achieve practical outcomes of development or poverty reduction without providing consideration to women, who hold an absolute majority of the world's poor. However, this approach to gender as a means ought to be extended toward a more sustainable and human-rights based approach as the international aid framework becomes more inclusive and focuses more on development effectiveness.

I. Introduction

The issue of gender was adopted as one of the main agenda items of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) organized by the OECD and held in Busan, South Korea in 2011. Through the four HLFs, this was the first time the issue of gender was highlighted by the host government and opened as a special session. In the Paris Declaration (PD) of 2005, gender equality was first mentioned in an HLF document as a cross-cutting issue concentrat-

ing on harmonization (OECD, 2005)¹. It was expressed in a more developed form in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) in 2008,² and as a main pillar for impacting poverty through environmental sustainability (OECD, 2008). The most distinguished feature of the issue of gender is that AAA considers gender equality as a human right issue. In Busan, gender equality was included as one of the basic factors of an inclusive partnership for effective development, presenting reducing inequality as a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth and development (OECD/DCD/DAC/EFF, 2011).³

In the HLF-4, it is widely stated how aid effectiveness as emphasized by the OECD is transformed and shifted toward the development effectiveness initiated by the United Nations. The core difference between aid effectiveness and development effectiveness lies in its starting point. The former questions whether aid is being used well and whether it is achieving its objectives, while the latter considers whether development solutions are being found. Development effectiveness advocates stressing the key issue of achieving transformational change (Kharas, 2011).⁴ The development effectiveness perspective is more inclusive than that of aid effectiveness, and in that sense it could offer a good opportunity to examine gender equality. Achieving gender equality is more of a long-term target compared to economic growth, but gender equality can be defined as a development solution. Since each Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is related to gender, if the international community wishes to achieve all the MDGs, the greatest concern in international development should be focused on gender issues.

This paper aims at investigating the perspective on gender equality held by the OECD and the World Bank, which have promoted aid effectiveness, and United Nations and the UN women-supporting development pursuing a rights-based approach. Is gender a means for development or its goal? Is gender a tool to enhance aid effectiveness or is it a target in its own right that should be accomplished separately from aid effectiveness? These questions can be investigated in the light of two approaches: an economic approach and a rights-based approach. Finally, based on the compared perspectives, the gender agenda in Busan Outcome Document and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative announced during the HLF-4 will be analyzed and critiqued.

For investigating the differences between the perspective of the OECD and the World Bank and that of the UN and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment

1 OECD (2005). The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

2 OECD (2008). Accra Agenda for Action.

3 Fifth draft outcome document for the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, South Korea. Para changed to 20 in the final version.

4 Kharas, Homi (2011). "New Principles for Development Effectiveness" [Toward a Global Compact for Development Effectiveness], paper presented at the Pre-HLF4 Conference hosted by KDI and KAIDEC, Busan, South Korea.

of Women (UN Women), this paper made use of analyzing issue papers, articles and reports released by each organization that include gender and development in the title. Investigating the documents is considered a proper methodology to compare and analyze the perspectives since these documents represent the voices and opinions of these organizations.

II. Gender and Development: History and Approaches

1. From Beijing (1995) to Accra (2008)

Since the 1960s, a number of developing countries have set development as a national goal to be achieved based on the modernization theory of the West. With this process, however, women and gender issues were ignored. It was believed that women's conditions would be improved if the levels of wages, income and education increased apace with modernization. However, research has revealed that development in the early 1970s, which was considered equivalent to economic growth, actually exacerbated gender disparities, resulting in negative consequences for women and children. The general expectation that women's status would improve together with the modernization of society proved to be mistaken (Kim, G., 2005).⁵

With the declaration of the UN International Women's Year and the International Women's Decade in 1975, a new paradigm known as Women in Development (WID) emerged as an innovative approach to women and development. The WID approach to development asserted that women should be included as part of the process of economic development through their participation in income-generating activities.

In the mid-1970s, however, the WID approach came under criticism for failing to challenge traditional gender roles and gave way to the Gender and Development or GAD paradigm. While the WID approach was to recognize the reality of discrimination against women and establish policies and programs to combat it, the GAD approach drew attention to women as self-organizing actors with political voices, not as simple beneficiaries of development aid (Young, 1993; Kim, G., 2005).⁶

The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995, came to include gender mainstreaming as a strategy to progress on gender equality and

⁵ Kim, Gyeong-hee (2005). "Globalization and the Korean Gender Policy Move," *Women and Society*, 21(2): 149.

⁶ Young, Kate (1993). *Planning Development with Women*, London: Macmillan; Lind, Amy (2003). "Feminist Post-Development Thought: Women in Development and the Gendered Paradox of Survival in Bolivia," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 31(3/4): 227-246; Quoted from Kim, Gyeong-hee (2005). "A Preliminary Study to Reconstruct Gender Policy Perspectives," *Korean Feminism*, 21(2): 268.

demanding that women's interests and experience be reflected in all phases of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects designed for gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy focusing on systemic instruments that enable gender-responsive approaches across all areas. Corner (1999) argues that what is important is the process of gender mainstreaming which integrates gender-sensitive perspectives into policies across the board while deviating from traditional perspectives that confine women's policies within particular areas (Corner, 1999).⁷

Furthermore, the international community, acknowledging the importance of gender perspectives in poverty reduction efforts, included gender equality and women's empowerment in the UN Millennium Development Goals declared in 2000, highlighting the significance of gender perspectives in development. Achieving gender-responsive innovations and gender equality in the public sector through gender mainstreaming of policies has become a mandate of development.

Meanwhile, through the 2005 Paris Declaration, the five pillars of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability- were announced by the OECD as main principals of aid. However, many international CSOs, including women's advocacy groups, denounced the Paris Declaration for being prepared based mainly on discussions among governments of donor countries without any input from civil society and resulting in an excessively narrow development cooperation framework confined by a focus on technical aspects. Subsequently, international women's advocates initiated active responses and intervention in the run-up to the HLF-3 held in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008.⁸

Women's organizations, which were excluded from the preparation process of the Paris Declaration at the HLF-2 in 2005, took step to ensure that gender issues would be included in the agenda of the 2008 Accra HLF-3. As a result, unlike with the Paris Declaration, issues of gender equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability were able to be built into the AAA. The AAA states that "gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are cornerstones for achieving enduring impact" (paragraph 3), and "devel-

7 Corner, Lorraine Corner, (1999). "Strategies for the Empowerment of Women: Capacity building for gender mainstreaming," paper presented at the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Bangkok, 26-29 October 1999.

8 Women's networks including the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Women in Development Europe (WIDE), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) and Coordinadora de la Mujer/Bolivia, a South American women's network, held women-focused consultation on aid effectiveness in January 2008. In addition, women's organizations along with the international CSOs that had participated in the HLF-3 questioned the effectiveness of the Paris Declaration and the AAA. Critics assert that the discussions on aid effectiveness through the PD and AAA are too technical, lacking in information-, gender blind, ignorant and exclusive of civil society, lacking legitimacy and undermining rights.

oping countries and donors will ensure that their respective development policies and programs are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability” (paragraph 13). In particular, it acknowledges CSOs as independent development actors (paragraph 20) and the necessity of “improving information systems including disaggregating data by sex” (OECD, 2008).⁹

Reflecting this international trend, the OECD/DAC adopted WID guidelines in 1983, the Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation in 1998, and additional gender equality guidelines in 2008 that set gender equality and women’s empowerment as a goal of development aid (OECD, 2010). These guidelines demonstrate the institution’s willingness to engage in a balanced reflection of the two initiatives, WID and gender mainstreaming, which include the harmonization of aid approaches for gender equality, implementation of concrete, outcome-oriented action, and accountability for agreements made on promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. All in all, it reiterates the correlation between gender equality and aid effectiveness.

The OECD/DAC also marked gender equality as one of its aid goals and issued recommendations to specify relevant indicators across all stages of aid programs from planning to implementation and evaluation (Kim, E.M. et al., 2010).¹⁰

2. Two Approaches to Gender Issues

With increasing attention from the international community, the issues of women and gender equality are becoming one of the most important cross-cutting issues, both from the perspective of economics that view women as a means to achieve aid effectiveness and from that of human rights that considers gender equality to be a goal unto itself.

The international development system is only partially homogenous, as the United Nations and the World Bank adopt distinctly different approaches from one another. The United Nations considers improvement in equality to be a goal to be achieved, and invokes laws and pursues justice to push equality forward. In contrast, the World Bank regards improvements in equality, including gender equality, to be a means to measure and promote a healthy market economy. The discrepancy between the United Nations and the World Bank stems from the different postwar imperatives entrusted to the two. On the one hand, the United Nations’ mission is to put the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into practice. Thus, the United Nations’ *raison d’être* for gender issues is to eradicate all forms of discrimination against

9 OECD (2008). Accra Agenda for Action.

10 Kim, Eun Mee et al. (2010), *A Study on the Application State of Advanced Donor Agencies’ DAC Recommendation and Evaluation Indexes and KOICA’s Responses*, Seoul: KOICA.

women and reinforce their roles and participation, together with the defense of their rights. On the other hand, for the World Bank, as a member of the Bretton Woods system, economic and financial responsibilities are the priority. Therefore, the bank views women primarily as a new type of economic actor and women's rights issues remain secondary (Bessis, 2004).¹¹ The development approach represented by the OECD and the World Bank is based on the perspective of economics. Early colonial governments and development agencies defined serving as a wife and a mother as the most important role of a woman; accordingly, their development policies related to women were focused on social welfare aspects such as child-rearing and home economics. In other words, the focus of development was on the promotion of a family-oriented welfare, with men responsible for production and women tasked with reproduction. They supported the trickle-down theory, which argues that the benefits of development can trickle down from the rich to the poor and that men's improved economic status would raise that of their wives (Momsen, 2004).¹²

This theory is closely related to modernization theory, which claims that modernization can enhance women's participation in economic activities. Proponents of modernization theory linked modernization to industrialization, urbanization and technological innovation, and women's productive economic activities outside housework to modernized activities. Modernization theorists predicted that it would bring about more jobs, greater educational opportunities, and increased participation by modernized contemporary women in the labor force. This paradigm considered women's engagement in economic activities other than housework as "labor force participation" and assumed that based on the experience of industrialized nations, women's labor force participation would increase in proportion to the level of modernization of a country (Cho, 1983).¹³

The movement of women's work from the home to the labor market is one of the most remarkable characteristics of economic development (Lewis, 1954).¹⁴ Within the process of development, however, women were excluded from the benefits of economic development due to their restricted social and economic participation. It was argued that if women were able to more fully participate in the production sector, they would be able to offer great contributions to development and thereby to increasing effectiveness. This economic approach that viewed women as a means for economic growth was coupled with the basic needs approach in the 1970s and 80s, the goal of which was to eliminate absolute poverty and to increase GNP and household

11 Bessis, Sophie (2004). "International Organizations and Gender: New Paradigms and Old Habits," *Signs*, 29(2): 634-636.

12 Momsen, Janet Henshall (2004). *Gender and Development*, New York: Routledge, pp.12.

13 Cho, Eun (1983). "Economic Development and Women's Labour," *Phenomenon and Perception*, 7(3): 55.

14 Lewis, W. Arthur (1954). *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour*, Manchester: The Manchester School, pp.143.

income. It regarded women as a resource to be tapped for economic development.

With a sharp decline in birth rates during times of war, women's participation in the labor force served as an engine for economic growth in East Asia, lowering countries' dependency on overseas aid while increasing savings and investment. However, this economic approach revealed limitations in that it pursued effective outcomes by exploiting women's traditional roles rather than by seeking to promote gender equality.

In addition, there is the rights-based approach. Recently, international civil society has been approaching gender issues from the perspective of human rights. This new paradigm, which seeks a more fundamental and effective resolution of poverty, has emerged from reflection upon the problems entailed by development, growth and aid efforts since the late 1990s. This new approach reflects the recent trend by which international civil society views issues of development cooperation through the lens of human rights (Shetty, 2000).¹⁵ Such a rights-based perspective defines gender-related inequality as a fundamental cause of poverty and calls for fairness and social justice by which every individual enjoys equal opportunities to live up to his or her full potential regardless of sex, age, race, social status, religion, illness or disability (Kapur and Nata, 2006).¹⁶

The Statement of Common Understanding issued by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) states that human rights are within the framework of rights and obligations (UNDP and Olsson, 2005)¹⁷, meaning that the capacities of rights-holders (victims of human rights violations) should be developed in order for them to claim their rights, as well as the capacities of duty-bearers (governments) to meet their obligations (Dickson, 2011).¹⁸ In this regard, a rights-based approach to development allows men and women equal participation in the decision-making process and strengthens the capacities of every individual to claim his or her rights to services and opportunities.

15 Shetty, Salil (2000). "Gender Policy: Organisation-wide Strategies to Achieve Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," Action Aid, available at <http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/119_1_gender_policy.pdf>; YWCA (2007). "Take-Action Campaigns: Nairobi 2007 Call to Action on HIV and Aid", YWCA International, available at <<http://www.worldywca.org/Take-Action/Campaigns/Nairobi-2007-Call-to-Action-on-HIV-and-aid>>; BetterAid (2010). *Development effectiveness in development cooperation: a right-based perspective*, Manila: BetterAid.

16 Kapur, Aanchal and Nata, Duvvury (2006). *A Rights-Based Approach to Realizing the Economic and Social Rights of Poor and Marginalized Women*, Washington D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

17 UNDP and Olsson, John (2005). *Thematic Paper on MDG3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*, New York: UNDP.

18 Dickson, Osei Bonsu (2011). "Petro-States in West Africa: The Case for a Rights Based Model to Oil & Gas Development in Ghana and Nigeria," *Ghana Oil Watch*, available at <<http://ghanaoilwatch.org/>>.

The fundamental concept of the rights-based approach parallels that of dependency theory. Dependency theorists claim that capitalist industrialization alters the nature of development and preferentially absorbs women's labor in pursuit of maximum profit. They believe that what is important is not whether or not women are participating in economic activities, but how they are participating. According to them, women in the third world are absorbed into modernized industries as a source of inexpensive labor, are left in charge of food production in rural areas deserted by men, and participate in peripheral economic activities in the informal sectors of urban areas (Cho, 1983).¹⁹

The human rights approach attempts to provide a more effective, sustainable and rational model for both development and human rights while linking gender issues with poverty, development and human rights. It is believed that the rights-based approach to development is an appropriate starting point for introducing a novel development architecture that emphasizes women's rights as well as development together with environmental, economic, social and cultural rights.

III. Two Perspectives on Gender Equality Discourse

1. The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

As for the development and human rights perspective, the UN issued the Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986. The UNDP, with its human development approach, has been publishing the Human Development Report since 1990 under the influence of Amartya Sen who called attention to human rights and capabilities. While women had frequently been featured in the UN's economic and social programs, women's rights were rarely viewed within the framework of human rights until the 1990s. The 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna served as a watershed for change, triggering the realization among women that women's rights are human rights. Two years later, women's influence within the international community grew further and was embodied through the publication of Gender and Human Development, the 1995 edition of the UNDP's Human Development Report, as well as the Gender Development Index, which measures the status of women (Bunch, 2009).²⁰ The UN Economic and Social Council first showed interest in women's human rights through Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, which stresses the importance of women's equal participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities and states that "UN work to implement this resolution is

19 Cho, Eun. op. cit., pp. 56-57.

20 Bunch, Charlotte (2009). "Women's Rights and Gender at the United Nations: The Cause for a new Gender Equality Architecture," To be published in *Vereinte Nationen: German Review on the United Nations*.

a focus of both OSAGI and UNIFEM (now UN Women).”

The UN, UNDP, and UN Women consider gender equality to be a goal in its own right. Furthermore, both UNIFEM (UN Women) and UNDP assert that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable growth and poverty reduction and also a precondition for progress on the MDGs, people-centered development and democracy (UNIFEM and UNDP, 2010).²¹

In effect, all of the MDGs are related to gender. This can be interpreted as, on one hand, the UN’s awareness of the gravity of gender equality being well-reflected in the MDGs, but on the other hand, the international body includes divergent perspectives when it comes to gender equality. The UNDP argues that while the significance of gender equality is well recognized, it is not mainstreamed within the MDGs, and thus needs to be further highlighted (UNDP and Olsson, 2005).²²

According to a recent issue paper by UN Women, women’s empowerment principles are a partnership initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact (UNGC). This initiative, which defines gender equality as a fundamental and inviolable human right, aims to promote gender equality by empowering women in the economic and business sector (UN Women, 2011).²³

Feminist scholars, who share this idea, assert that gender equality and women’s empowerment is an intrinsic goal in its own right, not a means or tool for achieving others (Kabeer, 2005).²⁴ They also state that it is important to understand that gender equality is essential to achieving economic and social priorities. However, they express regret for the fact that although they have succeeded in leading the UN to endorse women’s rights as human rights, the outcomes of this hard-earned success were not clearly iterated in the Millennium Declaration (Heyzer, 2005).²⁵ Feminist scholars claim that for a long period, gender has been regarded as a tool or an ambiguous concept separated from reality and practices, and that women should be alert to such a tendency.

Gender equality is also considered to be an essential element for the accomplishment of all the MDGs, as well as for implementation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In fact, UNDP, an institution focused on achieving the MDGs, is making efforts to ensure that gender issues are clearly defined by governments and civil society and reflected in national MDG Reports.

21 UNIFEM and UNDP (2010). *Making the MDGs Work Better for Women: Implementing Gender-Responsive National Development Plans and Programmes*, New York: UNIFEM, pp.25.

22 UNDP and Olssen, John (2005). *Thematic Paper on MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*, New York: UNDP, pp.26.

23 UN Women (2011). *Issue Paper: Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality means Business*, New York: UN Women, pp.2

24 Kabeer, Naila (2005). “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal,” *Gender and Development*, 12(1): 13.

25 Heyzer, Noeleen (2005). “Making the links: Women’s Rights and Empowerment Are Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals,” *Gender and Development*, 12(1): 10.

Placing as much emphasis on process as it does on results, a human rights-based approach links gender and development with gender equality and rejects trade-offs between economic growth and gender equality. A rights-based approach regards poor women as key actors in the development process, rather than as passive recipients of aid (Hayes, 2005).²⁶

CSOs who endorse human rights-based approaches prioritize promoting gender-sensitive aid effectiveness as follows (Schoenstein and Alemany, 2011)²⁷: First and foremost is the need to focus on human rights, in addition to recognizing the centrality of poverty reduction, gender equality, social justice, decent work and environmental sustainability; second is the transition from a narrow focus on aid management and delivery to a more inclusive and outcomes-oriented emphasis on development; third, changes in the aid architecture to increased inclusiveness and legitimacy; fourth, the correction of the imbalance of power between donor and recipient countries through mutual accountability, elimination of tied aid, and increased aid predictability; and finally, the creation of mechanisms to ensure signatories follow through on commitments.

It is from the human rights-based approach that ownership in the PD would be implemented through the manner in which the most left-behind are empowered. The most vulnerable group, including women in poverty, can be considered as an agent for change and to develop their society and, further, their state, and even developmental programs can be tailored with their needs and through their participation. Gender equality can be achieved through the concept of human rights and transformation of social structures.

2. The Economic Development Approach

The economic approach takes a different view on gender. The OECD/DAC stated in a recent issue paper that women's economic participation and empowerment is essential to promoting women's rights and enabling women to assume control over their lives. While affirming that women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth, and achievement of the MDGs, it attaches a proviso: women's empowerment should be conducive to growth and development.

In a survey designed to assess progress on implementing the Paris Declaration and the AAA, the OECD added gender equality as an optional module in an attempt to identify partner countries' efforts to meet gender equality-related targets. According to the OECD, very few countries have allocated special budgets to address gender equality; in almost all countries, gender equality is noted as a national priority but few financial resources are allocated to the imple-

26 Hayes, Ceri (2005). "Out of the margins: the MDGs through a CEDAW lens," *Gender and Development*, 13(1): 68-69.

27 Schoenstein, Anne and Alemany, Cecilia (2011). "Development Cooperation Beyond the Aid Effectiveness Paradigm: A women's rights perspective," AWID Discussion Paper (AWID).

mentation of specific activities or to monitoring progress. While all partner countries have included gender equality in their national development strategies, most of them consider it to be a cross-cutting issue that only applies in certain areas. In other words, despite their awareness that gender equality requires greater attention, they are reluctant to increase financial resources in order to attain it (OECD DAC, 2011).²⁸

In the meantime, the World Economic Forum in its Global Gender Gap Report 2010 asserts that a country's competitiveness depends on whether and how it taps into women's abilities. It goes on to state that the UN defines women's empowerment as a key element toward the MDGs but falls short of presenting any further details (World Economic Forum, 2011).²⁹ The WEF is another institution that views women as a means for development: its focus is on how women can contribute to the development of an economy. For example, it argues that if countries were to reduce the gender gap, their economies would achieve tremendous growth: in the case of Japan, its GDP could grow by 16 percent through achieving gender equality in the economic sector (World Economic Forum, 2010).³⁰ The WEF also points out that, women's economic activities and fertility tend to be higher in countries where women are freer to balance their work and home lives, demonstrating their view of women's progress as a means for not only economic development but also as a countermeasure against a low birth rate.

A similar perspective is found in materials published by the World Bank. The organization states that the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the MDGs is a reaffirmation of the Beijing Forum and that gender mainstreaming is both a process and a goal. In addition, it asserts that gender mainstreaming is a technique created to overcome women's marginalization and to draw gender issues into the core of development activities. This international financial institution claims that it is important not to expect gender mainstreaming to bring about any major institutional changes in terms of norms or values that could transform people's perceptions. It goes on to claim that the integration of gender perspectives that examine how gender perspectives progress in certain issues is important since gender cannot be mainstreamed in the manner of other issues (Buvinic et al.).³¹

In conclusion, it can be stated that rather than focusing on how and why MDGs should be achieved, the World Bank shares the view of the OECD that gender equality is defined as a cross-

28 OECD DAC (2011). *Issue Paper: Women's Economic Empowerment*, Paris: OECD, pp.32.

29 World Economic Forum (2011). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2011*, Geneva: World Economic Forum, pp.5

30 World Economic Forum (2011). *The Corporate Gender Gap Report 2010*, Geneva: World Economic Forum, pp.11.

31 Buvinic, Mayra et al. *Equality for Women: Where do we stand for MDG 3?*, Washington DC: World Bank. pp.311-327.

cutting issue that cannot be achieved on its own and therefore needs to be incorporated into sector-based issues.

This standpoint is also in line with the understanding that gender equality, “although portrayed as a human right, is now also associated with the new demands of neo-liberal economic globalization, encouraging national regimes and indigenous cultures to move towards Western versions of modernization” (Fennell and Arnot, 2008).³² From this point of view, the focus shifts to, for example, how increased educational opportunities for women are linked to economic development and how women’s economic participation can transform male-oriented societies.

It is obvious that gender is a cross-cutting issue; however the problem lies not in identifying the nature of the issue, but rather how to define the issue. In other words, it is a question of whether it is defined as a goal in its own right or as a means. A fundamental discrepancy in the understanding of gender equality between organizations can be also identified through the terms they use: UNIFEM (now UN Women) and the UNDP use simply ‘gender equality’ while the OECD prefers to use ‘women’s economic empowerment’, ‘gender equality issues’, ‘equality for women’, and ‘gender-based activities’. From the economic approach, gender equality is not expressed according to its own meaning, but explained through some other mode. Even when used as a precondition, gender equality is presented for sustainable growth and poverty reduction in UN documents, but for sustainable development and pro-poor growth by the OECD.

IV. Contribution of the 4th High Level Forum to Gender Equality Discourse

At the Special Session on Gender (Gender Equality for Development Effectiveness) (Special Session on Gender: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment for Development Results, 2011)³³ at HLF-4, gender equality and women’s empowerment was recognized as an indicator marking how development has proceeded. It was reported that a growing body of evidence demonstrates that empowering women and reducing gender gaps in health, education, labor markets and other areas is associated with lower poverty, higher economic growth, greater agricultural productivity, better nutrition and education of children and a variety of other outcomes. The South Korean and US governments proposed the ‘Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE)’ Initiative³⁴ as a way to transform evidence and statistics into action at the country level, as part of the Busan Joint Action Plan on Gender Equality and Development. EDGE was created in order

32 Fennell, Shailaja and Arnot, Madeleine (2008). *Gender Education and Equality in a Global Context*, New York: Routledge, pp. 3.

33 (2011). Special Session on Gender: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment for Development Results, (BEXCO, Convention Hall Room 301), 11:00-12:00.

to increase the availability and use of statistics that capture gender gaps in various economic activities. Working in close cooperation with international organizations and government statistical agencies, the UN Statistics Division and UN Women will lead and manage the Initiative from 2012-2015, which will include: 1) the development of an online database for a harmonized set of indicators on education, employment, and entrepreneurship, among others, and 2) “a set of common pilot activities in a small number of partner countries to develop protocols and data collection methods for sex-disaggregated data on entrepreneurship and assets ,”³⁵ two areas with large data gaps.

Along with the presentation of EDGE by Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, there was a panel discussion moderated by Michelle Bachelet, executive director of UN Women and presented by the World Bank, IT companies and a women’s group from Kenya. At the panel discussion, success stories of women’s development were shared. Nothing related to EDGE was offered, however, but only to economic activities and economic development. The Special Session on HLF-4 drew a high-level politician into the spotlight and was intended to bring about changes in the discourse on gender, but EDGE was not linked with the panel discussion. It was apparent that Clinton’s star power had a significant impact on media coverage, enough to create a false impression that aid architecture would be transformed to women-focused or gender sensitive development.

Contrary to the common responses from the OECD and other governments, international women’s organizations announced in a position statement that “they were not able to endorse the draft joint plan in its current form based on the reason that it did not sufficiently promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and substantive equality”³⁶ (APWLD, AWID, FEMNET, WIDE Network, Coordinadora de la Mujer/Bolivia of the BetterAid Coordination Group, 2011).³⁷ The empowerment of women requires fundamental shifts in social, political and economic structures. Although women’s rights cannot be fully enjoyed by women in all their diversity simply by facilitating the entrepreneurship of women, this joint action plan emphasized women in economic activities. Both governments promoted the lofty-seeming initiative of EDGE

34 It capitalizes on the US’ call to action at the May 2011 OECD Ministerial Session on Gender and Development and builds on recommendations of the UN International Agency and Expert Group on Gender and Statistics.

35 Grown, Caren (2011). “Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative,” *Impactblog*, <http://blog.usaid.gov/tag/evidence-and-data-for-gender-equality-initiative/>

36 Association for Women’s Rights in Development (2012). “A Feminist View Of The Fourth High Level Forum On Aid Effectiveness,” AWID, <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/A-Feminist-View-of-the-Fourth-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness>

37 The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), WIDE Network, Coordinadora de la Mujer/Bolivia of the BetterAid Coordination Group (2011).

through the special session, but it was essentially another manner of regarding gender as a means to achieve economic development.

EDGE itself is a first step for both government and international organizations to approach women in developing countries, but the field of statistics is the most remote among the public sector, and even gender disaggregated statistics are a far cry from policy implementation. Given that women in developing countries are engaged in the informal sector, EDGE does not approach women's needs and is difficult to recognize as being tailored to women in developing countries.³⁸

Finally, in the Busan Outcome Document, gender equality was emphasized as an end in its own right and as a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth (OECD/DCD, DAC/EFF, 2011).³⁹ This phrase in the document reveals a blending of the outlooks of the OECD and the UN, the former with the established aid-focused perspective and the latter taking the up-and-coming view of the responsibility of development being based on human-rights.

As confessed in the Final Report of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, aid efforts over the past five years have failed to meet the basic needs of the world's poorest, especially women and girls. Gender perspective is of grave importance not only in terms of the results of aid but also for actualization of more inclusive development effectiveness. In this regard, gender perspective needs to be incorporated into all stages of development planning and implementation.

Given that development effectiveness is about positive impacts on the lives of the poor and marginalized, sustainable changes, and measures to address fundamental causes of poverty and inequality, poor and marginalized people, especially women who make up the majority of this group, should be able to participate as main actors in the development process. This means that gender-responsive approaches to development effectiveness should be aligned with the perspectives of women's rights and women's participation.

The basis of the aid architecture is widening and growing more diversified as the aid community is expanding from traditional Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries to include non-member countries and the Private Development Assistance (PDA) sector and recipient countries are becoming more involved. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the international aid architecture that encompasses newly emerging development partners, discussions on development effectiveness that go beyond the aid effectiveness paradigm seem essential. The concept of traditional aid effectiveness, which has simply dealt with managerial aspects of the process of aid implementation, has failed to address relevant political issues such as the imbalance of power in country relations and gender inequality.

38 Among the 23 governments who agreed to and supported EDGE, only one developing country, Nepal, was included.

39 OECD/DCD/DAC/EFF (2011). Fifth draft outcome document for the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, South Korea.

On the contrary, development effectiveness as endorsed by civil society, including organizational effectiveness, coherence and coordination, development outcome from aid, and overall development outcome, is concerned about “the impact of development actors’ actions on the lives of poor and marginalized people” (BetterAid Coordinating Group, 2010)⁴⁰; and it promotes sustainable change that addresses the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality, marginalization, and injustice. This perspective discloses the limitations of the existing aid effectiveness paradigm and acknowledges poor and marginalized populations as key development actors.

In order to create a novel vision for development cooperation, the international development cooperation architecture should be reformed based on a shared awareness of the roles of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), private enterprises, financial institutions, and non-DAC member countries, as well as the need for inclusive and participatory international governance.

The preliminary elements of the promotion of development effectiveness of a global aid architecture through integration of gender-sensitive perspectives include human rights combined with perspectives of gender equality; democratic, inclusive, and multilateral approaches that ensure participation of women’s organizations; structural coherence between international development policies (for example introduction of international governance that is consistent with domestic women’s rights scheme); eradication of root causes of poverty and structural inequality including gender inequality and intra-national/international inequality; consistency in international and regional agreements on development priorities, development plans, human rights, and gender equality in developing countries without restrictions of tied aid and other limitations; creation of political and social movements and women’s empowerment; provision of predictable, long-term, and multifaceted funding to women’s rights advocacy groups; and provision of gender-disaggregated indicators and gender-sensitive indicators for measurement of development effectiveness (De la Cruz, 2008).⁴¹

The reason that the issue of gender can easily be tied to development effectiveness is that development effectiveness attempts to find a development solution and the key issue is achieving transformational change. The fundamental key lies in the gender equality issue.

40 BetterAid Coordinating Group (2010). *Making Development Cooperation Just: Governance principles and pillars*, BetterAid.

41 De la Cruz, Carmen (2008). *From Beijing to Paris: Gender equality and aid effectiveness*, Madrid: FRIDE, pp. 3-4.

V. Conclusion

This paper reviewed the gender equality context from the UN's fourth women's conference, the Beijing Conference, to MDGs and the historical procedures of aid architecture from the PD and AAA through HLF-4, Busan. It also investigated two different perspectives on gender equality: the economic approach taken by the OECD and the World Bank, and the human-rights approach of the UN organizations. This paper also analyzed the different phrasing they used and what it means for gender and development.

The final HLF emphasizing gender in a written document and by means of an event reveals the limitation that HLFs are organized by the OECD, making it inevitable that the voices and characteristics of the OECD and World Bank are the ones represented. Also, the phrasing of gender in the Busan Outcome Document demonstrates that the HLF-4 is a transition from the OECD to the UN organizations in the frame of aid architecture, simply by describing growth and gender equality simultaneously.

Gender is considered as a cross-cutting issue in aid or development discourse. It is only recently that gender has been considered and embodied in the aid architecture, although the OECD previously attempted to incorporate gender into development by publishing guidelines. Gender equality is the issue that people look into at the very last moment, but it is a core issue of development.

So far, the obstacle in reducing poverty has been that gender issues are not considered in development and that the horizontal flow of the aid across the globe has failed to vertically trickle down to benefit the poor in developing countries. It has been emphasized that the flow of aid passes from state to state, but weight has not been placed on the vertical flow of aid nor to the diversity of actors in private corporate and civil society. When it comes down from the state, gender issues sound similar with civil society and human rights. Furthermore, given that it is CSOs rather than governments who have continued to work on gender issues both domestically and internationally, it would be difficult to attain effectiveness in women's empowerment without partnership from civil society.

In this regard, gender issues are the beginning of international development cooperation. Whether it is done by gender-insensitive male-oriented organizations or by gender-sensitive women's organizations, it is evident that there will be no tangible results from development without considering gender equality.

When it comes to effectiveness of international aid, whether it would be aid effectiveness or development effectiveness, the international community will not be able to achieve practical outcomes of development without taking into account women, who make up the absolute majority of the world's poor.

Representing women's interests, UN organizations, CEDAW, the UN World Conference on Women series and women's organizations around the world have made endeavors to raise aware-

ness of the fact that gender equality and improved status of women is an essential prerequisite for development and that gender-insensitive development only widens the gap between men and women.

As the international aid frame extends toward inclusive development and development effectiveness, UN organizations, CSOs and many new players will take over from the OECD and World Bank to play a role in development. It may take a long time to accomplish development goals, but if it is accompanied by sustainability and is human-rights based in the tailored program, it is the proper model for development.

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