

Islamabad Plan of Action

For Achieving Gender Equality, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals Five-Year Plan (2005-2010)

**International Conference: “Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs”
Islamabad, Pakistan, 28-30 March 2005**

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Political Will
- III. Challenges, Threats and Opportunities
- IV. Commitments

I. Introduction

1. Almost sixty years ago, on 26 June 1945, the **Charter of the United Nations** was signed, declaring to the world the vision and goals of the United Nations System and among others reaffirming in the Preamble its “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

2. Thus, the Charter of the United Nations became the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right. Since then, the world community has embarked an international campaign to promote gender mainstreaming, including the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women**, the **Beijing Platform for Action**, the **Cairo Declaration of ICPD**, the **Vienna Declaration on Human Rights**, the **Millennium Declaration** and the **MDGs** and other international agreements and conference outcomes.

3. The **Beijing Platform for Action**, endorsed by 189 countries, constitutes a comprehensive action plan for economic and political gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women in all critical 12 areas of concern, including poverty, education, health, political participation, power and decision making, economy, human rights, media, environment and institutional mechanisms. If implemented, this will go a long way towards achieving the UN objective of gender equality, and consequently would greatly contribute to the realization of the MDGs.

4. Gender mainstreaming was defined by **the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) agreed conclusion 1997/2** as: “...a process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” The definition makes clear that gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself but is a means towards the goal of gender equality.

5. Participants representing governments, the United Nations, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, experts and scholars, media, the private sector and distinguished women and men from all over the world who are involved in working towards gender equality and the MDGs have gathered in **Islamabad, Pakistan from 28-30 March 2005** to attend the **International Conference on “Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs.”** After three days of deliberations, participants adopted by consensus, the following comprehensive Islamabad Plan of Action in the spirit of human rights, sustainable development and global peace in order to promote gender-based approaches to achieve the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs.

II. Political Will

6. While the 191 member states of the United Nations, in partnership with almost all UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society, are supporting the global campaign to implement the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, a significant number of such organizations specific to gender equality and mainstreaming are enhancing the political will in addressing MDG 3 with its mutually reinforcing linkages with the other seven MDGs.

7. Governments and all relevant actors, including NGOs, academia, parliamentarians, local authorities, the business community, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector are invited to participate in a process that will advance the implementation of the MDGs, stressing concrete actions and comprehensive approaches, and improving national and local priorities to focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

8. Global efforts and political will are also needed to stimulate public-private and civil society partnerships to effectively implement the Millennium Declaration and the major UN Summits and Conference Recommendations and Action Plans for gender equality and development. This must include concerted efforts to improve collaboration and enhance the effectiveness of local, national, regional and international actors to carry out integrated gender sensitive programmes, generate new activities and strengthen existing ones towards an effective achievement of the MDGs.

III. Challenges, Threats and Opportunities

The main challenges, threats and opportunities identified during the Islamabad International Conference were:

9. The world is committed to engage in a global campaign and action to attain the MDGs. These MDGs can only be fully achieved once the centrality of Goal 3 is addressed and gender equality initiatives, programmes and efforts, using gender mainstreaming tools, are implemented in every corner of the world.

10. According to recent country reports, progress towards achieving Goal 3 is on track, yet there is a significant lag evident in specific sub-categories. For instance, women’s equal representation in national parliaments has seen very little progress while gender equality in education is only slightly lagging behind the projected goal, although national data may vary.

11. In general, progress towards achieving the other MDGs is on track though there are specific goals and sub-categories that are in need of significant attention. These include deficiencies in achieving Goal 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Western and Central Asia, Goal 4 (reducing child mortality), Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) and Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability).

12. With regard to worldwide gender mainstreaming initiatives, considerable progress has been made. Yet a large gap still remains between policy commitments and actual implementation. Remaining challenges include the failure to systematically use gender analysis as the basis of policy and programme development, lack of integration of gender perspectives in sector policies, plans, programmes and strategies, inadequate resources and lack of monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements as well as standardization techniques.

13. To date, gender perspectives have not been adequately incorporated or sufficiently mainstreamed in national policies and action. Most of the focus has been on the specific goal of gender equality (MDG 3) and little attention has been given to gender perspectives in relation to the other goals. The challenge will be to ensure that gender perspectives are explicitly outlined in discussions, activities and programmes to implement the other seven MDGs. Gender equality is essential to achieving peace, security, justice, unity and prosperity in the world.

14. Gender inequalities and threats need to be especially addressed in the fields of human rights, poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS, basic and reproductive health, education, ageing and disability, family perspectives, wage employment, trade and commerce, sustainable economic development, and political participation and their roots. The MDGs prioritize women's access to certain kinds of resources as indicative of their empowerment, specifically in their political, social and economic rights.

15. Conflict and war, chronic-poverty, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, kidnapping and discrimination threaten the wellbeing of all humans, but especially women. Women and children account for the vast majority of refugees and internally displaced persons and they have increasingly become targets of combatants and armed elements. Rape is increasingly being used as a weapon of war, demographic shift and "ethnic cleansing" in conflict zones. Women face significant consequences and responsibilities in rebuilding efforts after armed-conflict, but they are frequently not involved in decision-making, peace-building and rehabilitation efforts.

16. The International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs reiterated the global awareness of the threats and challenges to gender equality and the accepted acknowledgement of the importance of strengthening gender-based approaches to achieve the MDGs. Gender equality and sustainable development can be attained by engaging gender mainstreaming techniques, technology and activities that include Political Participation, Legal and Legislative Mainstreaming, Education, Training, ICT, Partnership Development, financial support and institutional mechanisms.

IV. Commitments

We, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs assembled in Islamabad, Pakistan from 28 to 30 March 2005 agreed and urged the following:

Appreciating the insightful and comprehensive deliberations of all participants of this Conference; the support of the host Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan to the Conference; the tremendous preparatory work for the International Conference since 2003 at the initiative of APWA, UN-NGO-Informal Regional Network (IRENE) National Coordinator of Pakistan, as part of its commitment to strengthen its contribution to the ECOSOC work in implementing the MDGs, and mark the centennial birth anniversary of the All Pakistani Women's Association's (APWA) founder and Patron-in-Chief, Begun Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan who unceasingly promoted the empowerment of women and universal cooperation; and the support and sponsorship of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO, in partnership with multi/bilateral donors, including the

Asian Development Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Gender Equality Project (The British Council and the Department for International Development), media and the corporate sector,

Taking into account the current threats, challenges and opportunities, and the necessary work needed in order to achieve gender equality and promote comprehensive gender based approaches to the MDGs especially in 2005 as it marks the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations, the +5 Review of the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration, and the +10 Review of the Beijing Platform for Action;

*Being in full agreement with the above and the **annexed** recommendations, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals, hereby commit ourselves to disseminate and work towards its implementation; and we call upon Governments, NGOs, private sector, Civil Society organizations and other institutions to increase their efforts to achieve by 2015 gender equality and the MDGs to:*

1. Fully integrate gender-sensitive perspectives and the rights-based approach in the international and national agendas, in the campaign and global efforts to attain the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, and as a priority when developing strategies, formulating economic, social and political policies and programmes, developing macro-economic fiscal and trade processes, and promote partnerships among key stakeholders.
2. Comply with the principles of good governance, the rule of law and the right to development, and fully support the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming as one of the means to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
3. Urge Governments of all countries to:
 - 3.1 Act upon their commitments to achieve gender equality, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, and to promote the integration of these goals in policies, activities, legislation and development programmes;
 - 3.2 Strengthen their dialogues, programmes, activities and partnerships related to gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve the centrality of MDG Goal 3: to promote gender equality and to empower women, for effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs by 2015;
 - 3.3 Secure political will, along with mechanisms for implementation such as gender sensitive electoral code and legislation for political parties to enforce reserved quotas for women, and monitoring and follow up to the role of women in parliament, decision-making and action;
 - 3.4 Eliminate gender-based discrimination and empower women to gain equal access to opportunities, formal and informal employment, economic security, legal rights, and political participation including decision-making positions;
 - 3.5 Empower women through education, financial support and affirmative action policies in education, employment, economy and politics;
 - 3.6 Ensure human rights and legal protection of men and women, including policies to halt violence against women, sexual harassment, exploitation and illegal human trafficking, by formulating or strengthening national legislation, litigation systems and international policies, monitoring systems and sanctions;
 - 3.7 Engage and encourage women to play a significant role in conflict-prevention, peace keeping, and peace-building efforts in countries under stress and in post-conflict regions;
 - 3.8 Eradicate poverty and hunger throughout the world, especially in rural areas and for rural women, through comprehensive strategic policies based on needs/resources assessment and realistic development approach for poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development for all;
 - 3.9 Promote integrated rural development programmes that engage local communities, governments and civil society through social programmes, education, vocational training,

- microfinance and credit, assets and job creation, natural, financial and human resource management and development;
- 3.10 Facilitate international financial assistance, promote partnership with civil society and support NGOs, grassroots organizations and local initiatives contributing to development and humanitarian efforts;
 - 3.11 Promote locally adapted gender sensitive programmes and facilities to provide equal access to: (i) preventive education on STDs, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases; (ii) basic and reproductive healthcare professionals; (iii) treatments and drugs; (iv) preventive services and supplies;
 - 3.12 Pursue national legislation and social programmes to protect the equal rights and access of ageing and disabled peoples;
 - 3.13 Ensure universal primary education for both girls and boys by funding education programmes, eliminating school fees, training teachers in gender sensitive skills and curricula, and ensuring necessary infrastructure.
4. Urge all stakeholders to:
 - 4.1 Address parental, cultural and traditional concerns about the role of girls and women through social awareness programmes and localized information campaigns in focus areas;
 - 4.2 Promote education and reduce women and girl illiteracy through substantial and adapted programmes to empower women and girls;
 - 4.3 Encourage integrated and holistic approaches and efforts to poverty eradication and cross-sector programmes for sustainable development that engage all important stakeholders, including civil society, with efforts at the local, national and international levels;
 - 4.4 Combat disease through comprehensive gender sensitive healthcare services and education;
 - 4.5 Promote partnership initiatives, projects and programmes between Governments, the United Nations, International Donors, Local Authorities, NGOs, Academia, the Private Sector and Civil Society in fulfilling their commitments to the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and Gender Equality.
 5. Urge the International Community to:
 - 5.1 Engage all stakeholders in partnership programmes, including coordinating trans-border issues such as the illegal trafficking of human beings, environmental degradation, the proliferation of diseases (such as HIV/AIDS and STDs), conflicts and refugee management and poverty eradication;
 - 5.2 Enhance international funds and financial support for projects, with gender sensitive criteria and financial allocations, and engage international financial institutions and funds to efficiently participate in achieving the MDGs;
 - 5.3 Promote women in leading international positions, including in the United Nations system;
 - 5.4 Promote dialogue, communication and cooperation among different cultures, religions and societies, and promote social integration and solidarity through effective public policies involving civil society, women, underrepresented peoples and minorities, indigenous peoples, youth, ageing and the disabled;
 - 5.5 Strengthen the international monitoring, evaluating, auditing, reporting and follow-up processes for all countries to assess progress and take the necessary measures to achieve the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs with gender equality and gender justice.

At the same time, we, the participants emphasize and call upon all members of the national and international community and vital stakeholders to:

6. Enhance their political will and their financial support to translate commitments into action.
7. Acknowledge the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

8. Reaffirm international support for the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration, recognizing the role of gender equality as fundamental to and mutually reinforcing the development efforts, including the global efforts to achieve and implement the MDGs.
9. Support participatory follow-up, regular monitoring and evaluation at all levels (national, regional and international) of the process and fully contribute to the outcomes of the current +5 Review of the MDGs, the recent +10 Review of progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
10. Support interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to follow-up the implementation of the Islamabad Plan of Action with other stakeholders. An international meeting held each year at the initiative of a different host country could ensure an effective implementation.
11. Request APWA to submit in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan, the Islamabad Plan of Action in the format of a statement to the 2005 High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, to be considered in the Ministerial Declaration of the ECOSOC.

We, the participants, therefore, reiterate that we will always bear in mind, dedicate and commit ourselves to our responsibilities, to fully realize, to work towards and to implement the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, using gender mainstreaming as an effective tool for the empowerment of women and for achieving gender justice and equality between women and men.

Islamabad, 30 March 2005.

General and Specific Recommendations

Article 1 – Promoting Gender Equality and the MDGs

1. The MDGs are mutually reinforcing; progress towards achieving Goal 3 – to promote gender equality and empower women- will facilitate progress towards the other seven goals and vice versa.
2. To achieve the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs with gender equality, it is necessary to reflect and build upon the advances and gains of the Cairo and Beijing Conference documents.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 1.1 Adhere and align efforts with existing agreements that promote gender mainstreaming, including the Beijing Platform for Action;
- 1.2 Strengthen national policy platforms and ensure legislative and Government commitments and action to promote gender equality while pursuing the implementation of the MDGs with good participatory governance;
- 1.3 Develop comprehensive integrated and cross-sector programmes to ensure gender equality and the MDGs in partnership with all stakeholders and players, especially civil society;
- 1.4 Ensure that the responsibility for gender mainstreaming is allocated across all categories and levels, engaging all critical stakeholders and establishing accountability systems.

Article 2 – Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming techniques

1. Gender mainstreaming has been promoted by the international community as a tool to achieve gender equality by engaging all stakeholders and addressing cross-sector initiatives. Gender mainstreaming is often seen solely as increasing women's participation, but it is also to identify and address gender perspectives across sectors and at various levels. This requires significant knowledge of what women and men do; what contributions they make; what resources they have access to and control over; what decisions they participate in; what their potentials are; what constraints they face; and what their needs and priorities are.
2. Comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies ensure that techniques are assimilated into MDG initiatives and that attention is given to gender equality from the initial stages of processes so that there is potential to influence goals, strategies and resource allocations and bring about changes in policies, programmes and other activities.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 2.1 Carry out gender analysis of the roles, responsibilities, contributions as well as potential impact of planned actions on women and men as the first essential step before taking any decisions especially in relation to access to and control over resources and participation in decision-making processes;
- 2.2 Carry out an assessment of the linkages between gender equality and the different MDGs, sectors and stakeholders and capacity building on gender mainstreaming techniques so as to keep key stakeholders actively engaged in efforts to achieve the MDGs and gender equality;
- 2.3 Identify the opportunities for introducing gender perspectives in MDGs and gender equality work tasks from research and analysis to implementation;
- 2.4 Identify the need for changes in goals, policies, strategies and actions, as well as institutional changes in structure, procedures and cultures;
- 2.5 Develop methodological approaches and establish institutional mechanisms, such as standardized guidelines, gender-sensitive budgeting and regular review and monitoring to support effective implementation across sectors and with all stakeholders.

Article 3 – Progress towards Gender Equality and the MDGs

1. Through the pursuit and development of partnerships the MDGs can be achieved and gender equality goals become a reality. National Legislation and policy must be aligned to support gender equality, gender justice and rights-based approaches to the MDGs. Political parties and successive governments must adhere to international law, conventions and treaties, agreements and institutions in order to support, encourage and enforce gender equality and the MDGs.
2. Governments and the international community must continue to remain active in support of the vital roles, programmes and skills of local authorities, NGOs and grassroots organizations which work towards sustainable development, the MDGs and gender equality.
3. Efforts must be taken and evaluated regularly through gender-disaggregated statistics, analysis and reports, gender audits and comprehensive monitoring and reporting systems by all countries.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 3.1 Engage each other through comprehensive partnership programmes;
- 3.2 Monitor and update gender mainstreaming practices regularly and develop relevant indicators of progress;
- 3.3 Develop a follow-up review process that evaluates and regularly reports progress to ensure results; and an independent and multi-national research panel to report the progress of the MDGs and gender equality and to propose innovative ways for concrete results;
- 3.4 Train international gender mainstreaming observers to support the research panel and provide country and region specific reports.

Article 4 – Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

1. The empowerment of women will enhance gender mainstreaming and foster the participation, roles and responsibilities of women in achieving the MDGs, global peace, security and prosperity.
2. While diverse social, cultural, legal and political systems and customs exist, it is essential to ensure equal human rights, legal protection, the rule of law and justice administration, political participation, economic security and employment opportunities for both men and women within the parameters of justice and equality.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 4.1 Encourage constitutional guarantees and national policies to promote the participation of women in political and leadership positions with outputs and transparent indicators per country;
- 4.2 Secure political will, along with mechanisms for implementation such as gender sensitive electoral code and legislation for political parties to enforce reserved quotas for women, and monitoring and follow up to the role of women in parliament, decision-making and action;
- 4.3 Increase political participation and sharing of experiences and success stories at all levels (international, regional, national and local) with the involvement of women in international organizations and parliaments by ensuring the institution and implementation of quotas, establishing supportive networks and fostering open communication among women in positions of power;
- 4.4 Develop local and national mechanisms to inform people of their rights, responsibilities and the role of women with an engagement of progressive religious institutions and scholars (as per country specific cases) in the pursuit of equality and justice for women and girls;
- 4.5 Strengthen national machineries particularly the office of Ombudswoman and national commissions on the status of women;
- 4.6 Review legal, judicial and administrative frameworks in order to ensure the prosecution, sentencing and punishment of all offenders and to protect civil rights and liberties;

- 4.7 Develop and implement national policies and strategies which promote a positive image of women and women's participation and access to expression and decision-making in and through the media;
- 4.8 Encourage balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media to promote women's empowerment;
- 4.9 Utilize gender-disaggregated statistics in the area of women and media and ICT representation, leadership and portrayal;
- 4.10 Legislate a gender-sensitive code of ethics for the print and electronic media, and the advertising industry.

Article 5 – Gender Equality, Human Rights and Peace

1. It is essential for the human rights of women to be secured and protected under the law in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Only by preventing and ending gender-based violence will the MDGs be achieved.
3. It is also essential for leaders to recognize that women must play an increased role in conflict-prevention, resolution and peace-building efforts, especially in post-conflict areas, and to participate in human development and rebuilding efforts.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to

- 5.1 Empower women to pursue higher education and vocational training so they can participate in legislation and political affairs to secure their rights;
- 5.2 Secure legislation and local enforcement to prevent gender-based discrimination against women and establish standardized national programmes to provide safe and secure systems to legally challenge offenders as well as prevent violence, abuse or exploitation;
- 5.3 Develop a holistic long-term strategy that secures a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to the MDGs while creating a harmonious society through sustainable development and social justice;
- 5.4 Promote international cooperation and adherence to existing international laws and arbitration mechanisms and agreements (including CEDAW and the Optional Protocol, CHR, ICC) in order to repeal discriminatory laws and prevent human trafficking;
- 5.5 Encourage the international community, multi and bilateral donors, governments, civil society, private sectors, and local communities to increase their efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and strengthen partnerships between health practitioners and community-based organizations with concrete actions and result-oriented projects;
- 5.6 Evaluate and measure initiatives taken by Governments addressing the trafficking of women, and publicize the results in ranking order;
- 5.7 Acknowledge that women are effective agents of change in non-state and unstable contexts, especially within local communities, and promote equal participation of men and women in all peace processes, conflict-prevention and post-conflict decision making and reconstruction.

Article 6 – Gender Equality and Poverty Alleviation

1. Poverty alleviation remains one of the most crucial issues being addressed by the United Nations and the world community. It is now well-documented and recognized that the vast majority of the world's poor are women and many aspects of gender inequality influence the complex dimensions of poverty and environment, and vice versa.
2. Ensuring environmental sustainability in order to prevent degradation and impoverishment halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers
3. While it is the primary responsibility of national Governments, there is also a need for the support of local initiatives, partnership building with civil society, academia, the private sector and NGOs,

and strengthened international and national platforms and national legislation in order to halve poverty by 2015 and achieve sustainable development.

4. As women play an equally vital role as men do in the function, well-being and economy of their communities, nations and regions, they must be equally empowered through education, credit, asset creation and ownership, skills development programmes facilitated by accredited organizations and Governments.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 6.1 Establish an international fund and comprehensive local micro-finance and credit, and micro and medium enterprise programmes for training, job creation and sustainable poverty eradication initiatives;
- 6.2 Educate and raise awareness in LDCs and developing countries about economic tools, credits and insurance, social security and welfare, unemployment assistance and pensions as well as empower rural women through micro-finance and technical skill development, pursuing participatory programmes that further engage civil society and NGOs for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up;
- 6.3 Develop comprehensive perspective and visions and national development programmes that engage all stakeholders, including women in rural areas and underrepresented players. Such a vision has to be based on a serious diagnosis of the situation and needs/resources (natural, human and financial) assessment and management. They should be highlighted and implemented through PRSPs and other national plans, and also be linked to the MDGs;
- 6.4 Promote exchange of innovative experiences and best practices among NGOs, Governments and other stakeholders and provide resources, tools, and training for sustainable development with a focus on human capacity development;
- 6.5 Facilitate local vocational training in focus regions that equip women with concrete skills to reduce poverty;
- 6.6 Establish gender-sensitive data and statistics systems to monitor rural poverty reduction and sustainable environmental activities;
- 6.7 Design, formulate and implement integrated and cross-sector programmes/ projects/activities for sustained rural development for all in cooperation with UN-NGO-IRENE/NGO Section, UNDESA and other international partners;
- 6.8 Pursue concrete and specific women-focused employment generation and job creation as a central tool to poverty reduction and sustainable human development;
- 6.9 Develop integrated business establishments, guidance and service systems with Government backing, financial support and investment in the private sector and NGOs;
- 6.10 Establish and adapt financial support mechanisms such as national solidarity funds, and monitor and coordinate poverty alleviation activities and efforts by all stakeholders, including national and local Government bodies, NGOs, grassroots communities and civil society;
- 6.11 In order to address the goal of developing a global partnership for development, with emphasis on non-discriminatory trading and financial system, tariff and quota-free access for the least developed countries and dealing comprehensively with debt problems, and providing guidance to WTO, economic blocs and countries, strengthened through inter-agency coordination.

Article 7 – Gender Equality and Health

1. Women are increasingly vulnerable to epidemics that include sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Improvements in reproductive and maternal health can be achieved through gender-based education, national platforms, legislation and health service programmes.
2. Women's high morbidity and mortality rates in the LDCs need urgent attention.
3. Legislation must protect women's reproductive rights and also secure the access and protection of ageing and disabled peoples.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 7.1 Promote initiatives that raise awareness of adolescent pregnancy and promote standardized and monitored health services available to all women, especially the marginalized women in rural areas;
- 7.2 Develop new mechanisms for improving health outcomes beyond public health systems for the most vulnerable and catalyze extra efforts for community action, local initiatives and private sector services;
- 7.3 Decrease the high cost of medicine, while increasing health supplies and services through cooperative international partnerships with the private pharmaceutical sector;
- 7.4 Assimilate and incorporate the recommendations and concerns of the Cairo Plan of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action with the MDGs;
- 7.5 Encourage utilization and social acceptance of health services by women and families and protect girls' rights and access to health education, reproductive health services and security in marriage within a comprehensive family policy;
- 7.6 Train health professionals and local authorities in the different health risks faced by men and women: cultural and gender sensitive health service delivery, availability of and access to health services, and ability of women to independently decide on the use of and travel to health services and facilities;
- 7.7 Educate and raise awareness around STDs and HIV/AIDS virus, standardize preventive methods and ensure affordable supplies through public-private-NGO effective partnerships;
- 7.8 Secure fundamental human rights of all women and men, girls and boys infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and ensure that people living with HIV/AIDS virus are involved at all stages of policy-making and programming;
- 7.9 Protect the rights of ageing and disabled persons and develop programmes that secure national human rights legislation, ensure equal access to facilities, raise social awareness and strengthen community-based medical services, inclusive education and employment.

Article 8 – Gender Equality and Education

1. Education is universally recognized as a basic human right and remains one of the most important and effective primary tools in gender mainstreaming. As eliminating gender disparities in education is one of the most effective poverty reduction and health awareness strategies, equality of women and girls education will have unprecedented effects and ultimately increase their role in working towards achieving the MDGs.
2. Gender disparities in access, enrolment, retention, provision and quality of education services must be addressed and reduced while vocational training and skills development to empower women and facilitate gender mainstreaming must be encouraged.
3. Financial concerns can be addressed by development of public-private and civil society partnerships. The resources of various public sector development funds, NGO activities, national policies and United Nations and donor support can facilitate gender mainstreaming in education.

We recommend that respective stakeholders work to:

- 8.1 Ensure national legislation to promote equal access to education;
- 8.2 Encourage men and women to equally pursue secondary and vocational training;
- 8.3 Eliminate primary school fees and establish scholarships and national funding to encourage equal and diverse enrolment and retention of girls and boys in all disciplines of secondary and tertiary education;
- 8.4 Ensure technical and professional training for women by alleviating political, legal, and cultural barriers to social and economic mobility;
- 8.5 Develop a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive approach to education and curricula and encourage the hiring and training of female teachers, gender sensitization of teachers and the development of gender-sensitive text-books;

- 8.6 Promote literacy as an enabling learning skill for human well being and gender equality in disadvantaged communities through strategic local initiatives;
- 8.7 Fully utilize ICT and computer technology with financial support for maintenance and training;
- 8.8 Revise national policies and legislation to bring them more in line with international conventions and agreements related to gender equality and education;
- 8.9 Develop national and social campaign and programmes to change public opinion about girls' and women's and education;
- 8.10 Increase national and international investments in basic education with a particular focus on rural areas and urban slums, and on education for marginalized peoples in cooperation with the UN, Governments, NGOs, donors, civil society and the private sector;
- 8.11 Strengthen global partnership for education involving public, private and civil society organizations.