

**Cyber dialogues summary seven**  
**LOOKING AHEAD: STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2005

**Theme:** Looking ahead: structures and processes

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**Quote of the day:** *"As a collective we need to appreciate difference and diversity amongst women as we are positioned in society at different levels based on age, class ethnicity etc. We need to collectively empower each other using our different experiences and knowledge... using a human rights perspective based on respect and recognition of our differences..."*

**1. How can grassroots women, community based women's organisations and NGOs get involved in reviving and building the women's movement?**

- NGOs should assist grassroots women's organisations to organise and sustain their efforts.
- Grassroots women need to be provided with up-to-date information on the key priority areas that are being focused on nationally; be helped to develop their own local priorities, agendas, tools and tactics of implementing their local agendas.
- Potential leaders at the grassroots level need to be nurtured and supported.
- NGOs face challenges such as outreach capacity, resources to persistently mobilise and disseminate information and engage rural women.
- Funding is a critical issue for involving grassroots women.
- National policies and documents that affect women need to be translated into local languages so that grassroots women are able to use and benefit from the information.
- Sustainable transformation for women's rights and empowerment lies in women's agency at the household and community level
- Women's different experiences and contexts require specific responses

**2. What is the role of young women and how can they be mobilised around gender issues?**

- Feminism means something different to today's young women which may not be the same understanding that older feminists have.
- The women's movement has to an extent been dominated by older women and many young women feel they do not have a role in the women's movement
- The feminisation of poverty is a major issue for the women's movement which requires collective mobilisation
- Young women's participation in women's organisations will encourage others to take up the struggle for women's rights
- Involving young women in the women's movement is critical for capacity building and succession and requires innovative strategies to get them involved.

**3. How can your organisation work better with donor agencies in furthering gender equality? What suggestions would you make to donors?**

- Resources and the role of donors are critical issues for women's empowerment and gender equality
- Global partnerships and agreements such as the International Conference on Financing for Developments' commitments to gender equality as well as the Millennium Development Goal 8 should include financial resources towards achieving women's equality.
- The sustainability of activities – economic and social – is an important question for women who are committed to social mobilisation and transformation
- Very little of the total aid is going toward gender equality. The manner in which the "aid architecture" is developing suggests that it will be increasingly difficult to track where aid is going unless "gender markers" are developed.
- While there are donors that have supported the women's movement over the years, this is not sustainable as their priorities change and these priorities are informed by global neo liberal policies and policies.
- Funding women's organisations, groups, associations and networks is as important as supporting public institutions and machineries for gender
- In some countries like Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Tanzania there are gender donor forums. These nascent spaces for dialogue must be strengthened and greater space created for engagement with civil society.

**4. How can women from your country engage with the Millennium Summit in September 2005 when the UN General Assembly reviews the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?**

- Women's NGOs must engage with the media well before the Summit and provide them with information on the targets and goals so that discussions can take place.
- The cyber dialogues can also be used to get women to engage with the Millennium Summit.
- Community based organizations can organize small forums within their localities where women, local authorities, civil society and the private sector can discuss the Millennium Development Goals.

**5. What is the best way for us to put gender firmly on the agenda of the MDGs being discussed in September?**

- Gender should be mainstreamed in the MDGs. An assessment of the national machineries to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality needs to facilitate gender mainstreaming and women's rights throughout the MDGs
- Determine who is responsible for developing the agenda, who are the influential persons and /or organisations and what their position on gender is.
- Borrow from the experience of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and organise working groups at national, regional and international levels to carry out independent reviews and consultations that can feed into the main summit.

## **6. Action points**

### *Grassroots women*

- Translate policies into local languages to make them more accessible to grassroots women
- Strengthen the connection between women's community grassroots movements and actions and policy reform

### *Young women*

- Work with young women at schools, educating them about the women's movement and its importance and relevance to their own lives
- Allow young women to participate in decision-making processes and structures in existing women's organisations so that they feel more involved and valued

### *Donors*

- The application and implementation of international and institutional commitments must be translated to funding support at the national and community level to actions that promote gender equality
- Conduct gender budgeting audits on development aid
- Women's organisations, national machineries for gender and institutions such as UNIFEM must be actively engaged in government donor coordination forums
- Start an international e-group to stay in touch and share information
- Donors need to support NGOs separately and not through their bilateral programmes with governments
- NGOs should collectively dialogue with donors to influence their priorities as donors global priorities are not always relevant to specific situations
- Develop resource and financing strategies which support accountability to women's agendas, invests directly in women's organising and in institutions that monitor implementation.
- Regional women's networks must organise a donor dialogue once a year so that a common agenda can be developed specific to each region. This will give NGOs the opportunity to influence donor priorities. The donor dialogue must have a strong south-south component and should be planned as part of the review of the Millennium Summit +5, making direct linkages between the CSW Beijing +10 review.
- The relationship between NGOs and UN agencies needs to go beyond fundraising. It should be about partnership, information, sharing expert knowledge and joint fundraising

### *MDG Summit*

- Borrow from the experience of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and organise working groups at national, regional and international levels to carry out independent reviews and consultations that can feed into the main summit.
- Organise a civil society parallel event so that the views of civil society are heard during the review
- Run a set of cyber dialogues to get women to engage with the Millennium Summit

## 7. Responses to the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question felt that the women's movement needs to be revived if gains made since Beijing Plus Five are to be cemented.

