

Briefing for Post 2015 Development Agenda

Women and economic transformation post 2015

There is an emerging consensus that if the post 2015 framework is to be transformative, economic policies in particular need to be reoriented to reduce inequality and enable the poorest and most marginalised to claim their rights for the long term. A post 2015 framework can only deliver economic transformation if it changes the way we understand women's contribution to the economy. This would reap enormous economic benefits and fulfil the economic rights of women. It would accelerate the achievement of other development goals. The CSOs meeting in Monrovia have identified the following three priorities that need to be addressed with a view to unleash the potential for women to act as agents of economic transformation.

- 1 To secure **access to and control over resources** – land rights and access to land are a key block on women's economic opportunities. Globally, women own 1% of property, despite making up 80% of smallholders farmers. Women's access to energy, water, information, education and technology are also critical to enabling women's to access the economy and secure livelihoods.
- 2 To ensure **decent work and a living wage for women** – 2/3 of women are engaged in informal sectors, without security and social and legal protection, and with low pay. They are also denied rights to organise and address infringements to their rights. Meanwhile, women's **unpaid care work** needs to be recognised, reduced and remunerated. The majority of unpaid care work falls on women, resulting in increased time poverty, limiting opportunities for pursuing paid work and education. While care is necessary for the well being of society, women do the vast majority of unpaid care work which is essentially a free supply of labour. And they have little choice.
- 3 to ensure that the challenge of rising **violence against girls and women and the violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights** including unsafe abortion, maternal mortality, early marriage and female cutting, is prioritised and addressed. It imposes huge economic costs, whether occurring in and around the workplace, at home and in schools. Women have little access to support services, including justice. Violence is particularly stark in the case of cross border trade, migrant, domestic and sex workers. Violence at home prevents women from being able to engage in work and reinforces the unequal power relations that prevent women from advancing economically.

Unless women's role in economic development is recognised, durable and visible solutions will not be possible. Creating the right governance framework is key to ensuring this happens, and requires, amongst others, gender responsive macro economic policies including budgeting, equal access to natural resources, and tackling corruption. The new framework must include a solid accountability framework, including the systematic collection and use of sex disaggregated data.

To ensure women can drive forward economic transformation, the post 2015 development agenda must include both a reinforced stand-alone gender equality goal and expanded gender targets and indicators mainstreamed across the entire framework, tackling the above issues. Failure to do so would reverse the gains of the last 20 years.