

Busan Joint Action Plan on Gender Equality and Development¹

I. Introduction

We, advocates of gender equality and women's empowerment for effective development,² agree to promote the Busan Joint Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development and mobilize additional support and partners. This Plan captures commitments to gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment made at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan, Republic of Korea. Our intent is to build momentum for implementing commitments in a timely and effective manner by expressing our support and desire to participate in post-Busan activities, as appropriate and in a coordinated way.

We recognize that achieving gender equality is a moral obligation and a development imperative. Common goals for achieving gender equality and advancing women's empowerment have been defined in national and international laws and internationally agreed-upon development goals. Progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment is a prerequisite for inclusive development, democratic governance, social and economic justice and peace for all. A growing body of evidence – including academic, policy, and private sector research – shows that empowering women and reducing gender gaps in health, education, labour markets, and other key social and economic areas is associated with higher economic growth, more effective management of public resources, greater agricultural productivity, improved food security, better health, nutrition, and education of children, and a variety of other development outcomes.

Addressing the factors underlying women's lower economic, political and social status requires political commitment, accurate information, rigorous analysis, and coordinated action and investment. Identification of the drivers and consequences of gender inequality through the collection of gender-relevant data and strong accountability mechanisms, including stakeholder dialogue, is critical to designing effective and appropriate policy, targeting investments, and advancing development progress.

We commend participants in HLF-4 for their strong commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment as captured in the Busan Outcome Document

¹ Because this Joint Action Plan includes language documents that are not yet finalized (e.g., the Busan Outcome Document and Building Blocks), the final version of the Plan will be released at the close of HLF-4.

² Endorsees will be listed at the end of the document.

(BOD) and anticipate that these commitments are reflected in the shared consensus emerging from this Forum, including the implementation of the Busan Building Blocks and the new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Gender Commitments in the Busan Outcome Document (Fourth Draft)

17. We must accelerate our efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women through development programmes grounded in country priorities, recognising that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to achieving development results. Reducing gender inequality is both an end in its own right, and a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth. As we redouble our efforts to implement existing commitments we will:

- a) Accelerate and deepen efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonise and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments, ensuring in turn that public expenditures are targeted appropriately to benefit both women and men.
- b) Integrate targets for gender equality and women's empowerment in accountability mechanisms, grounded in international and regional commitments.
- c) Address gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of our development efforts, including peacebuilding and statebuilding.

The voluntary, non-binding commitments described below build upon the Busan Outcome Document (BOD).

II. Building the Evidence Base for Action

“Accelerate and deepen efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonise and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments, ensuring in turn that public expenditures are targeted appropriately to benefit both women and men.” (Busan Outcome Document, paragraph 17a)

In recent decades, various initiatives aimed at improving the systematic collection and processing of gender statistics have been undertaken. However, despite progress and continuing efforts, much remains to be done. In various areas of critical interest for policymakers, basic gender data, including sex-disaggregated data, are still non-existent, insufficient or lack comparability across countries.

Building on the work of the Interagency and Expert Group on the Development of Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) and the momentum created by the OECD Ministerial Session on Gender and Development, a broad group of stakeholders launched the “Evidence and Data for Gender Equality” (EDGE) programme at the HLF-4 “Special Session on Gender.” The EDGE programme supports the efforts of national statistics offices to collect sex-disaggregated data, particularly in the areas

of education, employment and entrepreneurship, based on common standards that would allow harmonization and wide comparability across countries and regions. It will be coordinated with the Busan Action Plan for Statistics, which supports gendered data collection and use, and statistical capacity in partner countries, by committing to mainstream gender statistics into national statistical systems.

We commend the engaged actors for their leadership through EDGE and express our support for this initiative that seeks to implement BOD commitment 17a. We encourage others to support EDGE and similar efforts to advance efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonise and make full use of gender data and indicators.

III. Strengthening Accountability

“Integrate targets for gender equality and women’s empowerment in accountability mechanisms, grounded in international and regional commitments.” (Busan Outcome Document, paragraph 17b)

We endorse the recommendations agreed upon at the 29 November side event “Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment since the Paris Declaration” and will endeavour to support their implementation [the following are draft recommendations]:

- Addressing and integrating targets for gender equality and women’s empowerment in accountability mechanisms, and ensuring the participation of women and women’s organisations in these mechanisms based in relevant country, regional and international standards and commitments.
- Ensuring that aid and public expenditures are targeted appropriately to match gender equality commitments and benefit both women and men, including tracking aid and public expenditures for gender equality and women’s empowerment as appropriate. All actors should also reflect on the sectoral focus of their efforts to strengthen gender equality. Support for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the economic and productive sectors should be strengthened.
- Ensuring that any global monitoring framework on aid/development effectiveness after Busan fully integrates gender equality dimensions in the key monitoring indicators and review process. This could build on lessons learned from the gender equality module of the 2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey, used by 24 of the 78 countries that undertook the Paris Declaration Survey.

IV. Integrating Gender Equality Goals in Development

Address gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of our development efforts, including peacebuilding and statebuilding. (Busan Outcome Document, paragraph 17c)

We recognise the importance and challenge of addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of our development efforts, with specific focus on non traditional sectors and in peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts. As we seek to do so through our own organisations and partnerships, we also agree to support the implementation the Busan Building Blocks in ways that help realise the gender-related commitments endorsed in the Busan Outcome Document.³

We also recognise the importance of more inclusive partnerships and commend HLF-4 for highlighting the distinct roles of civil society and the private sector. We express our support for the commitments undertaken by civil society and the private sector and aim to improve coordination, where relevant, to build on complementarities and increase our impact with regard to enabling women's empowerment and gender equality.

[We will include the officially recorded gender-related commitments from the Private Sector and Civil Society Forums.]

V. Conclusion

This Plan captures commitments that guide the international community toward effective and inclusive development and benchmarks against which progress will be measured following the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness at Busan. We welcome new partners to endorse this Plan and look forward to supporting the implementation of these commitments in coordination with HLF-4 participants and the new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. To advance our collective efforts, we agree to review our progress before the end of June 2012 and continue building momentum for gender equality and women's empowerment.

List of endorsees

³ Note that in the shortened Busan Building Blocks, there is no mention of gender. Please send your input to the Building Block leaders, whose contact information can be found in the detailed concept notes at: <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/en/topics/building-blocks/553.html>