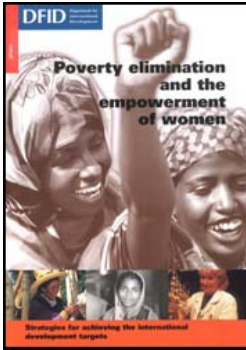


## Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women, 2000, 51 p.

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### Strategies for achieving the international development targets

**DFID** - Department for International Development

Cover photographs: Panos Picture, Tropix, Minoli

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## The international development targets

### Economic well-being

- a reduction by one-half in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

### Social and Human Development

- universal primary education in all countries by 2015;
- demonstrated progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- a reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age 5 by 2015;
- a reduction by three-fourths in maternal mortality by 2015;
- access through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015.

## Environmental sustainability and regeneration

□ the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.

While not amenable to quantification, there is a range of qualitative elements of development that are essential to the attainment of the quantitative goals. These include democratic accountability, the protection of human rights and the rule of law.



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## Department for International Development

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the British government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government elected in May 1997 increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The policy of the government was set out in the White Paper on International Development, published in November 1997. The central focus of the policy is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal

access to primary education by the same date.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to encourage progress which will help reduce poverty. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Commission. The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle income countries, and helping the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe to try to ensure that the widest number of people benefit from the process of change.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in New Delhi, Bangkok, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, Kampala, Harare, Pretoria, Suva and Bridgetown. In other parts of the world, DFID works through staff based in British embassies and high commissions.

## Department for International Development September 2000

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## Foreword by the Secretary of State

This paper is one of a set. Together, they spell out actions which could transform the lives of hundreds of millions of poor people and make the planet a better and safer place for our children and grandchildren. They say what needs to be done to achieve key targets for international development.

These International Development Targets have been agreed by the entire United Nations membership, following a series of summit meetings held by the UN and its specialised agencies over the past ten years or so. The meetings discussed progress in poverty reduction and sustainable development and set targets for measuring that progress.

In the past, targets have often been set and then disregarded. This time, however, the international community is giving them greater weight. In 1996, all the main Western donor countries, grouped together in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), committed themselves to a partnership with developing countries and with countries in transition from centrally planned economies. The success of this partnership would be measured against key targets from the UN summits. In the following year, the new UK Government made these targets the centrepiece of its 1997 White Paper on International Development. More recently the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to co-ordinate their development efforts behind the targets. These targets are listed on the inside front cover.

Neither the United Kingdom nor any other individual donor country can achieve the targets alone. The targets are challenging, some particularly so. But if, by working together, we can increase the effectiveness of the international community, our assessment is that these targets are achievable for developing and transition countries as a group by the target date, or soon after in some cases, even though they may not be achieved in each region or country individually. It is clear that each developing country must lead the effort if the targets are to be achieved. If this commitment is lacking, civil society institutions need to press their governments to take action as, without a local lead, progress cannot be achieved. The international

community, in turn, must provide support for those governments committed to the reforms which are necessary to achieve the targets. Most countries should be able to register very considerable progress towards meeting the targets by the due dates.

This paper is about the empowerment of women, which is recognised as an essential precondition for the elimination of world poverty and respect for human rights. The headline target for gender equality relates to education, and the need to ensure that girls get the same opportunities as boys to develop their potential and become full and equal members of society. The paper recognises that gender equality is required across the board in all development efforts. Education provides an excellent starting point, but is the beginning not the end.

The paper argues that the goal of gender equality needs to be pursued across all of the internationally agreed development targets, and in the wider process of governance and the pursuit of human rights. It sets out why this is an essential precondition for development, and indicates the steps DFID proposes to take in making its contribution to the achievement of this goal. It signals an important shift in DFID's priorities to achieve greater collaboration in support of key fundamental policy changes, while still retaining a strong commitment to incorporating concerns about gender equality into the mainstream of all of our work.

Targets need to be used intelligently. They cannot capture the full richness and complexity of individual and collective transformation that makes for sustainable development. Individual countries should select and debate, in normal democratic ways, their own measures of achievement. But regular public assessment of how countries, as a group and by region, are performing against a simple standard is essential in order to focus development assistance on achieving real outputs. Doing so will show what works and what does not, will provide accountability for the efforts being made in the name of development, and will give impetus to extending basic life opportunities that should be available to all.

Targets also need to be grounded in reality. For this, we should not underestimate the value of



good statistics. The political debate in Britain was strongly influenced by nineteenth and early twentieth century surveys documenting the reality of grinding poverty in our own society. A similar effort of political will is needed in many developing and transition countries if they are to give sufficient emphasis to the needs of their own poor people. Better quality and more accessible information on people's standards of living is one essential element in creating that will. Much work is needed to improve the collection of reliable and comparable data, and to strengthen local statistical capacity.

These papers do not attempt to provide detailed plans; they will follow, country by country and institution by institution, from discussions with developing countries and the relevant institutions. Many detailed proposals for action in pursuit of the targets are published, or soon will be, as Country and Institutional Strategy Papers. Our bilateral programmes are being reshaped. We are also encouraging the multilateral development institutions in the same direction. One example of this is the policy of the International Development Association - the concessional lending arm of the World Bank - which, following its Twelfth Replenishment, now focuses on poverty elimination in the context of the International Development Targets. Another example is the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, agreed at the IMF and the World Bank in September 1999, which has started to deliver faster, deeper and broader debt relief Co countries committed to eradicating poverty. The G8 Summit in Okinawa endorsed the targets and asked for annual reports on progress.

We must also take advantage of the increased wealth being generated by 'globalisation', to help achieve the International Development Targets. In November 2000, the UK Government will publish a second White Paper on International Development, focusing on managing the process of globalisation to the benefit of poor people.

This paper and the others in the collection assess the challenge and set out an overall approach and strategy for our involvement in achieving the development targets in a clear, focused and realistic way. Each reflects a process of consultation in the United Kingdom and

overseas.

I hope that you will find them a valuable statement of what the UK Government will do and how the United Kingdom seeks to use its influence to make a reality of the targets, to which we and the rest of the United Nations membership are committed. We stand ready to be judged against our delivery of this strategy. And the whole development community - governments, international agencies, civil society organisations - should be judged collectively against delivery of the targets.

## **CLARE SHORT**

Secretary of State for International Development

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## **Executive Summary**

**1** The empowerment of women is an essential precondition for the elimination of world poverty and the upholding of human rights. This goal is recognised in the internationally agreed set of development targets which provide the core framework for DFID's programme.

**2** A key measure for gender equality relates to education, and the need to ensure that girls get the same opportunities as boys to develop their potential and become full and equal members of society. The target is that "progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of

women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation.*

Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, May 1996.

**3** Research has shown that education for girls is the single most effective way of reducing poverty. Women with even a few years of basic education have smaller, healthier families; are more likely to be able to work their way out of poverty; and are more likely to send their own daughters and sons to school.

**4** Getting more girls through school is essential, but education alone will not be enough. Inequalities between women and men are deeply rooted, and need to be tackled across the board in economic, political, social and cultural life. The goal of gender equality needs to be pursued across all of the internationally agreed development targets, and in the wider pursuit of democracy and human rights.

**5** This paper sets out the reasons why women's empowerment is a precondition for poverty eradication, and the steps DFID proposes to take in making its contribution to the achievement of this goal. It signals an important shift in DFID priorities. Future work will concentrate on supporting fundamental changes in policy, laws, and attitudes, while maintaining strategic links with work at the grass roots. Our strategy will seek to ensure that a commitment to gender equality remains in the mainstream of all of our work.

**6** In 1995, the United Nations hosted the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing. This was a landmark conference, and ended with international agreement to the implementation of a comprehensive Platform for Action for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

**7** Great progress was made in the 20th century. Women enjoy greater freedom and power than ever before. Nevertheless, they still lag behind men in virtually all aspects of life. Inequalities are to be found in economic development and livelihood security, in human development, human rights, personal security, and empowerment and political representation, all reinforced by gender stereotyping and negative social attitudes. Gender gaps vary from place to place, but the overall pattern of women's disadvantage remains clear. Gender inequality represents a huge loss of human potential, with costs for men as well as women.

**8** Progress towards equality between women and men is not dependent on whether a country is rich or poor, or on its religious or cultural heritage. Some developing countries outperform much richer countries in the opportunities they make available to women<sup>2</sup>. Sustained political will lies at the heart of success, but this needs to be supported in a number of key ways. Good policy ideas have too often 'evaporated' in the course of implementation, leading to outcomes falling far short of intentions.

<sup>2</sup> *Human Development Report, 1999*. United Nations Development Programme, New York.

**9** A key lesson is that fundamental change can only be achieved through interventions which focus on major policy reforms, changes to laws and regulations, the reallocation of financial and other resources, and the promotion of changes in attitude through public debate.

**10** Co-ordinated action is also essential for success. Donors have an important but modest role to play. Real change will result from the concerted actions of governments, civil society, and the private sector, underpinned by stronger and more effective support from bilateral and multilateral donors and development organisations. Although a global sense of common purpose is emerging, there remains much to be done to close gaps in understanding and increase co-operation. This is true both at a government to government level, and also between the state and civil society. Within the donor community, there is also significant scope

for improvement.

**11** The purpose of DFID's strategy is to ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality are actively pursued in the mainstream of all development activities. Our work will be focused on supporting the achievement of 10 specific objectives, consistent with the internationally agreed development targets and the Platform for Action set out at the Beijing conference. These provide a broad framework for action from which operational priorities can be drawn, depending on the situation on the ground.

**12** DFID will support actions through three channels:

- support to governments, civil society, and the private sector for the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action agreed at Beijing and the inclusion of gender equality goals in the mainstream of all development programmes;
- stronger collaboration and co-ordination for the achievement of gender equality goals among donors, including the European Union, UN system, and the World Bank and other international financial institutions;
- the strengthening of DFID's internal capacity through improved research and knowledge development, information support, and skills development.

**13** The strategy set out in this paper is broad-based, and the framework for measuring progress towards the achievement of the specific objectives to which DFID is committed is necessarily broad too. At its heart, however, are the International Development Targets and the key indicators which have been identified to measure progress towards the achievement of these. Whenever possible, we will seek to break down these measures to analyse how benefits are being shared between women and men, boys and girls. Clear targets and measures of progress are essential, to focus minds, to provide encouragement when progress

is made, and to strengthen co-ordination around common goals.

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## 1. Introduction

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### **Women's empowerment and the elimination of world poverty**

**1.1** The aim of UK international development policy is to contribute to the elimination of world poverty. A key component of our strategy is to promote equality for women, particularly for those who make up the majority of the billion or more people living in abject poverty.

**1.2** There is a growing and compelling body of evidence that shows that not only do women bear the brunt of poverty, but also that women's empowerment is a central precondition for its elimination. Women's equality is an absolute necessity if the blight of poverty is to be removed and the nations of the world are to create a secure, sustainable and prosperous future.

**1.3** This paper sets out what we believe will be required to achieve this goal. It provides an overview of how gender inequalities bear on international development, and the lessons which have been learned from experience. Finally, it sets out the contribution DFID itself can make towards the achievement of gender equality, and the strategy we will follow.

... Women's equality is more than a right. It is an absolute necessity if the blight of poverty is to be removed ...

**1.4** Our analysis signals a refocusing of DFID effort towards more strategic levels of action, supporting changes in policy and regulatory frameworks, and the strengthening of capacities and knowledge, to help accelerate the pace of change.

**1.5** The focus of this paper is on the powerful links between women's empowerment and the elimination of world poverty. The struggle for gender equality is a key instrument for lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Beyond this, it is also a central element of the wider struggle for human rights for all<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed explanation of DFID's strategy for incorporating a human rights perspective into development and poverty elimination see the paper on *Realising Human Rights for Poor People*, which forms part of this series of *Strategies for the Achievement of the International Development Targets*.

## The international development targets

**1.6** The nations of the world, including the UK, are committed to a set of development goals and time-bound targets. These were agreed at a series of major UN conferences during the 1990s. They cover key aspects of economic, human, and social development, and the sustainable management of natural resources (see Box 1). Together, they set out the

conditions for real progress towards the elimination of world poverty.

**1.7** Equal access for girls and boys to primary and secondary education by the year 2005 has been identified as a key measure of progress towards gender equality<sup>4</sup>. Getting more girls through school is essential<sup>5</sup>, but vital as it is, education alone will not be enough. Inequalities between women and men are deeply rooted, and need to be tackled across the board in economic, political, social and cultural life. In many cases progress in education will be dependent on success in tackling wider and deeper causes of inequality.

<sup>4</sup> This target has been agreed by the international community at three major conferences in recent years - the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), and the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> The specific steps DFID will take to help achieve this target are set out in *Strategies for Achieving the International Development Targets: Education for All - The Challenge of Universal Primary Education*. Department for International Development, London, 2000.

**1.8** None of the International Development Targets is likely to be achieved without a genuine global commitment to gender equality. Gender discrimination is not only unjust, it is also inefficient and limits the prospects for development. Effort is required across the whole spectrum of development work, combined with close monitoring of progress, to ensure that the benefits are fairly shared.

**1.9** Women today have won more independence and freedom of action than ever before, but there is still a long way to go. Where women have successfully challenged inequality, the benefits to development have been enormous. In spite of this, millions of women around the



world still have to work harder than men to secure their livelihoods, have less control over income and assets, have a smaller share of opportunities for human development, are subject to violence and intimidation, have a subordinate social position, and are poorly represented in policy and decision making.

... Women today have won more independence and freedom of action than ever before, but there is still a long way to go ...

## Sex and gender

**1.10** Differences between women and men are both biologically and socially determined. Biological, or sex, roles mark the fundamental differences between women and men. Social, or gender, roles are highly variable and set by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural forces. The precise boundary between these determining factors is the subject of fierce debate. Nonetheless, the significant variation in the position of women in different societies around the world demonstrates that gender roles are not fixed. They can be changed and renegotiated.

## Women's empowerment, equality and equity

**1.11** Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) includes the following factors in its definition of women's empowerment:

- acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed;
- developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes

and the right to control one's life;

gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power;

developing the ability to organise and influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

### **Box 1. Targets for international development<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> See *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*. Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, May 1996.

#### **Economic well-being**

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty (less than US\$1 per day at 1993 purchasing power parity) in developing countries should be reduced by at least one-half by 2015.

#### **Social and human development**

##### *Universal primary education*

There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015.

##### *Gender equality*

Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.

### *Infant and child mortality*

The death rates for infants and children under the age of five years should be reduced in each developing country by two-thirds the 1990 level by 2015.

### *Maternal mortality*

The rate of maternal mortality should be reduced by three-fourths between 1990 and 2015.

### *Reproductive health*

Access should be available through the primary health care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages no later than year 2015.

### **Environmental sustainability and regeneration**

There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.

#### **1.12** The notion of women's empowerment has far-reaching consequences:

*"Extending the idea of human development to encompass women's empowerment and gender justice puts social transformation at the centre of the agenda for human development and progress of women. Choices for women, especially poor women, cannot be enlarged without a change in relations between women and men as well as in the ideologies and institutions that preserve and reproduce gender inequality. This does not mean reversing positions, so that men become subordinate and women dominant. Rather, it means negotiating new kinds of relationships that are*

*based not on power over others but on a mutual development of creative human energy...It also means negotiating new kinds of institutions, incorporating new norms and rules that support egalitarian and just relations between women and men.*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Progress of the World's Women 2000*. UNIFEM Biennial Report. United Nations Development Fund for Women, New York, 2000, pp. 20-21.

**1.13** Defining women's empowerment in this way has important consequences for understanding the meaning of women's equality. DFID's approach to women's empowerment draws an important distinction between equality of opportunity, on the one hand, and equity of outcomes, on the other.

**Equality of opportunity** means that women should have equal rights and entitlements to human, social, economic, and cultural development, and an equal voice in civil and political life.

**Equity of outcomes** means that the exercise of these rights and entitlements leads to outcomes which are fair and just, and which enable women to have the same power as men to define the objectives of development.

**1.14** This distinction is important because it underlines the rights of women to define the objectives of development for themselves, and to seek outcomes which are not necessarily identical to those sought or enjoyed by men, but which reflect differences in needs and aspirations. Equality does not mean that everyone has to be the same. Diversity enriches human life and should be a cause for celebration, not a basis for discrimination.





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## 2. The challenge

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### Gender inequality, poverty, and human development

**2.1** At the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the UN said that "poverty has a women's face", and that 70% of the world's poor were female<sup>8</sup>. This simple statement hides a complex reality. The 'bottom line' measure of poverty is lack of income, but it also consists of lack of access to services and opportunities for human development, lack of a voice in political life and decision making, and social subordination and exclusion. All poor people experience these deficits, but in almost all cases women and girls suffer from them to a greater degree than men.

<sup>8</sup> *Human Development Report*, 1995. United Nations Development Programme, New York. The UN figure is controversial and is acknowledged as a very rough estimate. Widespread gender inequalities within households indicate, however, that women are likely to be disproportionately represented among the poor.

**2.2** In the same year as the Beijing conference, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched two new measures to track progress in tackling inequalities between women

and men. These were the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). These measures have been used every year since then in UNDP's annual Human Development Report, alongside a broad-based Human Development Index (HDI), to assess the progress of nations towards the elimination of poverty<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The HDI is based on measures of life expectancy, literacy and school enrolment, and real income. The GDI takes the same basic indicators used for the HDI, but adjusts the overall measure according to the gaps in achievement between women and men. Thus, a country with a high HDI score may get a low GDI score if the benefits of development are not evenly distributed between women and men. By the same token, if benefits are very evenly distributed, even low HDI scoring countries can get a high GDI score. The GEM is a specific measure of women's empowerment, and ranks countries according to women's share of seats in parliament, administrative and management jobs, professional and technical posts, and national income.

**2.3** Since they were launched in 1995, the GDI and GEM have shown that significant progress in closing gender gaps has been achieved in the last quarter of the 20th century, but that:

- in no society do women fare as well as men;
- while there has been a closing of gender gaps in human development, there is still a long way to go in sharing political and economic opportunities;
- women continue to suffer high levels of violence and abuse;
- many countries continue to discriminate against women in the law.

**2.4** A key conclusion drawn from the UNDP analysis is that progress towards gender equality is not dependent on the income level of a society, but is more dependent on political will.

Governments have made the most progress when they have been willing to put concerns about women's empowerment at the heart of policy, and drive through the changes necessary for real progress. The income level of a society appears to be less important than a serious commitment to improving opportunities for women. Some developing countries outperform much richer countries in the opportunities they afford women<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> The GDI was calculated for 143 countries for the 1999 Human Development Report. Of these, 43 had GDI ranks lower than their HDI ranks, revealing unequal progress in building women's capabilities compared with men. Sixty countries, however, had a higher GDI than HDI rank, suggesting that development was more equitable. The countries scoring highly for GDI were diverse, and included the poor as well as the rich. The report concluded that these results "... show that greater gender equality in human development does not depend on income level or stage of development. And they show that it can be achieved across a range of cultures".

... progress towards gender equality is not dependent on the income level of a society, but is more dependent on political will ...

**2.5** Once achieved, there is no guarantee that gains will be sustained. While overall trends have been positive, there have been reverses in various parts of the world in almost all key areas<sup>11</sup>. Achieving gender equality is not a one-time goal, but one which needs to be constantly protected and sustained.

<sup>11</sup> For an interesting analysis of both positive and negative trends see: Progress of the World's Women 2000. UNIFEM Biennial Report. United Nations Development Fund for Women, New York, 2000.

### Key areas of inequality

Economic development and livelihood security  
Human development  
Personal security and violence against women  
Basic services and infrastructure  
Women and the environment  
Empowerment and political representation  
Disability  
Diversity and the life-cycle  
Rights of the child  
Men, masculinities and power  
Social attitudes and gender stereotyping

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**2.6** Inequalities between women and men manifest themselves across all key areas of development, in a variety of ways which vary significantly from place to place. Nonetheless, it is possible to point to general trends which create the backdrop for international development efforts.

### **Economic development and livelihood security**

**2.7** According to the UN, women perform 53% of all economic activity in developing countries, but only about a third of their work is currently measured and acknowledged in national accounts, compared with three quarters of men's. An estimated US\$16 trillion of global output is currently 'invisible', of which US\$11 trillion is estimated to be produced by women<sup>12</sup>. Women's work in the so-called 'reproductive economy' in raising families and maintaining the home has until recently been entirely ignored by accounting frameworks and economic analysis. Most women's work is unpaid and taken for granted.



<sup>12</sup> *Human Development Report, 1995*. United Nations Development Programme, New York.

**2.8** Share of national income provides a rough measure of economic inequality between women and men. Figure 1 is drawn from the 1999 UNDP Gender-related Development Index and shows that throughout the world women have a significantly lower share of national income, measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), than men. The figure also underlines the massive disparity in wealth between the industrial nations and developing countries. In the industrialised countries, women's share is on average US\$17,660 per year compared with US\$30,050 for men. In developing countries, women receive on average US\$2,088 compared with US\$4,374 for men. In the least developed countries, the averages are US\$731 and US\$1,258 respectively

**2.9** Women are also disadvantaged by inequalities in the distribution of income and consumption within the household. In South Asia, there is evidence that women get a lesser share than men of food and other consumption goods. In urban Nigeria, a survey found that only 20% of wives were aware of how much their husbands earned. Data from Asia, Africa and Latin America show that men often spend more on personal consumption (including tobacco and alcohol) and women spend more on food, education and health. Women's expenditure is generally more beneficial to the household as a whole than men's<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Various sources, cited in OECD-DAC/DCD *Gender Training Programme 1998. Training Modules and Resources*. Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE), Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, and OECD, Paris, 1998.

**2.10** Women receive only a very small share of credit from formal banking institutions, often because they are unable to provide collateral. When women do receive loans, these tend to be smaller than men's, despite their generally better track record in making repayments. In Latin

America and the Caribbean, only 7 - 11% of the clients of formal credit institutions are women. In many African countries, despite the fact that they account for 60% of the labour force and contribute up to 80% of total food production, women receive less than 10% of the credit to small farmers, and only 1% of total credit to agriculture<sup>14</sup>. Women's rights to land and other assets are also widely constrained. In many countries, poor women risk losing their livelihood if they are widowed or separated from their husbands.

<sup>14</sup> *Human Development Report*, 1995. UNDP, New York.

### Figure 1: GDP per capita (US\$) by region and sex

(Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999)

**2.11** The differential impact of globalisation and the opening up of world trade on the livelihoods and well-being of the poor is a new and challenging area of concern. Preliminary research, funded by DFID, suggests that these processes can bring both benefits and costs. New employment opportunities have undoubtedly been created, many for women. However, women in south and south-east Asia suffer low wages and poor working conditions as a result of discrimination in the labour market, while women in Africa are unable to benefit from the opening up of new markets because they lack property rights or are squeezed out of markets by cheaper imports<sup>15</sup>. International, as well as national, action is required to harness the forces of globalisation for the benefit of the poor and disadvantaged.

<sup>15</sup> M. Fontana, S. Joekes, and R. Masika, *Global Trade Expansion and Liberalisation: Gender Issues and Impacts*. Report commissioned by the Department for International Development. Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, January 1998. See also 1999 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. Globalization, Gender and*

Work. Department for Economic and Social Affairs. United Nations. New York, 1999.

## Human development

**2.12** Important gains have been made in human development, with greater progress in the 20th century than ever before. Gender gaps in health and education are closing fast, but progress has been inconsistent, and, in some cases, disparities have increased rather than decreased. Declines in basic services, such as those experienced in sub-Saharan Africa between the mid 1970s and the 1990s, have hit women particularly hard. It is women who care for the sick and walk long distances to fetch water when the regular supply breaks down. As households often give lower priority to girls' education than boys', it is girls who will be withdrawn from schools when the costs of education rise.

**2.13** Women have made significant gains in education, but with marked regional contrasts. Figure 2 shows literacy gaps by region. While women's literacy rates have increased to at least 75% in most of Latin America, the Caribbean, and eastern and south-eastern Asia, high rates of illiteracy still persist in much of Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia. In 1997, in the least developed countries, fewer than four out of ten women could read or write, compared with six out of ten men. The lowest rates for women were in south Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> *Human Development Report*, 1999. UNDP. New York.

... Every additional year of female education reduces child mortality by 5-10% ...

**2.14** Progress in primary and secondary school enrolment for girls was reversed in the 1980s in regions experiencing political and economic instability, including countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and eastern Europe<sup>17</sup>. Worldwide, 24% of girls of primary age are

still not in school, compared with 16% of boys<sup>18</sup>. Poverty and other economic and social pressures continue to be major challenges to the achievement of education for all.

<sup>17</sup> Similar setbacks have more recently been experienced in Asia in the wake of the financial crisis.

<sup>18</sup> *World Education Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paris, 1995.

### Figure 2: Adult literacy rate (%) by region and sex

(Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999)

**2.15** Keeping girls out of school is costly and undermines development. Research by the World Bank<sup>19</sup> has shown that education for girls is the single most effective way of tackling poverty. Women with even a few years of basic education have smaller, healthier families; are more likely to be able to work their way out of poverty; and are more likely to send their own children - girls and boys - to school. Child mortality is lower, the higher the number of years of education of the mother. Each additional year of female education is thought to reduce child mortality by 5-10%. Child nutrition and school performance are also improved. Countries which are failing to ensure that women obtain their right to an education, and free and equal rights and opportunities, are falling behind in all aspects of development<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> See M. A. Hill and E. M. King (eds), *Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policies*. The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1993; and M. A. Hill and E. M. King, 'Women's education and economic well-being', in *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Various sources, cited in OECD-DAC/DCD *Gender Training Programme 1998. Training Modules and Resources*. Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE), Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, and OECD, Paris, 1998.

**2.16** In sub-Saharan Africa, it has been argued that the cost to countries which have failed to give girls a fair chance of getting an education has been a reduction in economic growth of 0.7% every year for the last 30 years. As a consequence, those countries now have GNPs roughly 25% lower than if they had given girls a better chance<sup>21</sup>. A more specific World Bank estimate has suggested that education for female farmers in Kenya could help increase crop yields by as much as 24%<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> M. A. Hill and E. M. King, 'Women's education and economic well-being', in *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, 1995.

<sup>22</sup> The World Bank has published a major study which clearly underlines the huge economic costs of gender discrimination in sub-Saharan Africa: Mark Blackden & Chuitra Bhanu, *Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction. Special Program of Assistance for Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank Technical Paper No. 428, Washington D.C., 1999. The report was prepared with funding assistance from DFID.

**2.17** In some developing countries, it is boys rather than girls who find it harder to attend or succeed at school, though they tend to maintain a distinct advantage in other aspects of life. In the Caribbean, boys often perform less well than girls, and in many pastoralist communities boys are unable to attend school because of their responsibilities for herding. In parts of the Middle East, boys from poor families in urban areas are often withdrawn from school to help out in the family business. The general pattern, though, is for girls to suffer more than boys.

... Countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have not sent enough girls to school over the past 30 years now have GNPs 25% lower than if they had given them a better chance ...

**2.18** Maternal mortality and sexual and reproductive health persist as major problem areas. The international community set itself ambitious targets at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. The conference reaffirmed the view that access to health services is a human right. Women in particular have the right to control their fertility and to have the highest possible standards of basic health care. This view was further underlined and strengthened at the five year review of the Cairo conference in 1999.

**2.19** While fertility rates in the developed world are below population replacement levels, women in Africa still have an average of six children each. Rates of pregnancy among teenage girls have declined in the past 20 years, but are still too high. In Central America and sub-Saharan Africa, rates are five to seven times higher than in developed regions. In Central America, 18% of all births are to teenage mothers, while the rate in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole is 13%<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> *The World's Women 1995. Trends and Statistics*. United Nations, New York, 1995.

**2.20** Pregnancy and childbirth have become safer for women in most of Asia and Latin America. At the same time, there has been little or no progress in most of sub-Saharan Africa where, in some countries, maternal mortality rates have risen. There have also been rises in maternal mortality in some countries in eastern Europe. Every year, of the 200 million women who become pregnant, 500,000 will die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth. Of the remainder, 20 million will suffer severe and long-term disability as a result of poorly managed pregnancy or delivery<sup>24</sup>. In some of the poorest countries, women have lifetime risks of maternal death of one in ten or higher<sup>25</sup>.

24 *Women's Health: Improve our Health, Improve the World*. World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva, 1995.

25 WHO and World Bank data, cited in *Gender and Development: Facts and Figures*. Prepared for the Department for International Development by Briefings on Development and Gender (BRIDGE), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 1999.

... Every year 500,000 women will die because of pregnancy or childbirth ...

**2.21** Women are especially vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, which often go unnoticed or untreated until serious damage has been done. In many parts of the world, young people are denied access to sexual health services and information, despite the fact that every year one in 20 young people worldwide contracts a sexually transmitted infection.

**2.22** The number of women infected with HIV is now growing faster than men. In sub-Saharan Africa, women now make up 55% of the total of HIV-positive adults<sup>26</sup>. Overall, the proportion of HIV infected women to infected men has doubled since 1992 - to almost 50%. HIV is transmitted from men to women two to four times more easily than from women to men. Women tend to become infected at a younger age than men, and develop full-blown AIDS more quickly<sup>27</sup>. Changes in sexual behaviour, improvements in sexual and reproductive health services, and more power for women to control their sex lives, are all required. An important breakthrough was achieved in 1999 at the five-year review of the Cairo conference. New international targets were set to ensure that information, education and services to reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are available to at least 90% of 15-24 year olds by 2005, and to at least 95% of this group by 2010.

<sup>26</sup> See *The World's Women 2000. Trends and Statistics*. United Nations, New York, 2000, p. 68.

<sup>27</sup> Source: UNAIDS, 1999 figures.

**2.23** Life expectancy is one of the few indicators where men generally fare worse than women. This has increased almost everywhere, for both women and men. But men continue to have a lower life expectancy than women in virtually every country<sup>28</sup>. In some countries in Eastern Europe, life expectancy for men has declined. The AIDS epidemic is beginning to have a significant impact on life expectancy in an increasing number of countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>29</sup>. Women's longer life span makes them more vulnerable than men to isolation and neglect in old age.

<sup>28</sup> According to the 1999 Human Development Report, the global average life expectancy for women is 68.9 years compared with 64.7 years for men. Variations between rich and poor countries are high: in industrialised nations the averages are 80.9 and 74.5 years for women and men respectively, compared with 52.6 and 50.8 in least developed countries. The worst rates are in sub-Saharan Africa, with average life expectancy being 50.3 for women and 47.5 for men.

<sup>29</sup> See *The World's Women 2000. Trends and Statistics*. United Nations, New York, 2000, p. 54. In southern Africa life expectancy has dropped during the 1990s by an average of five years for women and men, to 51 and 48 respectively. This compares with 80 and 74 years in western Europe.

## Personal security and violence against women

**2.24** The most shocking manifestation of women's inequality is gender-based violence. Women



are at risk from violence everywhere in the world, and in every walk of life. Practices like female genital mutilation, and other forms of physical disfigurement, also remain a serious threat to many women around the world. Women can not always depend on justice systems to protect them from violence. In some countries, wife-beating is not even regarded as an offence.

**2.25** In parts of south and east Asia, some traditions see girls as a burden rather than an asset. Infanticide, sex-selective abortion, and preferential care and feeding of boys, particularly in early childhood, appear to lie behind demographic data which show alarming evidence of "missing" women in some populations<sup>30</sup>. Even where governments are doing their best to stamp these practices out, progress is slow.

<sup>30</sup> In most regions of the world, women slightly outnumber men. In parts of south and west Asia, China, and the Pacific, women are fewer than men to an extent which can not be explained by biological and physiological factors alone. In India and Pakistan, there are only 91 women for every 100 men, while in Bangladesh the ratio is 95:100. In China the ratio of girls to boys born appeared to decline from 93:100 to 88:100 during the 1980s. In Europe, the girl: boy ratio is 105:100. Source: *The World's Women 2000. Trends and Statistics*. United Nations, New York, 2000, pp. 7-8.

**2.26** Data on violence against women, rape, and female genital mutilation is hard to come by, but these problems are acknowledged to be widespread. It has been claimed that domestic violence may be the leading cause of injury and death to women worldwide<sup>31</sup>. Data from sample surveys compiled by the UN in 1995 indicated that as many as 75% of low caste women in India, and 60% of women in Tanzania, Ecuador, and Sri Lanka say they have been subjected to domestic violence and sexual assault by their partner<sup>32</sup>. So-called "honour killings", dowry-related violence, and non-consensual sex in marriage are also becoming issues of increasing concern<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> J. Seager. *The State of Women in the World Atlas*. Penguin, London, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> *The World's Women 1995. Trends and Statistics*. United Nations, New York, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> These practices were explicitly condemned during the five year review of the Beijing conference at the UN General Assembly Special Session in June 2000.

## Basic services and infrastructure

**2.27** Women are highly dependent on basic transport, energy, secure shelter, and water and sanitation services to enable them to carry out their economic and social roles. Many of these are often poorly related to women's needs, significantly adding to the costs for women of carrying out their responsibilities and reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of public investment in these areas. Failure in design work to address cultural considerations may severely constrain women's use of sanitation and other facilities. More gender-aware approaches will enable planners, engineers, and managers to bring important gains to economic and social development, as well as making an important contribution to reducing the burden on women.

## Women and the environment

**2.28** Women and men often have different relationships with the environment, due to the gender division of labour and other factors. As a result, they may be affected differently by environmental change, which in turn may itself affect gender relations. For example, where women are responsible for collecting fuel wood, deforestation may result in longer journeys, sometimes leading to men themselves having to take over this responsibility. Gender relations are thus interwoven with environmental and natural resource management. In spite of this, women are often excluded from decision-making processes related to these issues. This can

result in women's needs and rights being overlooked, potential hazards being ignored, and opportunities for better environmental protection and development being missed.

## Empowerment and political representation

**2.29** Despite their educational and other advances, women still face major obstacles in entering senior positions in society. Political participation is a human right, recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women are poorly represented at all levels of political life and decision making, leading to the widespread neglect of women's priorities at all levels by politicians and bureaucrats. Figures published in 1999 show that women hold only 12.7% of the worlds parliamentary seats, and only 8.7% of those in the least developed countries<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> *Human Development Report 1999*. UNDP, New York.

...Women hold only 12% of the world's parliamentary seats, and only 8.7% of those in the least developed countries...

**2.30** The need for effective institutional and organisational frameworks to promote gender equality and the rights of women has been clearly recognised. However, many of the national machineries set up to do so have failed to live up to expectations. This is due, among other things, to limited resources, lack of technical capacity, or insufficient political will. A great deal remains to be done to establish effective arrangements to turn good policy into effective practice.

## Disability

**2.31** Disability is a major cause of social exclusion, and is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Women with disabilities suffer multiple disadvantages and severe challenges to the

achievement of their human rights. Disability makes it even less likely that girls can go to school and be economically independent in adult life. They are also far more at risk from abuse and exploitation. Strategies which seek to promote women's empowerment must take specific account of the rights and needs of girls and women with disabilities, and ensure that these are considered in the mainstream of development efforts.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> For a more detailed analysis of DFID's views on disability see *Disability, Poverty and Development*, DFID Issues Paper, Department for International Development, London, 2000.

## Diversity and the life-cycle

**2.32** Diversity is a key characteristic of women's lives and directly impacts on their empowerment and development needs. Although the human rights of women are universal, their strategic needs vary considerably from place to place, both within and between societies, and throughout the life-cycle. These factors are central to a proper understanding of women's empowerment, but have only recently been considered in any detail in development thinking. Very often women's diversity is subsumed into wider analyses of cultural, social and economic differences within and between societies, and the different stages of the life-cycle, and hence overlooked.

**2.33** Significant attention has been paid to women's needs and rights in adulthood, particularly during their child-bearing years, and increasing attention is being paid to their rights in childhood and adolescence. More still needs to be done, however, to fully understand the challenges posed by old age and by abrupt changes in status brought about by marital breakdown or widowhood, conflict or humanitarian crises. The particular circumstances of women in minority or indigenous groups, or as migrants, are only sketchily understood.

**2.34** A full understanding of what is required to promote gender equality and women's

empowerment will require a deeper analysis of these factors, and a recognition that women's own development aspirations are likely to reflect their diversity.

## Rights of the child

**2.35** All children are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and it would be incorrect to say that girls are always the worst affected. Overall, however, they tend to suffer more than boys. This is particularly true, as we have already seen, in relation to education and their longer term prospects for empowerment, independence, and self-expression<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which virtually all countries have signed up, sets out in detail the global values aimed at protecting children's interests and giving all children the best possible chance for a free and dignified life and secure livelihood.

**2.36** The sexual exploitation of children is a particularly abhorrent violation of child rights. It is estimated by the ILO that up to 95% of child prostitutes are girls. As many as 800,000 children in Thailand, 400,000 in Brazil, 100,000 in Philippines, and countless thousands elsewhere, have been forced into prostitution. Many others are compelled to work, from very early on in their lives, to help their families fend off poverty. The nations of the world are beginning to take steps to address these challenges. The conditions for eliminating violations of children's rights require the underlying causes of poverty to be tackled.

## Men, masculinities and power

**2.37** Although women are more frequently and widely disadvantaged than men, it can not be taken for granted that this is true in every case. Gender inequalities are rooted in the way in which relations between women and men are structured and determined by social convention. Men are just as affected by gender roles as women. Until recently, there has been a marked

reluctance among gender analysts to turn their attention to men, ideas about masculinity and their implications for gender relations and how these issues bear on inequalities of power between women and men.

**2.38** Recent academic work in the UK has pointed out this deficiency in the analytical frameworks being used to assess gender inequalities<sup>37</sup>, and has called for an expansion of the gender studies agenda to encompass men as well as women.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example *Men, Masculinities and Development. Politics, Policies and Practice*. IDS Bulletin Vol. 31 No. 2, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, April 2000.

**2.39** A key issue in the study of male identities (or masculinities), and how they are defined and reinforced, is the underlying factors which establish and reinforce male power, both in the household and in society. A more complete understanding of these may help to identify situations when men are experiencing patterns of discrimination, what changes will strengthen women's bargaining power, and enable men to better understand the benefits change will bring.

### **Social attitudes and gender stereotyping**

**2.40** Gender discrimination is deeply embedded in, and reinforced by, social attitudes. Real changes in relations between men and women require real changes in attitudes, by both men and women. In many respects, these are the hardest things of all to change.

**2.41** Donor countries which support women's equality have sometimes been accused of seeking to impose their own values on others. While respect for peoples culture is a right, so too is respect for the human rights of women. Both are recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women have been oppressed and treated unequally in all cultures, and in all

cultures this is an abuse of human rights. An underlying guiding principle in addressing attitudes and social values is the importance of moving forward at a pace, and in a direction, determined by women themselves. In the worst cases, women's lives can literally be at stake if they challenge the existing social order head on. International support is of great importance to protect women's rights to speak out.

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### 3. Experience to date

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#### The international framework

**3.1** The 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 set out 12 critical areas of concern as the basis for the global Platform for Action (see Fig. 3). This built on the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights instruments and agreements, and asserted that "...the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child [is] an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human

rights and fundamental freedoms"<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995. Department of Public Information, United Nations. New York, 1996. p. 34. The Platform for Action was further strengthened at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 2000 which reviewed progress five years after Beijing and proposed actions to accelerate implementation.

**3.2** The combination of the International Development Targets, CEDAW, and the Platform for Action sets out a powerful and challenging framework of international agreements for the pursuit of gender equality. This calls for a fundamental transformation in the relations between women and men which will help unlock the full potential for economic, social and human development and bring benefits to all.

### Figure 3.

#### Lessons from international experience

**3.3** A large number of lessons were drawn together from international experience, as part of the preparations for a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 2000 which reviewed progress after five years of implementing the Global Platform for Action agreed at Beijing<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> *Progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action based on a review of reports to the Commission on the Status of Women of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Note by the Secretariat*. UN Economic and Social Council, New York, E/CN.6/1999/PC/4,



February 1999.

**3.4** The first and most important lesson is that the goal of gender equality is achievable. An enormous amount of progress has been made, though this should not lead to a belief that further progress will be easy. New challenges are arising all the time<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Since 1995, for example, world attention has increasingly turned to issues of globalisation, with the opening up of world markets and a major revolution in global information flows, and the proliferation of ethnic and other forms of conflict and communal violence. The AIDS epidemic is also commanding attention as a major challenge which threatens to undo a good deal of progress, particularly in Africa.

**3.5** Progress has been greatest where there has been strong political will, where changes in laws and regulations have been followed through with real action, and resources have been devoted to the explicit goal of reducing gender discrimination. People always find it difficult to adjust to change, however, and those who benefit from inequalities and inequities are seldom willing to surrender their advantage without a struggle. The spread of democracy and more vibrant civil societies appear to be key factors in success. There is also a growing realisation in the private sector of the benefits of ethical and socially responsible behaviour in enabling businesses to operate sustainably and maintain consumer confidence.

... There is every sign that the goal of gender equality is achievable...

**3.6** Gender equality and women's empowerment are inextricably entwined. Women will only win equality when they are able to act on their own behalf, with a strong voice to ensure their views are heard and taken into account. The empowerment of women needs to be supported by properly resourced and influential institutional and organisational frameworks, often referred to in international agreements as "national machineries for women's advancement". While

equality of rights and opportunities for both women and men is the goal, a specific focus on women is justified on equity grounds as long as they continue to bear the burden of gender discrimination.

## Lessons from donor experience

**3.7** The donor community, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in development, has undertaken numerous reviews of experience and practice in supporting activities aimed at promoting gender equality. A great deal has been learned, both from success and failure.

**3.8** Four key issues stand out from these analyses:

A major problem is that of so-called 'policy evaporation', where good policy intentions fail to be followed through in practice. This can occur both prior to and during implementation as a result of poor planning, lack of technical expertise, poor follow up, low levels of management support, and inadequate resourcing<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> This problem was identified by Sara Hlupekile Longwe in her 1997 paper 'The evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking òit', in *Development in Practice*, Vol. 7, No. 2., London 1997.

Another important lesson is the importance of good statistics and other data, disaggregated by sex, to aid policy formulation and monitor progress<sup>42</sup>. Many of the problems experienced in setting baselines and benchmarks, and assessing progress, are due to the lack of good data. In the end this is the responsibility of governments, but it is also due, in part, to failures by the donor community to give sufficient priority to assisting poorer countries to strengthen their capacities in this area. The current focus on the International Development Targets has brought this issue more to the

fore. Capturing evidence of impact is not only important in pointing the way forward to further work, but also provides a vital incentive to continue to pursue the policy objective with commitment and vigour.

42 The publication in 1995 of the statistical compendium *The World's Women* by the United Nations underlined the value of good statistics, and also illustrated the widespread deficiencies in the availability of sex-disaggregated data for planning and impact assessment purposes. An updated version is to be published in 2000, with significant funding support from DFID.

A major lesson is that little can be achieved in the long term by focusing only on small-scale activities. While these bring direct benefits to many people, they rarely bring about lasting, strategic change unless they are linked to, and complement, policy development. Their greatest value is as knowledge-generating, learning experiences, and as means of accessing the experience of, and giving voice to, poor women. Lasting change is best brought about through interventions which focus on major policy reforms, changes to laws and regulations, the reallocation of financial and other resources, and the promotion of changes in attitude through public debate.

Above all, donors in particular are beginning to learn the value of working in collaboration with others towards the achievement of common goals. Donor funding can make a real difference to people's lives, but in the end it is a modest contribution. Donors can make a more important contribution within a framework of collaboration with key actors in government, civil society and the private sector, and through the sharing of experience and the development of new ideas.

**3.9** Comprehensive approaches are required, combining sound analysis and policy formulation with a shared commitment among all partners, strong management support at all levels, and

the necessary skills and expertise for successful implementation.

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## 4. Meeting the challenge

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### **Opportunities, constraints and the way forward**

**4.1** There are many opportunities for accelerated progress. A solid global policy framework is in place, based on numerous international agreements. The knowledge and evidence base linking progress towards gender equality with material gains in economic and social development is well established and growing fast. There is also a much greater understanding of the remaining obstacles which stand in the way of the achievement of international gender equality goals.

**4.2** Although partnerships are strengthening around a greater sense of common purpose, there is much to be done to close gaps in understanding and increase co-operation, both between the governments and also between the state and civil society. A clearer understanding of

mutual rights and responsibilities is required. This is particularly true of the relationships between states and organisations in civil society. These have too often been adversarial rather than collaborative, and there has been too little sharing of experience and good practice.

**4.3** Donors, including DFID, have an important strategic role to play, but must recognise their own limitations and deficiencies. These include problems relating to co-ordination and capacity, and the need to recognise the fundamental importance of focused and practical actions. The richer countries must also play their part in addressing issues of global regulation and equity. They must actively work with the private sector to improve labour and trading standards, and strengthen social responsibility in business practice, in ways which promote and support progress towards gender equality.

## Key actors

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Governments  
Civil society  
Private sector  
Donors

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## Governments

**4.4** The fundamental responsibility for the achievement of gender equality rests with governments. Gender equality is a human right, but it is also a public good bringing benefits to all. It is, therefore, the duty of governments to ensure that commitments to equal rights and opportunities are upheld and delivered. While some governments have shown a real commitment to gender equality, others have either given it a very low priority or actively obstructed progress.

**4.5** It is governments which set the enabling environment for gender equality at the country level, and also in the global community through the formulation and implementation of conventions and other international agreements. They also command the public resources needed to deliver basic services in an equitable way, and set the 'rules of the game' for actors in civil society and the private sector.

### **Civil society**

**4.6** Gender inequalities are played out in civil society, and it is in the community that fundamental change will occur. Organisations and groups in civil society, both formal and informal, national and international, provide focal points for debate and advocacy. They support activities and programmes which can promote gender equality. They can lobby governments and the private sector to ensure that policy commitments are delivered and, where necessary, appropriate changes to policies and laws are made. Organisations in civil society can also assist and empower citizens to call governments to account over their commitment, or otherwise, to gender equality goals.

### **Private sector**

**4.7** The private sector - at all levels, and in all sectors - is the engine of economic growth and development, and is also a standard setter in relation to the rights of both workers and consumers. Businesses, whatever their size, must act responsibly and recognise their social obligations, as well as their obligations to shareholders. Governments and international bodies can regulate the private sector but, in the end, a commitment to social responsibility and the maintenance of ethical standards must come from within. Women's advancement will continue to be held back as long as companies discriminate in employment practices and terms and conditions of work, or reinforce and perpetuate gender stereotypes through marketing strategies and the media. Many businesses adhere to strict standards of social and ethical responsibility, but many others are still lagging behind.

## Donors

**4.8** The donor community is made up of a number of key actors, each of whom has a slightly different role, and each of which faces challenges in strengthening its contribution to the achievement of international gender equality goals.

**4.9** The funds and programmes and specialised agencies of the UN have the task of helping to deliver the global, normative framework for development set down by the various UN conferences and conventions<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Key partners for DFID in gender equality work are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat), and the International Labour Office (ILO).

**4.10** The smallest of the UN funds, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), has the central strategic role in promoting gender equality work in the UN. In the past UNIFEM was considered to be limited in its effectiveness and too small to make a major difference for women in developing countries through its own projects and programmes. Under the wider umbrella of the UN reform programme, however, it has made major strides in establishing a more strategic role for itself. It has taken on a more significant role in knowledge development and capacity building, and supporting greater co-ordination within the UN and between the UN and the wider donor community<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> *Working in Partnership with UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for*

*Women*. DFID Institutional Strategy Paper, London, 1999.

**4.11** Other funds and programmes and specialised agencies have performed in a rather mixed way, and there is considerable scope for improvement. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, has made a major contribution through its global analysis and the establishment of new measures like the GDI and GEM, but the extent to which gender equality has been a focus of country programmes has been uneven. By contrast, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has put considerable resources into meeting the needs of women, as well as children. This has tended to focus, however, on their practical needs as mothers rather than their wider strategic needs as members of society entitled to equal rights. Others, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), are actively working to strengthen their gender equality work, but all acknowledge that a lot more needs to be done. The UN reform programme offers important opportunities, particularly in seeking to establish more integrated country programmes and more sharing of analysis and expertise, and the establishment of a common framework for assessment and progress measurement.

**4.12** The international financial institutions, most notably the World Bank, but also the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, are key partners for development work and command the biggest share of financial resources earmarked for development purposes. In the past, all of these have been weak in their approach to gender concerns. This situation is rapidly changing, however, as new knowledge is emerging of the constraints imposed by inequality on economic development. The development banks have also shown more willingness during the 1990s to improve the skills mix in their staffing and bring in more social scientists to help them gain a better understanding of the important linkages between economic and social policy issues.

**4.13** The World Bank has made a particularly important contribution to understanding the costs



of gender inequality for growth and poverty reduction and has, as a result, added considerable weight to the instrumental and practical arguments for more investment in women<sup>45</sup>. This has been an essential complement to the normative, rights-based arguments advanced through the UN.

<sup>45</sup> In 2000 the World Bank is issuing a new Policy Research Report, *Engendering Development*, which provides further evidence of the crucial linkages between poverty reduction, economic growth, and women's empowerment.

**4.14** The European Union is the world's biggest channel for donor funding. The international development efforts of the European Commission (EC) have been the subject of considerable criticism by member states, including the UK<sup>46</sup>, and a great deal of work is required to bring about reforms which will allow the EC to perform to its full potential. Organisational and procedural problems, along with an inappropriate skills mix, is currently constraining its capacity to turn good policy into effective practice. Like all big agencies, however, it has produced very good work in some areas and the foundations exist for real progress to be made.

<sup>46</sup> *Working in Partnership with the European Union*. DFID Institutional Strategy Paper, London, 1999.

**4.15** The Commonwealth Secretariat also plays an important role, and is particularly well placed to help member governments address controversial and politically sensitive issues. Despite having modest resources, it has been making an important contribution in bringing issues like violence against women to the fore, and has led ground-breaking work on public spending reform making use of gender-sensitive analysis of the implications of different public spending choices. The Commonwealth as an organisation also provides an important framework for strengthening global consensus around key economic and social policy issues,

bridging the divide between rich and poor countries.

**4.16** The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the main forum for bilateral donor co-ordination. This makes international policy in relation to bilateral development assistance and provides guidelines and other support to donor activities. DFID's policy on gender equality is fully consistent with guidelines issued by the DAC in 1998<sup>47</sup>, which in turn draw upon the key agreements set out at the Beijing conference. The substantive work of the DAC is undertaken through Working Parties and other subsidiary bodies, including a Working Party on Gender Equality. The DAC subsidiary bodies have been at the forefront of development thinking, and will remain a vital forum for future work.

<sup>47</sup> *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation*, OECD, Paris, 1998.



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## 5. Priorities for DFID

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Specific objectives  
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## Progress so far

**5.1** The 1997 White Paper on international development<sup>48</sup> strengthened UK policy on gender equality in a number of ways. It reaffirmed the UK's commitment to put this issue at the heart of international development work, based on a clear understanding of the direct link between gender inequality and poverty. It also explicitly recognised the vital link between human rights and poverty.

<sup>48</sup> *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century*. HMSO, London, 1997.

**5.2** DFID's focus since the 1997 White Paper has been on strengthening the delivery of the policy, and finding better measures of progress. Implementation is based on a 'twin-track' approach. This combines specific activities aimed at empowering women with a commitment to put concerns about gender equality into the mainstream of development programmes<sup>49</sup>. The focus of DFID's work is on supporting innovation and achieving impact. Some of what has been achieved in recent years with UK development assistance is shown in Box 2<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> The concept of "mainstreaming" is drawn from the 1995 Global Platform for Action, and means several things: that before decisions are taken on a policy or programme, the likely effects on women as well as men are analysed; that wherever possible specific components addressing gender issues are designed into policies and programmes; that women as well as men are consulted in the design, implementation,

and assessment of policies and programmes; that monitoring work, including the collection of statistics, seeks to examine the effects on women as well as men.

<sup>50</sup> For further examples see: *Breaking the Barriers. Women and the Elimination of World Poverty*. Issues Paper, Department for International Development, London, 1998.

## **Box 2. Examples of DFID support for gender equality and women's empowerment**

### **Economic and social policy**

DFID has made a major contribution to the development of Participatory Poverty Assessment methods which feed the views of the poor - including women-into national policy making. The government in Uganda has adopted these methods as a routine part of its policy-making cycle.

DFID support to the Commonwealth Secretariat for: a gender budget initiative - where public spending is analysed according to how benefits will be shared by women and men - led to important changes in welfare spending and more funding for women's credit in South Africa. Similar work is being done in Sri Lanka, Fiji, and the Caribbean.

### **Women's economic empowerment**

DFID, through its support to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and other financial service providers around the world have made small-scale finance (credit, savings and insurance) available to millions of poor women.

Support is being given to: innovative approaches to bringing financial services to

the poor, including ground-breaking partnerships with commercial banks in Zimbabwe and Uganda to bring community banking services to poor rural communities, with big benefits for poor women.

## **Education**

DFID-funded training has helped 500 women get promoted to head teacher in primary schools in Kenya in only two years.

Between 1995 and 1997, primary school enrolment in DFID-supported districts in India has risen by 6.5%. Girls enrolment rose more - by 7.5%. Among girls from scheduled castes the rise was 12.4%, and among scheduled tribes it was 9.6%.

DFID's support to non-formal education programmes in Bangladesh is enabling thousands of school drop-outs, the majority girls, to re-enter formal education.

## **Women in public life**

DFID is supporting an innovative programme run by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to promote a central role for women in peacemaking and national reconciliation work in Tajikistan.

Training for prospective: women candidates and a women's voter education project in Kenya led to a higher turnout among women, and more women elected, in project than non-project districts.

## **Trade and globalisation**

The growth of world trade has brought benefits to women, but it has also brought costs. Research funded by DFID has shown, for example, that women in south and

south-east Asia suffer low wages and poor working conditions as a result of discrimination in the labour market, while women in Africa are unable to benefit from the opening up of new markets because they lack property rights. New work is under way to identify policy instruments to improve the opportunities for the poor created by globalisation, and reduce the negative effects on the poorest and most vulnerable, including women.

### **Reproductive and sexual health**

DFID's support to organisations in Calcutta, India working with female commercial sex workers on HIV/AIDS reduction has resulted in HIV infection rates for commercial sex workers in the city remaining below 5% compared with 70% in similar contexts in India. As a consequence of this support, women engaged in the local sex industry have formed a self-managed co-operative, taking actions to achieve reductions in violence, increased women's access to credit and lobbying government for recognition of their rights as workers.

DFID-funded research in east Africa showed that prompt, effective treatment for sexually transmitted infections can reduce the transmission rate of HIV by up to 40%.

DFID's support to innovative work to reduce the risks of catching HIV in east Africa and Asia includes educational and awareness raising work to change gendered attitudes and empower women and girls to take more control over their sexual relationships.

### **Rights of the child**

The UK has helped formulate a powerful new international convention, through the

International Labour Organisation (ILO), to combat the worst forms of child labour. Support is also being provided to an ILO initiative to combat trafficking in children in south east Asia.

DFID has been helping the United Nations Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict protect children's rights, including girls vulnerable to abduction and rape.

### **Violence against women**

DFID is supporting a growing portfolio of activities aimed at stopping violence against women, including work in Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, the Caribbean, and Zambia.

DFID has been a major contributor to a Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence Against Women run by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

DFID is working with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to protect women against violence in refugee camps.

### **Basic services and infrastructure**

New approaches to infrastructure programmes which emphasise service delivery linked to social benefits and women's needs are being developed with DFID's support. Work includes the use of participatory planning and assessment methods in road improvement programmes in Uganda and Ghana, and support to a 15-country research programme in Africa and Asia aimed at developing more gender-sensitive approaches to travel and transport programmes.

**5.3** The proportion of DFID spending aimed at promoting gender equality has more than

doubled in the second half of the 1990s<sup>51</sup>. Table 1 shows the trend in the proportion of new bilateral spending commitments since 1994 which explicitly seek to support DFID's gender equality objective. This shows a steep upswing, from 23.2% in 1994-95 to 46.0% in 1998-99 of the total of marked commitments.

<sup>51</sup> DFID uses a Policy Information Marker System (PIMS) to track expenditure commitments in its bilateral programme against key policy objectives, including the removal of gender discrimination. Major spending commitments are marked for all of the policy objectives they seek to address. This accounts for the support we provide directly to developing countries through governments or organisations in civil society.

**5.4** The UK is working to ensure that donor efforts are better co-ordinated. It plays a leading role in the Working Party on Gender Equality of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a key international body for bilateral donor co-ordination. DFID's policy framework and approach draws heavily on guidelines produced by the DAC, with significant UK inputs<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation*, Development Co-operation Guidelines Series, OECD, Paris, 1998.

**5.5** More than half the UK's budget for development assistance is spent through the European Union, the United Nations and other multilateral partners. Very close links are maintained with multilateral development agencies, including the European Commission, the UN funds and programmes, and international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the various regional development banks.

**Table 1. DFID bilateral spending commitments on gender equality (PIMS data), 1994-**



**95/98-99**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>1994-95</b>	<b>1995-96</b>	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>
Total PIMS marked spending commitments	£854.1 m.	£701.1 m.	£878.8 m.	£879.2 m.	£1,305.1 m.
New spending commitments with gender equality as an objective £599.8 m.	£198.5 m.	£209.7 m.	£310.6 m.	£258.0 m.	
Percentage committed to gender equality goals 46.0%	23.2%	29.9%	35.3%	29.3% <sup>53</sup>	

<sup>53</sup> The dip in 1997-98 is accounted for by the introduction of a revised, and more stringent, marker. Subsequent work has had to be even more focused on gender equality goals than before.

**5.6** The UK is an active participant in international policy discussions and the global round of UN conferences, and is a strong supporter of the UN Secretary General's reform programme<sup>54</sup>. DFID also works closely with partners in civil society, including international NGOs and local development and community based organisations, to promote gender equality and support the women's movement in developing countries. New partnerships are also being built with the private sector and the trade union movement.

<sup>54</sup> See *Working in Partnership with the United Nations*. DFID Institutional Strategy Paper, London, 1999.

**5.7** New DFID recruits receive briefing on the UK's gender equality policy and objectives as

part of their induction. Training in gender planning is provided for DFID personnel on a regular basis, both in the UK and overseas. DFID also invests in gender expertise in developing countries, and supports numerous initiatives in many parts of the world to train trainers and to pass on gender analysis and planning skills to government and non-government partners.

## Purpose of the strategy

**5.8** The purpose of DFID 's strategy is to ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality are actively pursued in the mainstream of all development activities. It builds on the lessons learned from international and donor experience. It also signals an intention to move more actively into fundamental areas of core policy and regulatory reform and strategic action. We will implement this through a framework of collaboration, with priorities being redrawn to focus on the major sticking points identified in the situation analysis and lessons learned, without giving up a broader commitment to addressing issues of gender equality across the whole range of the work we do.

**5.9** We will bring a much stronger focus in our work to supporting the incorporation of gender equality goals into national and local policy frameworks. We will support the development of better data and measures of progress, and the reform of public spending and regulatory frameworks in ways which bring more equity into the sharing of benefits between women and men. We will back up this commitment by continuing to strengthen our own knowledge base and capacity to turn good gender policy and analysis into practical action. We will also support the strengthening of similar capacities in partner governments and organisations in civil society and the private sector, and continue to work hard for stronger and more effective coordination of donor effort.

... The purpose of DFID's strategy is to ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality are actively pursued in the mainstream of all development activities ...

**5.10** DFID will not abandon its support to efforts at the grass roots. This has an important impact on people's lives, and provides an indispensable source of knowledge and lesson learning. However, it is not donor action in itself that will bring about lasting change, but the actions of governments and, most importantly, women and men themselves which will bring about the fundamental transformations the goal of gender equality demands.

### Specific objectives

**5.11** DFID's strategy will aim to support the achievement of specific objectives, consistent with both the International Development Targets and the global Platform for Action, and with the analysis set out in the situation analysis in this paper. The specific objectives are set out in Box 3, along with examples of the kinds of actions we might support to achieve them.

### Box 3. DFID objectives and examples of actions

<p><b>Objective 1.</b> To promote equality in rights for women and men through international and national policy reform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of equal opportunities policies.</li> <li>• Gender aware approaches to international agreements and regulations.</li> <li>• Development of new tools for analysis and international and national policy making, including better statistics.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 2.</b> To secure greater livelihood security, access to productive assets, and economic opportunities for women as well as men.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to financial services for women.</li> <li>• Improved access for women to affordable energy, water and sanitation, and transport services.</li> <li>• Reforms to land and inheritance laws.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved information flows, particularly for women farmers and entrepreneurs.</li> <li>● Adherence to core labour standards.</li> <li>● Development of 'family friendly' employment practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 3.</b> To further close gender gaps in human development, particularly education and health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development of policies and programmes to remove gender barriers to education.</li> <li>● Development of policies and programmes to support achievement of International Development Targets for maternal mortality and access to reproductive health services.</li> <li>● Improvements to national statistical systems to provide sex-disaggregated data across all key social indicators.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 4.</b> To promote the more equal participation of women in decision making and leadership roles at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capacity-building and other support to women's organisations.</li> <li>● Electoral and other reforms to remove barriers to women's participation in public life.</li> <li>● Public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 5.</b> To increase women's personal security and reduce gender-based violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reform and strengthening of criminal and civil law.</li> <li>● Awareness-raising of women's rights among police and judiciary.</li> <li>● Public information campaigns.</li> <li>● Support to women's organisations.</li> <li>● Improved knowledge and statistics.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Objective 6.</b> To strengthen institutional mechanisms and national machineries for the advancement of women in governments and civil society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Civil service and public spending reforms to establish and support appropriate government structures.</li> <li>● Strengthening of role of civil society organisations in advancing gender equality.</li> <li>● Public awareness campaigns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 7.</b> To promote equality for women under the law and non-discrimination in access to justice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reform and strengthening of criminal and civil law.</li> <li>● Support to legal literacy programmes.</li> <li>● Training and capacity building for police judiciary, and organisations in civil society.</li> <li>● Public information campaigns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 8.</b> To reduce gender stereotyping, and bring about changes in social attitudes in favour of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support to media projects and campaigns, including gender training for journalists and programme makers.</li> <li>● Support to women's organisations.</li> <li>● Awareness-raising among policy makers and political leaders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 9.</b> To help develop gender aware approaches to the management of the environment and the safeguarding of natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender aware planning and women's participation in the development of National Strategies for Sustainable Development.</li> <li>● Strengthen tenure and common property rights in line with gender equity.</li> <li>● Ensure that local planning and access to natural resources is gender aware.</li> <li>● Improved data and research.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 10.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implementation of the Convention on the Rights</li> </ul>

To ensure that progress is made in upholding the rights of both girls and boys within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

of the Child.

- Improved data, research, and statistics.
- Support to programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

**5.12** The achievement of some of these objectives will require continued progress along familiar lines. Others will need new approaches and the development of more incisive tools and methods. All depend on strong political will, backed up by appropriate resources. Promoting equality for women can be controversial and may provoke opposition or provoke intense public debate. Additional resources are not always implied, as many of these objectives should be achievable through the more equitable distribution of existing resources. As gender gaps close, economic benefits should flow which will make more resources available, thus creating a virtuous cycle which will further accelerate the pace of change.

**5.13** Most of the objectives refer to country level work, but all depend on action at the regional and international levels too. Achievement of greater livelihood security, for example, will depend on the reform of global frameworks for trade regulation and codes of conduct as well as on changes in regulations and the creation of opportunities at the country level. It is also important to note that the objectives are highly interdependent. Thus, while better access to education will help women to equip themselves to take a more prominent role in public life, more women will need to find their way into positions of power and influence before they gain a real voice in public policy. At the same time, it will be difficult for women to rise to positions of seniority and influence in society without major changes in attitudes and values. These changes, in turn, will accelerate as women have more opportunities to demonstrate their leadership capabilities.

**5.14** The achievement of these objectives will depend on the continued strengthening of the 'twin-track' approach, combining focused actions aimed at women's empowerment and gender aware action in the mainstream of development work. In all cases, gender sensitive social

assessment work will be required to ensure that policy and practice are informed by a full understanding of the diversity of women's experience and aspirations.

## Setting priorities

**5.15** While no one objective is seen as having more importance than others, it will not be possible for DFID to pursue all ten objectives at once, everywhere in the world. Priorities will need to be set case by case, and this will depend on the wider analysis informing country and institutional strategies. Priorities will need to be set, both on the basis of regional and local situation analyses and on the basis of assessments of the policy environment on a country by country basis. For example, global data suggests that education will need to be a major focus in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Issues related to child rights may be of particular concern in parts of Asia. In Latin America, it may be important to put particular emphasis on political representation, or the needs and rights of women in indigenous groups. Female genital mutilation may be a particular concern in parts of Africa.

**5.16** Whatever priorities are set, there will be no DFID country or institutional strategy which does not take account of gender equality. Specific areas for action in relation to many of these objectives can be found in other papers in the DFID series of *Strategies for Achieving the International Development Targets*.

## Channels for action

**5.17** Delivery of the DFID strategy will be through three main channels, defining focal areas for action. These are:

- Support to governments, civil society, and the private sector for the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action and the inclusion of gender equality goals in the mainstream of all development programmes

- Stronger collaboration and co-ordination for the achievement of gender equality goals among donors, including the European Union, UN system, and the World Bank and other international financial institutions;
- The strengthening of DFID's internal capacity through research and knowledge development, information support, and gender training.

### Channel 1

- Support to governments, civil society, and the private sector for the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action, and the inclusion of gender equality goals in the mainstream of all development programme

**5.18** DFID's work through the first channel will seek to strengthen the global commitment to more focused actions which will deliver measurable progress in the delivery of the Platform for Action. Bench-marking and target setting will be a necessary part of this process, and we will be willing to offer our support as appropriate to governments and others to help build capacity for statistical and other forms of measurement and impact assessment. We will also place strong emphasis on the need for gender equality goals to be pursued at the very heart of public policy and decision making.

**5.19** We will follow up agreements at the international level in our negotiations with developing country governments over the priorities to be addressed through our country strategies, and with international organisations in relation to the aims and objectives of our institutional strategies.

**5.20** A key role we will seek to play in promoting the inclusion of gender equality objectives in the mainstream of development assistance will be that of knowledge broker. To support this



role, we will continue to invest in applied research and other knowledge development work, including the capturing and dissemination of good practice and lessons from experience. Our work in knowledge development will include a focus on new areas of analysis and activity, including such issues as the impact of globalisation on gender equality and the gender aspects of new development co-operation instruments such as sector-wide approaches (SWAPs).

## Channel 2

- Commitment to stronger collaboration and co-ordination for the achievement of gender equality goals among donors, including the European Union, UN system, and the World Bank and other international financial institution

**5.21** The second channel recognises that there is a great deal of scope for stronger and more effective co-ordination within the donor community, and the establishment of much greater commitment among some donor agencies to gender equality goals.

**5.22** We will continue to build on the leading role we already play in advancing understanding of gender and development issues among development colleagues, while at the same time gaining as much benefit as possible from the lessons drawn from the experience of others and the high quality knowledge development work done in the international community as a whole.

**5.23** We will encourage the development of common country assessment frameworks as part of the UN reform process at the country level, and will also work to promote closer collaboration and complementarity of action between the UN funds and programmes and the international financial institutions. We will also continue to work closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat and support its role in developing new and innovative lines of work.

**5.24** We will continue to build our collaborative relationships with the European Commission,

including developing much closer collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues through country programmes. We will also continue to make an energetic contribution to central dialogue within the EU to maintain a strong policy framework for European development co-operation and a clear focus on achieving results. Our work with European colleagues will be a useful jumping off point for continued engagement with the wider framework for bilateral donor co-ordination established through the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

**5.25** We will also continue to encourage the World Bank and the other development banks and international financial institutions to continue to build their expertise in gender analysis, and to factor the findings of this into their assistance and lending programmes.

### Channel 3

- The strengthening of DFID's internal capacity through knowledge development, information support, and gender training

**5.26** The third channel refers to the strengthening of DFID's own capacity to be a good development partner in the pursuit of gender equality goals. While we have worked hard in this area, we are far from complacent about our own capabilities. We will continue to develop our technical capacity to advise on and support the development of gender equality policies; and to measure progress towards the achievement of gender equality goals. We will develop improved information support, lesson learning, and impact assessment systems and make full use of these in strengthening our own capacity, and that of others. We will maintain a critical view of our own contribution to development work in this area, and ensure that we are sufficiently self-critical of our own methods to learn real lessons from experience. We will also maintain and further strengthen the close working relationships we have established with other UK government departments, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the

Women's Unit in the Cabinet Office, to ensure policy consistency and the sharing of good practice<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Examples of good practice in promoting women's empowerment, both in the UK and overseas, are contained in a recent Women's Unit/DFID/FCO joint publication *Equality in Practice*, which was prepared for the five-year review of the Beijing conference.

**5.27** We will keep our skills mix and specialist capabilities under constant review, to ensure that we are providing the right kind of professional support, in the right places and at the right times. Above all, we will seek to ensure that our work in support of gender equality goals is well-focused, practical, and directly linked to changes in the real world for the benefit of both women and men.



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## 6. Monitoring progress

**6.1** Progress towards the achievement of DFID's specific objectives will be measured against 'real world' outcomes, with the International Development Targets providing core indicators, along with other appropriate measures of progress. The main measures to be used are set out in Box 4.

**6.2** The key measures are drawn from the working set of 21 core indicators agreed by the international community to measure progress towards the achievement of the International Development Targets. Of these, 12 indicators either already refer specifically to measures of progress for women or can be readily disaggregated by sex to provide male-female comparisons. These cover all of the economic well-being and social and human development targets. Where disaggregation by sex is required, this is shown in the box.

**6.3** Where possible, it will also be valuable to obtain measures of the impact of income poverty on women, compared with men. This measure has proven very difficult to obtain as part of standard, national statistics, but specific studies can be very revealing in exploring the extent to which poverty impacts differentially not only on women and men, but also across generations and in relation to different members of households.

**6.4** The current status of the core indicators is shown in the Annex. In some cases, sex-disaggregated data is not yet available. Efforts will be required by governments, with support from donors (including DFID), to improve the collection and use of statistics to ensure that more gender-sensitive measures become available, and are fed into policy making processes.

**6.5** The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) devised by the United Nations Development Programme help fill important gaps in providing measures of women's empowerment, and in providing comparative measures of aggregate progress from country to country. The GDI combines measures of life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment, and real income, broken down by sex. The GEM is a specific measure of women's empowerment and ranks countries according to women's share of seats in parliament, administrative and management jobs, professional and technical posts, and national income. Results are published every year in the UNDP's Human Development Report.

#### **Box 4. Core indicators for measuring progress towards gender equality**

International Development Targets	Indicators
<input type="checkbox"/> Reducing extreme poverty	<input type="checkbox"/> Child malnutrition: prevalence of underweight under 5s (by sex)
<input type="checkbox"/> Universal primary education	<input type="checkbox"/> Net enrolment in primary education (by sex) <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of 4th grade of primary education (by sex) <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy rate of 15 to 24 year olds (by sex)
<input type="checkbox"/> Gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/> Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education <input type="checkbox"/> Ratio of literate females to males among 15 to 24 year olds
<input type="checkbox"/> Infant & child mortality	<input type="checkbox"/> Infant mortality rate (by sex) <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5 mortality rate (by sex)
<input type="checkbox"/> Maternal mortality	<input type="checkbox"/> Maternal mortality ratio <input type="checkbox"/> Births attended by skilled health personnel
<input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive health	<input type="checkbox"/> Contraceptive prevalence rate <input type="checkbox"/> HIV prevalence in 15-24 year old pregnant women

**6.6** In addition to these core indicators and indexes, a number of other international, national, and local measures and reporting systems will also be helpful in tracking progress towards the achievement of the objectives set out in this strategy. A selection of these, which include the components of the GDI and GEM, are summarised in Box 5.

**6.7** The proposed measures are provided for general guidance, and will need to be adapted to suit local conditions. Some measures, like progress towards the achievement of the International Development Targets and the use of the UNDP Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), are likely to be valid in all

circumstances. Others may be more context and country specific.

**6.8** Since all of these measures are aimed towards real world outcomes, it will be extremely difficult in almost all cases to attribute progress directly to DFID supported actions. Process and input measures will also need to be used, therefore, to provide verification that our own contribution is consistent with what is required to achieve the desired outcomes. An improving knowledge base should make this easier to achieve as further progress is made. Qualitative measures, and the extensive use of participatory methods to amplify women's voices, will also play a crucial part in both understanding the deeper meaning of data collected through more formal methods and in providing direct measures of progress from a women's perspective.

**6.9** The strategy set out in this paper is broad-based. The framework for measuring progress towards the achievement of the specific objectives to which DFID is committed is necessarily broad too. At its heart, however, are the International Development Targets and the key indicators which have been identified to measure progress towards the achievement of these. Clear targets and measures of progress are essential, to focus minds, to provide encouragement when progress is made, and to strengthen co-ordination around common goals.

### **Box 5. Additional international, national and local measures**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measures</b>
1. To promote equality in rights for women and men through international and national policy reform.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN progress reports on implementation of the Global Platform for Action agreed at the Beijing conference and CEDAW. <input type="checkbox"/> Reviews of bilateral donor performance by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD.
2. To secure greater livelihood security,	<input type="checkbox"/> Larger share and control for women of

<p>access to productive assets, and economic opportunities for women as well as men.</p>	<p>earned income, household income, and assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes in land and other laws relating to women's property and tenure rights.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development of more gender aware approaches, tools and methods, for infrastructure development.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Core labour standards adhered to, and terms and conditions of work for women improve.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improved access to financial and non-financial business and small enterprise services for poor women.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More equitable access to basic services, including water, sanitation, clean energy, and transport.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes in international regulations and policy frameworks to ensure more benefits to women from globalisation.</li> </ul>
<p>3. To further close gender gaps in human development, particularly education and health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Closing of gender gaps in standard sets of social indicators, including UN Common Country Assessment indicators.</li> </ul>
<p>4. To promote the more equal participation of women in decision making and leadership roles at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Country by country data on women's representation in national and local government, and the judiciary and legal profession.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reporting data on women's representation</li> </ul>

	in international organisations and related bodies.
5. To increase women's personal security and reduce gender-based violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN and other reporting. <input type="checkbox"/> Sex disaggregated crime and justice statistics. <input type="checkbox"/> Data on crimes against women.
6. To strengthen institutional mechanisms and national machineries for the advancement of women in governments and civil society.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN and national progress reports on implementation of the Global Platform for Action agreed at the Beijing conference.
7. To promote equality for women under the law and non-discrimination in access to justice.	<input type="checkbox"/> CEDAW and other reports.
8 To reduce gender stereotyping, and bring about changes in social attitudes in favour of women.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN and other reports.
9. To help develop gender aware approaches to the management of the environment and the safeguarding of natural resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN progress reports on implementation of the Rio agreements. <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of gender content of National Strategies for Sustainable Development. <input type="checkbox"/> Sex-disaggregated data on the labour force, particularly women's role in agriculture and other occupations particularly relevant to the environment.
10. To ensure that progress is made in upholding the rights of both girls and boys, within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.	<input type="checkbox"/> UN progress reports on the implementation of the CRC. <input type="checkbox"/> Closing of gender gaps in child related UN Common Country Assessment indicators,





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### Annex: Global and regional indicators of development progress for the international development targets

			World total	Developing country total <sup>a</sup>	East Asia & Pacific	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Latin America and Caribbean	Middle East & North Africa	South Asia	Sub Sahara Africa
<b>Population</b> [millions]	1980		4,430	3,641	1,398	426	360	174	903	380
	1990		5,255	4,414	1,641	466	439	238	1,122	508
	1998		5,897	5,011	1,817	475	502	286	1,305	627
<b>Reducing Extreme Poverty</b>										
<b>Population covered by at least one survey for poverty data</b> [%]	1985-98 <sup>b</sup>			88.1	90.8	81.7	88.0	52.5	97.9	72.9
<b>Population living on</b>	1987	"		1,183.2	417.5	1.1	63.7	9.3	474.4	217.2

<b>less than \$1 a day<sup>C</sup></b> [millions]	estimates for	1990	"	1,276.4	452.4	7.1	73.8	5.7	495.1	242.3
		1993	"	1,304.3	431.9	18.3	70.8	5.0	505.1	273.3
		1996	"	1,190.6	265.1	23.8	76.0	5.0	531.7	289.0
		1998	"	1,198.9	278.3	24.0	78.2	5.5	522.0	290.9
<b>Population living on less than \$1 a day<sup>C</sup></b> [%]	estimates for	1987	"	28.3	26.6	0.2	15.3	4.3	44.9	46.6
		1990	"	29.0	27.6	1.6	16.8	2.4	44.0	47.7
		1993	"	28.1	25.2	4.0	15.3	1.9	42.4	49.7
		1996	"	24.5	14.9	5.1	15.6	1.8	42.3	48.5
		1998	"	24.0	15.3	5.1	15.6	1.9	40.0	46.3
<b>Poverty Gap<sup>C, d</sup></b> [%]		1987	"	8.6	6.8	0.1	5.2	1.0	13.0	20.0
		1990	"	9.0	7.6	1.0	6.0	0.5	12.0	20.4
		1993	"	8.9	7.5	1.2	5.8	0.4	11.2	21.7

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		1990	7.5	4.0	1.5	5.5	0.4	10.0	21.5	
	estimates for	1998	"	7.2	4.2	1.6	5.3	0.2	9.5	20.1
<b>National income/consumption by poorest 20%</b> [share that accrues to the bottom 20% of the population]		1980s	"	"	6.3	9.8	3.7	6.6	7.9	5.7
		1990s	"	"	6.9	8.8	4.5	6.9	8.8	5.2
<b>Prevalence of child malnutrition, weight for age</b> [% of children under 5 years old]		1992-98 <sup>b</sup>	30	31	22	8	8	15	51	33
<b>Universal Primary Education</b>										
<b>Net primary school enrolment</b> [school age in school as % of all school age children]	Female	1980	77	72	82	91	85	64	52	49
		1990	86	83	96	95	88	82	65	52
		1997	88	86	99	99	93	84	70	54
	Male	1980	86	83	90	93	86	84	75	59

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		1990	91	89	99	95	88	92	82	59
		1997	92	91	99	100	95	91	83	66
	Total	1980	81	78	86	92	85	74	64	54
		1990	88	86	97	95	88	87	74	56
		1997	90	88	99	100	94	87	77	"
<b>Persistence to grade 5</b> [% of children enrolled at Grade 1 who reach Grade 5]		1990-1995 <sup>b</sup>	77	74	91	"	76	90	56	67
<b>Youth literacy rate</b> [% of people 15-24]	Female	1980	70	69	85	96	89	47	38	44
		1990	77	77	92	97	92	63	50	60
		1998	81	81	95	98	94	75	58	72
	Male	1980	83	83	95	99	90	73	64	66
		1990	87	87	97	99	92	82	71	75
		1998	89	89	98	99	93	87	76	81
Total	1980	77	76	90	97	89	60	52	55	

		1990	82	82	94	98	92	73	61	68
		1998	85	85	97	99	94	81	67	76
<b>Adult literacy rate</b> [% of people 15+]	Female	1980	54	52	57	92	77	28	25	28
		1990	62	61	71	94	83	41	34	40
		1998	68	67	78	95	87	52	41	51
	Male	1980	72	71	80	97	82	56	52	49
		1990	78	78	87	98	86	67	59	60
		1998	82	82	91	98	89	74	65	68
	Total	1980	63	62	69	94	80	42	39	38
		1990	70	69	79	96	85	54	47	50
		1998	75	74	84	96	88	63	53	59

### Gender Equality

<b>Gender equality in school</b> [female gross enrolment ratio as a % of male gross enrolment ratio]	Primary	1980	87	84	87	99	97	74	67	76
		1990	90	88	94	99	100 <sup>f</sup>	86	75	82
		1994-1998 <sup>b</sup>	94	92	100	98	98 <sup>f</sup>	86	82	84
	Primary &	1990	"	"	88	93	98	82	75	82

	Secondary	1996	"	"	91	85	95	86	94	87
<b>Gender equality in adult literacy</b> [female literacy rate as a % of male literacy rate]		1980	75	73	71	95	94	50	48	57
		1990	79	78	82	96	97	61	58	67
		1998	83	82	86	97	98	70	63	75
<b>Infant and Child Mortality</b>										
<b>Infant mortality rate</b> [per 1,000 live births]		1980	80	87	55	41	61	95	119	115
		1990	60	65	40	28	41	60	87	101
		1998	54	59	35	22	31	45	75	92
<b>Under-5 mortality rate</b> [per 1,000 live births]		1980	123	135	82	"	78	136	180	188
		1990	87	91	55	34	49	71	121	155
		1998	75	79	43	26	38	55	89	151

<b>Maternal Mortality</b>										
<b>Maternal mortality ratio</b> [per 100,000 live births]		1990	430	480	210	95	190	320	610	980
<b>Births attended by health staff</b> [% of total]		1990	"	49	58	"	"	58	39	"
		1996-1998 <sup>b</sup>	52	47	"	92	78	62	29	38
<b>Reproductive Health</b>										
<b>Contraceptive prevalence</b> [% of women 15-49]		1997-1998 <sup>b</sup>	49	48	52	67	59	55	49	21
<b>HIV prevalence<sup>9</sup></b> [Percentage of adults (15-49 years) living with HIV/AIDS in 1999]		1999	1.1	"	0.07	0.14	"	0.13	"	8.0
<b>Environment</b>										
<b>National strategies for sustainable development<sup>h</sup></b> [countries with effective processes for sustainable		1998	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

development]										
<b>Safe water</b> [% of population with access]	Urban	1990-98 <sup>b</sup>	90	89	95	"	88	97	86	77
	Rural	1990-98 <sup>b</sup>	62	62	58	"	42	72	78	39
	Total	1990-98 <sup>b</sup>	72	72	69	"	78	85	80	50
<b>Forest Area</b> [% of National Surface Area]		1990	30	29	25	36	49	4	14	23:
		1995 <sup>j</sup>	25	26	24	36	45	1	16	17
<b>Biodiversity: land area protected</b> [% of total land area]		1994 <sup>i</sup>	6.7	5.1	6.2	3.6	6.5	3.0	4.4	5.8
		1996 <sup>j</sup>	6.6	5.3	6.9	3.2	7.3	2.2	4.5	6.2
<b>Energy efficiency: GDP per unit of energy use</b>		1990	"	"	"	0.7	"	1.5	"	"
		1997	"	"	"	0.8	"	1.3	"	"
<b>Industrial Carbon Dioxide emissions</b> [tonnes per capita]		1980	3.4	1.5	1.4	"	2.4	3.0	0.4	0.9
		1990	3.3	1.7	2.0	"	2.2	3.3	0.7	0.9
		1996	4.0	2.5	2.7	7.4	2.5	3.9	0.9	0.8



<b>General Indicators</b>										
<b>Life Expectancy at Birth</b> [in years]	Female	1980	64	60	67 <sup>å</sup>	72	68	60	54	49
		1990	68	65	69	74	71	66	59	52
		1998	69	67	71	74	73	69	63	52
	Male	1980	59	56	64 <sup>å</sup>	63	62	57	54	46
		1990	63	62	66	65	65	63	59	49
		1998	65	63	67	65	67	66	62	49
	Total	1980	61	58	66 <sup>å</sup>	68	65	59	54	48
		1990	65	63	67	69	68	65	59	50
		1998	67	65	69	69	70	68	62	50
<b>Fertility Rate</b> [births per woman]		1980	3.7	4.1	3.0	2.5	4.1	6.2	5.3	6.6
		1990	3.1	3.4	2.4	2.3	3.1	4.8	4.1	6.0
		1998	2.7	2.9	2.1	1.6	2.7	3.5	3.4	5.4
<b>GNP per capita</b> [Atlas method (current US\$)]		1980	2,530	790	330	"	2,110	2,040	270	650
		1990	4,030	940	570	"	2,250	1,720	380	550

		1998	4,890	1,250	990	2,200	3,860	2,030	430	510
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<sup>a</sup> Combined figure for low and middle income countries used as a proxy for developing countries with the exception of the indicators for persistence to Grade 5, maternal mortality ratio and safe water where a true developing countries figure is used.

<sup>b</sup> Data refer to the most recent year available within the specified period.

<sup>c</sup> At 1993 purchasing power parities (PPPs) adjusted to current price terms

<sup>d</sup> The poverty gap is the mean shortfall below the poverty line (counting the non-poor as having zero shortfall), expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. The measure reflects the depth of poverty as well as its incidence.

<sup>e</sup> Data are for nearest available year.

<sup>f</sup> Figures are based on net enrolment ratios.

<sup>g</sup> The indicator actually relates to HIV prevalence in 15 to 24 year old pregnant women. However, until satisfactory data coverage is achieved on this indicator, the prevalence of HIV infection in all adults will be used.

<sup>h</sup> These data relate to environmental action plans. These are not the same as national

sustainable strategies for development but are a proxy until further information is available.

i Relates to the year in which the strategies or action plans were adopted.

j Data may refer to earlier years

" = Not available

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**Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women, 2000, 51 p.**

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**The international development targets**

**Department for International Development**

## **Foreword by the Secretary of State**

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