

How do donors collectively address gender issues in joint coordination mechanisms at country level?

The **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD)** commits donors and partner countries to reform aid management and delivery in order to strengthen its development outcomes. Through the Declaration, development partners commit to implementing common arrangements for planning, funding, disbursing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on donor activities and aid flows at country level. To respond to these requirements, donors have collectively put in place a number of **mechanisms** to better coordinate and manage aid, such as:

- joint assistance strategies (JASs);
- collective financing modalities, such as general and direct budget support (GBS/DBS) and sector budget support (SBS);
- sector-wide approaches (SWAPs);
- memorandums of understanding (MoUs);
- performance assessment frameworks (PAFs);
- monitoring mechanisms, such as joint sector reviews and GBS reviews; and
- dialogue structures.

The research conducted under the European Commission(EC)/UNIFEM programme 'Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting into the Aid Effectiveness Agenda' assessed to what extent **these mechanisms addressed and integrated gender issues**. For instance, the reviews considered to what extent:

- JASs and country strategy papers included gender analysis, activities and gender performance indicators;
- gender-sensitive indicators were included in PAFs for funding modalities, such as GBS;
- joint reviews and evaluations discussed and reported on gender equality issues and results; and
- gender equality advocates, gender focal points and officers participated in different dialogue fora.

This paper presents an overview of the joint mechanisms that donors have put in place in the countries reviewed, and how these addressed gender issues.



Joint assistance strategies (JASs)

Donors typically develop a joint assistance strategy (JAS) that provides a framework for collective donor support and identifies the priorities for donor and government cooperation in a country. JASs are typically modelled on the national development plan or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). JASs aim to achieve a clearer division of labour between donors and reduce the duplication of work. They outline the division of labour between donors, designating lead, active, and delegating donor roles within a sector.

The country reviews were not asked to investigate in detail how JASs integrated gender issues. Nevertheless, the **Uganda** review reports that the Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy (UJAS) (2005–009), which provides the parameters for donor support to the implementation of the 2004 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), Uganda's PRSP, commits donors to a number of gender-specific activities. For instance, donors agree to support the implementation of the revised Uganda Gender Policy as well as the Plan of Action on Women, promote gender equity in family, work and community life, and finance a CSO basket fund that supports CSOs that work on addressing issues of gender inequity and vulnerability. While in principle the UJAS forms the basis for donor support to PEAP implementation, in practice donors that provide DBS use the **Poverty Reduction Support Credit** (PRSC), a World Bank budget instrument, as the basis for joint discussions with government. The PRSC is an annual process for donors to link their disbursements to the fulfilment of agreed actions derived from the PEAP. The level of gender sensitivity of the PRSCs has been improving. The fourth, fifth, and sixth PRSCs make explicit commitments to gender, such as supporting the mainstreaming of gender and equity objectives into planning and budgeting,

strengthening women's entrepreneurship and trade, and supporting the implementation of gender-focused activities in the justice, law, and order sectors.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) are agreements that donors sign collectively or individually with a country government, indicating an intended common line of action. Performance assessment frameworks (PAFs) of MoUs can include gender-sensitive indicators and actions. This is the case in Mozambique, to discussed in the section 'performance assessment frameworks and gender-sensitive indicators'.

Financing modalities

With the PD, donors made a commitment to increase the use of new aid modalities, and channel money through the government budget using a government's own systems. **General budget support (GBS)** is donor money that is channelled into the main government budget and is not earmarked for particular expenditures. GBS finances the national development plan and uses the country's existing systems and processes. If funding is primarily targeted to sectors where policies are gender-sensitive, the funding should promote gender equality. **Sector budget support (SBS)** is donor money allocated to a particular sector, and is one way to financially support a sector-wide approach (SWAp). A **SWAp** is a way means of working together between government, donors, and other sector stakeholders. SWAPs aim to broaden national ownership over public sector policy and resource allocation decisions. They aim to increase coherence between policy, spending, and results, and reduce transaction costs.¹ SBS funds should be spent according to an agreed sectoral policy, although funds are not earmarked for particular activities or purposes.

Performance assessment frameworks (PAFs)

Where GBS is significant, GBS donors generally monitor the government's performance through an agreed set of **indicators** in the **performance assessment framework (PAF)**, specified through a partnership memorandum between the donors and the recipient country. Generally, the indicators/performance criteria are drawn from the country's national development plan or PRSP. One way to integrate gender issues into PAFs is through gender-sensitive indicators. Gender-sensitive indicators can be sex-disaggregated or gender-specific. A sex-disaggregated indicator provides separate measures for males and females on a specific indicator, such as literacy rates. A gender-specific indicator is specifically relevant to women or men: indicators on gender-based violence are an example.² According to the reviews, PAFs mostly included sex-disaggregated indicators from the education and health sectors. Where PAFs included gender-specific indicators, these were typically related to maternal mortality.

Mozambique was reported to be the only country amongst those reviewed that had a **specific 'gender' indicator in the PAF of the MoU for GBS**. The PAF is used to evaluate the performance of the Government in the annual joint review. The indicators and goals in the MoU are taken from the matrix of Mozambique's PRSP indicators. One of the forty indicators in the 2008-2009 PAF relates to gender: "PES/OE (Economic and Social Plan/ State Budget) and BdPES (PES implementation report) in which the actions, budgets and progress in gender are reflected". The previous PAF (2006-2008) had an indicator to monitor the Government's commitment to promoting gender equality: 'Approval and implementation of the National Gender Policy and Strategy for Implementation'. The current PAF also has specific women/girls indica-

tors from the health and education sectors. Because these indicators are included in the PAF, progress on gender equality is inevitably discussed in the annual and mid-annual reviews. Especially the education and health sector reviews have devoted specific attention to gender issues.

In **Uganda**, the development partner economist group did not agree on including a gender-sensitive indicator in the Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy (UJAS) PAF. The group argued that as the UJAS PAF only included aggregate indicators, it was difficult to agree on a suitable aggregate gender indicator.

The **EC/United Nations (UN) Partnership on Gender Equality, Development and Peace** has developed a set of gender-sensitive indicators to monitor implementation of the five PD indicators (ownership, alignment and harmonization and managing for results and mutual accountability) from a gender equality viewpoint. The existing PD indicators and its progress reporting have not adequately captured results and impacts on gender equality. The EC/UN indicators aim to help assess the implementation and impact of the aid effectiveness agenda on development goals, such as gender equality. The suggested indicators measure issues such as the participation of women's groups in national development planning, implementation, and monitoring, the extent to which gender equality targets are integrated into national development strategies, the internal and external resource allocations for gender equality priorities and women's needs, as well as the 'gender' results of programme-based approaches and other aid delivery modalities.³

Joint monitoring and evaluation

A number of joint monitoring and review processes for GBS and JASs were found in the study countries. These processes exist

alongside the standard processes associated with developing, implementing, monitoring, and auditing of government budgets that exist in any country. In general, the joint processes did not monitor or report on progress on gender equality concerns, except in the case of **Mozambique**. Reviews were typically conducted between the government and donors, with limited participation from civil society organizations.

For instance, in **Mozambique** donors monitor the **performance of the Government** during two annual **Joint Reviews**. The first annual review follows the production of the implementation report of the Economic and Social Plan and establishes a shared understanding on performance, which determines new financial commitments. The mid-year review is held prior to the submission of the Economic and Social Plan and State Budget to the Parliament. The mid-year review focuses on dialogue related to forward planning, budgeting, and agreement of the PAF. Working groups prepare reviews on the different themes of Mozambique's PRSP. These themes are macro-economy and poverty, governance, human capital, economic development and cross-cutting issues (gender is one of these and a gender working group also exists). Fórum Mulher, a women's organization, is involved in the gender working group and also tries to raise gender issues in other working groups. As the GBS PAF includes a number of gender-sensitive indicators, gender issues are inevitably discussed in these meetings.

In **Tanzania**, the annual **GBS review** similarly monitors and assesses the Government's and the GBS donors' performance in meeting their commitments agreed in the GBS performance monitoring framework. The review determines the financial commitments of GBS donors for the following year. The review is focused on structural issues, such as whether sector reviews have been undertaken on time, rather than the content

of sector policies and programmes. Only the Government and the 14 donors who contribute to GBS participate in the review, while the UN participates as an observer. A few civil society organizations were invited to the opening and closing sessions of the 2007 review, but did not have access to background documents beforehand. To date, the reviews have not addressed gender issues. To address this, the Gender Coordination Group has suggested that sector reviews incorporate a performance rating on gender issues.

The country reports did not discuss **review and evaluation** mechanisms for **donor JASs** in detail. Tanzania and Mozambique were an exception. In Tanzania, the JAS is monitored and evaluated annually and at mid-term stage by the Government and donors in consultation with non-state actors. The final review of JAST implementation is undertaken in each five-year cycle by the Independent Monitoring Group (IMG). In Mozambique, the performance of the donors themselves is evaluated annually. As the donor-specific PAF has no indicators related to gender, gender issues are not discussed in this review.

Joint dialogue structures

To respond to calls for enhanced harmonization and coordination of aid, donors have set up a number of **coordination, theme, and working groups** in the countries reviewed. Groups are usually concerned with a specific sector or theme and draw their membership from government and key donor agencies, in some cases including civil society organizations and UN agencies. Coordination mechanisms and groups exist for **planning or aid coordination, information sharing and performance monitoring (such as for GBS) purposes**. In countries that receive substantial aid volumes, specifically in new aid modalities, and have a large numbers of donors, the structures exist for the pur-

pose of joint planning. In less aid-dependent countries joint dialogue structures may also exist, but are likely to focus more on information sharing.

Gender coordination groups

In most of the countries donors have also established structures or **groups** that have **responsibility** for supporting the implementation of the country's **gender equality objectives**. The groups are often co-chaired by the lead donor on gender issues and a UN agency. In general, gender groups have limited influence over decisions about financing, and may not have the links or representation in the more high-level dialogue structures, such as the mechanisms for reviewing GBS support. In addition, gender focal points and advocates may have weak representation in other sectoral dialogue groups.

Specific gender groups were found, for instance in **Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Mozambique**. **Uganda** has a Donor Coordination Group on Gender since 2001; this convenes 18 bilateral and multilateral donor organizations and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Group plans to establish a basket fund to support gender equality interventions. **Rwanda** has a cross-cutting issues cluster among the 13 clusters that participate in the joint review, strategic

national gender equality objectives. It seeks to mainstream gender into national systems and processes, such as budgeting and public expenditure and sector reviews.

Mozambique has a Gender Coordination Group amongst the 29 working groups set up for the Joint Review process, which has representation from government, donor and civil society.

The case of the **Tanzanian** donor gender group demonstrates how gender groups do not often have direct representation in the main economic decision-making forums. Representatives from thematic sub-groups (such as the one for Gender Equality) do not directly attend the MKUKUTA (Tanzania's PRSP) Cluster group meetings. Instead, they raise issues with sectoral development partner groups, which are then supposed to bring up the issues in the Cluster group meetings. The ability to participate in Cluster group discussions is important, because these discussions feed into the MKUKUTA and the GBS reviews, which in turn determine donor financial commitments.

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