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SDC-Gender Equality Network

SDC GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK NEWSLETTER

No. 1, March 2015



Beijing Review and the post-2015 development agenda

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues

I am very happy to announce the **SDC Gender Newsletter No. 1**, on the occasion of the 8th of March, the international women's day in 2015. Why, you may ask, do we need another newsletter? The main objective is to communicate not only between the field and the headquarters, but also among yourselves who are working for or are a partner of SDC in different parts of the world. Often I learn about excellent initiatives, interesting assessments or dedicated action plans only by chance. Hence, the aim of this newsletter is to provide a platform for regular communication and exchange that will help make the SDC gendernet a lively and resourceful community of practice. The newsletter will be published three times a year. It will always include a focus article on a specific topic, information from the Gender Focal Point and the headquarters and a section with news and inputs from the cooperation offices. There will also be a part with references to events, publications and links; we thank all those who contributed to this first edition and look forward to many more contributions in the editions to come. With the first newsletter we also would like to announce the launch of our newly revised [gender website](#). The site is not yet fully completed, but please take a moment to surf the site and give us your feedback on what you like and what you miss. SDC has also revised its thematic website on gender. You find the new site [here](#).

This number's **key topic** is Beijing+20 and the year 2015 – a year that is very special from a gender equality and women's rights perspective: 20 years ago the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action was launched at the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. This visionary and pioneering platform contains objectives in twelve critical areas of concern and guides states in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. 2015 is also the year that the Millennium Development Goals are coming to an end and the new framework for sustainable development goals will be adopted by the international community. Full equality between women and men is a key ingredient to achieve these new goals. Moreover, in 2015 we also celebrate the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It is thus a good moment to take stock: What has been achieved in the last two decades and what are the old and the new challenges to be tackled? Our lead article, authored by Flurina Derungs from the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG) at the University of Bern, looks at stakes around Beijing+20 and what the lessons are for the new development agenda.

Ursula Keller, Senior Gender Policy Advisor SDC

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«The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action are as relevant today as they were twenty years ago»¹

In Beijing in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women around 50'000 participants from 189 states adopted the **Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action** (BPfA). Considered to be the boldest and the most progressive normative framework ever adopted for advancing women's rights and achieve gender equality, the BPfA promotes actions in twelve critical areas of concern (see box on p. 4). Where do we stand today in relation to the promises made in Beijing in 1995?

In March 2015 at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) the international community will meet in New York for the **review of the implementation of the BPfA**. What were the major achievements in advancing gender equality in the last two decades and where do the challenges remain? What further action is needed until full equality of women and men and women's human rights become a reality?

Let us highlight some of these **major achievements and challenges** during the last two decades:² Since the adoption of the platform, the **education level** of women and girls has increased substantially around the world. However, many girls worldwide drop out of school and gender disparities are even more prevalent at higher levels of education. Poverty, customs, distance to schools, child marriage, sanitation and care-duties exacerbate gender gaps in education. Despite the progress in women's **health**, maternal mortality, HIV / AIDS as well as a high amount of **violence against women and girls** worldwide remain a big problem. Although women's status in the **labour market** is improving while more and more women are entering paid employment in non-agricultural sectors and they get access to productive resources, gender disparity still largely exists and progress is very uneven. While women's share of paid employment has increased globally from 35-40%, only one in five non-agricultural jobs were performed by women in the Middle East and in South Asia. Women are also more likely to engage in vulnerable employment, to work part-time, be unemployed and work in precarious jobs. They also earn less than men, lack basic social security and are underrepresented in economic management positions. In rural societies, women do account for 43% of agricultural production and for 60-80% of food production and thus form a central pillar to secure food and nutrition in rural communities. However, more women and girls are disadvantaged in terms of access to healthy and nutritious food. Moreover, the issue of land – as we all know through the capitalisation process among the Gender Equality Network in 2014 – is highly gendered. Even if women's **political participation** increases by more and more women becoming ministers, members of parliaments and heads of states, glass ceiling largely remains. Women are not only underrepresented in economic decision-making, but also in political decision-making.

The gendered differences in the use of time and the **provision of care**, which is all over the world still largely in the hands of women, is a highly critical domain and a root cause of gender inequality. Who spends how much time for household work and care duties is strongly influenced by social norms and gender roles in society. In poor and rural areas, household work is particularly time-intensive and most of it is carried out by women and girls. A World Bank study on 'Time Use and Poverty' in 25 Sub-

¹ This quote stems from the Co-Chairpersons' Conclusions of the Beijing+20 Regional Review Meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, 6 – 7 November 2014 (37.).

² The facts and figures in this article are based on the [Millennium Development Report of the UN \(2014\)](#) and the UN Women Statement for the post-2015 session 17 – 20 Feb 2015 as well as on the different preparation documents for the 59th session of the CSW such as the [Secretary-General Report \(2015\)](#), the different [Regional Review Reports \(2014 and 2015\)](#) and the [Swiss Beijing+20 Review \(2014\)](#).

Saharan African countries³ estimates that women spend at least 16 million hours a day collecting drinking water (and men and children an additional 6 respectively 4 million hours). The many hours women spend fetching drinking water, cooking and child caring are the hours which are not available for education, income-generating productive work or for political activities. The heavy burden of unpaid care work thus enhances the cycle of poverty. **Poverty** and mainly extreme poverty – as we all know – wears a female face!

Today, 20 years after Beijing, the claims of the platform therefore have not lost any of its visionary power and actuality. A lot has been achieved, but many challenges still remain. What is the **way forward** until full equality of women and men and women’s human rights become a reality?

We have to build on our achievements while simultaneously moving forward on the road to gender equality. The new framework of **sustainable development goals post-2015** is a unique opportunity to do so. It needs to be in full compliance with the BPfA together with other existing women’s human rights obligations and standards. The core consists of a strong stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment. This stand-alone goal addresses the topics and issues which were missing in the Millennium Development Goals, namely, women’s economic empowerment, equal voice and participation in decision-making and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence based on gender. Furthermore, gender-sensitive targets and indicators need to be integrated into all other goals of the agenda. This high level of commitment should be reflected in the **strong accountability mechanisms** and the equally ambitious financing mechanisms – i.e. the allocation of sufficient and sustainable resources to achieve gender equality (see also News from the Gender Focal Point on p. 5). Finally, the **root causes of gender inequality** – power imbalances between women and men, gender stereotypes, unequal distribution of unpaid care work – should be at the centre of any intervention, rather than the mere symptoms. To eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable development for all, both men and women need to be able to develop their potentials and resources on equal footing. In this process, women are not to be instrumentalized as ‘untapped economic resources’, but should be empowered by all means – socially, economically and politically.

Flurina Derungs, Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies, University of Bern

THE BEIJING PLATFORM OF ACTION : TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Women and Poverty	Women in Power and Decision-making
Education and Training of Women	Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women
Women and Health	Human Rights of Women
Violence against Women	Women and the Media
Women and Armed Conflict	Women and the Environment
Women and the Economy	The Girl-child

More information: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform

³ World Bank Working Paper No. 73 (2006). [Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa](#).

NEWS FROM THE GENDER FOCAL POINT

Policy Issues: Post-2015 and Financing for Development

A stocktaking session was launched at the end of January 2015 to announce the upcoming negotiation process of **the new development agenda post-2015**, which is to be adopted by the General Assembly in September this year. The negotiation is based on the report of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (see Publications, Events & Links on p. 8). Throughout this process, Switzerland will continue to demand a strong and transformative Goal 5 on Gender Equality as well as the integration of substantive gender elements into all other goals. However, we are also closely following the parallel process, by preparing for the 3rd International Conference on **Financing for Development** (FfD) which will take place in Addis Abeba in July 2015. The high level of ambition for gender equality in the post-2015 agenda should be matched by equally ambitious financing mechanisms. We need to build political momentum to ensure that gender equality will be an essential pillar in the new financing plan for the development agenda, which will underpin the implementation of the post-2015 goals. We are active indeed: We have drafted a [joint statement](#) with other countries that was read at the first drafting session of the FfD process. At the upcoming 59th session of the CSW in March 2015, Switzerland will organize the side event 'From commitment to action: Financing for gender equality in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda'.



A craftswoman transferring her knowledge to a young man in Masaya, Nicaragua (SDC Nicaragua)

Upcoming e-discussions

The next e-discussion is planned for end of March or beginning of April. We would like to learn about your knowledge and experiences on gender in local governance and fiscal decentralization processes. We will have another discussion in the joint working group with the Conflict & Human Rights Network and will launch a learning and capitalization process on SDC's gender-based violence programs. Further information will follow.

Gender in the Annual Reports 2014

The gender dimension is well visible in the majority of the reports and many reports provide sex-disaggregated data and refer to gender results on the outcome and result statement level. Compared to the reports in 2013, this is a positive trend as it reflects the efforts made by the cooperation offices to better integrate gender into their reporting. Major challenges nonetheless remain, in particular on how to capture transformative changes and the qualitative interpretation and contextualization of data and results. An external quality assessment shows that in all domains of interventions from all reports assessed, 25% present an adequate gender analysis and another 59% have some elements of gender included (i.e. some sex-disaggregated data). Key lessons for next year are 1) to focus on less, but strategically relevant data and developments and 2) to pay particular attention to integrate gender systematically into the new cooperation strategies.

New strategic guidelines on gender

The SDC directorate adopted the new strategic guidelines 2015 -2018 on Gender in December. Against the backdrop of the review of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), the Swiss Position on Gender Equality in the post-2015 agenda and SDC's main areas of intervention in three thematic priorities guiding our work in the coming years have been defined:

1) **Gender and women's rights in conflict and fragile contexts** with a particular focus on protection and prevention of gender-based violence in post-conflict situations and humanitarian crisis while simultaneously strengthening women's participation and the inclusion of a gender dimension in local peacebuilding, governance and state building processes. Furthermore, the inclusion of men and a thorough analysis of dynamics around gender roles and masculinities need particular attention in conflict-affected situations.

2) **Equal access to natural resources, skills and income in rural economies and urban areas**, with a specific emphasis on two major topics of SDC: First, gender in agriculture, food security and climate change adaptation with a strong focus on issues on land governance and women's access to land; Second, gender aspects in private sector development to promote women's economic empowerment and their access to decision making in value chains, markets, services and skills. Issues around unpaid care work are of particular importance within these thematic domains.

3) **Gender, political participation and local governance** with the aim of strengthening women's political empowerment in democratization processes and enhance women's participation and gender-responsiveness in local governance, public financial management and fiscal decentralization (incl. gender-responsive budgeting initiatives).

On **an institutional level**, SDC is committed to strengthening gender in policy dialogues, both in bilateral relations with partner countries and on the international level, to improving visibility and accountability for transformative gender results and to promoting institutional learning and capacity building to enhance gender-responsive implementation in the field. Finally, the inclusion of men in all gender work is given a high priority. Currently, the document is available only in German but it will be translated into both English and French.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY NETWORK

Nairobi

Regional gender workshop

Gender is a transversal theme for the HoA strategy. There was a need to develop a mutual understanding on SDC's gender mainstreaming policies and tools and to practice how to translate these concepts into projects and programmes within our working context. A two-day gender training for our program team and gender focal points from other COOFs in the OSA division was organized to address this issue. The workshop was a success and has enabled the team to understand how to integrate gender systematically into their work in different domains.

More information: SDC Cooperation Office Nairobi, catherine-wangechi.muriithi@eda.admin.ch

Humanitarian Aid

Gender Focal Points in the field are encouraged to establish contact with Gen Cap advisors

In January, SDC/HH decided to support the GenCap facility with CHF 200'000 for 2015. GenCap was launched by the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2007. Its overall mission is to facilitate and strengthen the capacity and leadership of humanitarian actors to undertake and promote gender equality programming. It further aims at ensuring the distinct needs of women, girls, boys and men by analyzing these needs and taking them into account in humanitarian action at global, regional and country levels. To this end, GenCap deploys senior gender advisers to UN agencies on the ground (often OCHA and/or the Humanitarian Country Team) for a period of several months to provide strategic and operational support on gender issues. Simultaneously, GenCap provides training on gender in humanitarian action to humanitarian personnel and deploys regional gender-based violence experts for joint programming in this field. GenCap is jointly run by OCHA (GenCap support unit) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (roster management of senior gender experts). As of October 2014, GenCap had advisers based in Jordan (Syria crisis), South Sudan, CAR, etc. and three regional GBV advisers (posted in UNFPA offices). As Gender Focal Points in the field, you and/or your office heads are encouraged to establish contact with GenCap advisers on the ground to make sure our HQ support to GenCap is capitalized upon by our field operations (e.g. by knowledge exchange with GenCap advisers, and, if possible, by participating in GenCap trainings).

More information: SDC Headquarter, Humanitarian Aid and SHA, sascha.mueller@eda.admin.ch, www.humanitarianresponse.info/coordination/genicap

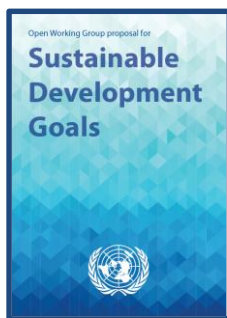
Mongolia

Gender equality in Mongolia

Daniel Valenghi from COOF Mongolia shares the following two documents: A desk study on gender equality in Mongolia that has been conducted by SDC Mongolia together with the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) and the gender action plan 2015 of the sustainable artisanal mining project that is considered as best practice. Please contact Daniel Valenghi to receive the documents and for further information.

More information: SDC Cooperation Office Mongolia, daniel.valenghi@eda.admin.ch

PUBLICATIONS, EVENTS & LINKS



Publications on post-2015

In September 2015 the general assembly of the UN will adopt the new sustainable development goals post-2015 (see also News from the Gender Focal Point). With regard to this process different documents have been published on this issue, some of which we highlight below:

Open Working Group: [Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals](#) (July 2014)

Women's Major Group: [8 Red Flags following the conclusion of the OWG](#)

UN Secretary-General: [Synthesis Report](#) (Dec 2014)

Women's Major Group: [Response to the Secretary-General Synthesis Report](#)

UN Women: [World Survey on the role of women in development 2014](#) (2014)

Switzerland: [Swiss Position on a Framework for Sustainable Development post-2015](#) (June 2014)

Switzerland: [Swiss Position on Gender Equality in the post-2015 Agenda](#) (Jan 2014)



Publications on Beijing+20

In March 2015 the community of states will review the Beijing Platform of Action at the 59th session of the CSW in New York. You might be interested in the implementation of the BPfA in your own country? Or learn more about the achievements, challenges and the way forward in Switzerland? Or about the views of different experts in the Regional Review Meetings in all parts of the world? There is plenty of information in the internet around the Beijing+20 review. Furthermore, UNRISD is launching a series of think pieces on Beijing+20 with provocative and critical insights from Switzerland, India, Argentina, South Africa, Italy, Brazil, Bangladesh and many other countries.

59th CSW: [Information on the CSW in general](#)

UN Secretary-General: [Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the BPfA](#)

Regional reports: [Reports from Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Carribean, Asia and the Pacific as well as Western Asia](#)

Reports of Switzerland: Report Beijing+20, Evaluation of the Swiss Action Plan ([German](#) and [French](#))

UNRISD: [Think Piece Series](#)

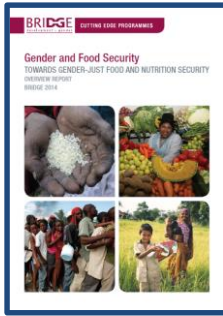


Working Paper Gender & Land

The latest publication of the Gender Equality Network was launched in December 2014. «Gender & Land – Implications for Sustainable Development. A working paper for development practitioners» was developed by the ICFG together with SDC and draws on the experiences and knowledge of the SDC participatory process of institutional learning. It provides an overview of the critical issues related to gender and land, and outlines major trends in the policy context and presents different approaches and good practices of SDC's experiences on how to address these challenges in development cooperation. Thanks a lot again to all

those who have contributed to this publication!

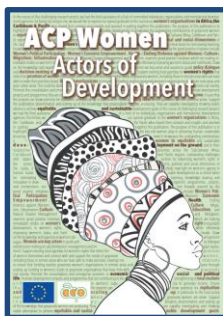
SDC, ICFG: [Working Paper Gender & Land](#) (2014)



Gender & Food Security

Also in December 2014 BRIDGE, together with SDC, published the latest cutting edge pack. «Gender and Food Security. Towards gender-just food and nutrition security», a cutting edge overview report was elaborated with 40 experts on food and nutrition security and gender from around the world and makes the case for a new, gender-awareness of food security. Showcasing effective and promising existing strategies, the report suggests that responses need to be rights-based, gender-just and environmentally sustainable in order to truly achieve food security for all in gender equitable ways.

SDC, BRIDGE: [Gender and Food Security. Overview Report](#) (2014)



Best Practices of women's empowerment

Stéphanie Aubin from the Regional Office Southern Africa suggests an interesting document called «ACP Women. Actors of Development». The publication presents and analyses best practices of women empowerment (with a bottom-up approach) in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands and includes a list of key bibliographical sources.

ACP: [ACP Women. Actors of Development](#)

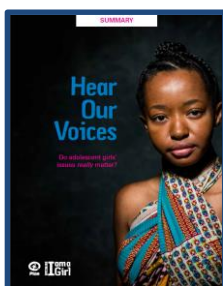


Briefings from the GADN network

Jose Luis Sandino from COOF Nicaragua suggests two Briefings from the GADN network that were a sort of eye-opener for him and could be for others. The briefings are very well written and informative on gender mainstreaming in the context of an organisation and on the policy dialogue on care economy.

Briefing 5.2014: [Untangling gender mainstreaming](#)

Briefing 6.2014: [Unpaid care](#)



Worldwide study on adolescent girls

Plan International spoke directly with over 7,000 adolescent girls and boys (aged 12-16) in 11 countries across four regions. The purpose of the study was to help girls, communities and Plan International to understand the key issues that adolescent girls face today by giving the opportunity to express themselves in their own words. The study's results vividly depict the daily realities of girls in these contexts.

Plan: [Hear our voices. Do adolescent girl's issues really matter?](#)