



## Briefing Document

# Gender & Financing for Sustainable Development – after Addis Ababa: What is the role and responsibility of Switzerland?

Tuesday, 20 October 2015, 14:00 – 16:00

SDC, Freiburgstrasse 130, Berne (Room A2023)

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### **Traverse Events**

Traverse is an SDC platform for controversial public debate on themes related to international cooperation. High-profile personalities from the scientific, political, economic, societal, and cultural sectors are invited to discuss current issues from a wide range of viewpoints. Traverse is an opportunity to air differences of opinion and to get involved in critical and self-critical debate. Participants include staff of the SDC and other Federal offices, as well as representatives from the scientific, cultural, political, and economic communities, NGOs, and the interested public.

### **Thematic Background**

On 25 September in New York, 150 UN member states adopted the *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*. Consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that replace the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the new agenda defines the global framework for sustainable development until 2030, combining the social, economic and ecological dimension of development. From the onset, gender equality was firmly on the agenda. For Switzerland, gender equality is imperative for the realization of sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and real prosperity. None of the 17 goals can be fully achieved without the inclusion of women and girls and their contribution as agents of change.

Back in July this year, the international community also adopted the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Sustainable Development*. The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)* provides the framework for financing and implementing the sustainable development goals. The two processes towards the SDGs and the AAAA were closely interlinked and coordinated to ensure coherence between the 17 goals and the means for their implementation in the countries.

From a Swiss perspective, key issues of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* are: 1) The stronger focus on domestic resource mobilization as the most important source for financing sustainable development – meaning that funds for development projects are generated by developing countries themselves e.g. through improved tax systems, value added tax (VAT) or by investing remittances<sup>1</sup>; 2) The importance of the private sector through the contribution of businesses and their private investments for financing sustainable development; 3) The commitment to uphold the UN target that countries contribute a minimum of 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) for official development aid; 4) And finally, the fight against illicit financial flows; as every year billions of dollars are lost to developing countries due to corruption, tax evasion or criminal activities<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in his or her home country. Money sent home by migrants competes with international aid as one of the largest financial inflows to developing countries. Workers' remittances are a significant part of international capital flows, especially with regard to labor-exporting countries.

<sup>2</sup> Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimates that illicit financial flows from developing country 201-2010 sum up to USD 5,9 trillion while official Development aid during the same period were USD 677 billion. (<http://www.gfintegrity.org/category/illicit-financial-flows/>)

Also for the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, Switzerland has been active, together with other states and with UN Women, in advocating for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into the Agenda. An inclusive and equitable economic growth and poverty eradication will not be possible without true gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The key aspects of the Action Agenda with regard to gender equality are: 1) The support of policies that help to reduce and eliminate existing gender inequalities and therefore help to challenge traditional gender stereotypes and inequalities; 2) The promotion of a public financial management (tax system, budgeting, expenditures) that takes into account specific situations and needs of women and men and their roles in society; 3) The creation of an enabling environment for the economic empowerment of women - this includes, amongst others, access to land, property, credits, information, and decision-making processes; 4) And finally, the enhancement of financial literacy and the inclusion of women and girls in financial and budgeting decision making.

As a first step, UN Women initiated *The Addis Ababa Action Plan for Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*. This plan captures the principles and commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* and defines concrete policy actions on domestic and international levels. These include, amongst others, actions for an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, better distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, ensuring minimum wage legislation and equal pay for work of equal value. It also promotes a gender-responsive public finance management. The *Action Plan* was endorsed by a number of Member States, including Switzerland. It suggests policy actions for government and non-government actors, as well as private sector, for more gender-responsive management of public and private resources.

The Traverse will discuss the role and responsibility of Switzerland for the implementation of the *Addis Ababa Action Plan for Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*.

**Relevant questions:**

- 1) Why do we need an *Addis Ababa Action Plan for Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*? What can we expect from it? How should countries use it?
- 2) How can Switzerland contribute to the implementation of the *Addis Ababa Action Plan for Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, both in international cooperation and in the Swiss context?
- 3) What are the role, experiences and the specific expertise of Swiss government and non-governmental actors?
- 4) What are challenges and good practices to be taken in consideration for international cooperation and in the Swiss context?

Further, the panelists will try to answer your questions from the floor.

We are looking forward to a lively debate!

## **Participants:**

### **Michael GERBER**

Ambassador Michael Gerber is Special Envoy for Global Sustainable Development at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). He headed the Swiss delegations in the inter-governmental negotiations at the UN on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the financing of sustainable development. Previously, Michael Gerber headed the Policy and Analysis Division of SDC and was responsible for Switzerland's development programmes in various countries. Michael Gerber studied political philosophy, history and ethnology at the University of Bern.

### **Zohra KHAN**

Zohra Kahn is Senior Policy Advisor for Governance and National Planning at UN Women in New York. UN Women is the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women acts on three fronts: it supports international political negotiations to formulate globally agreed standards for gender equality; it helps UN Member States to implement those standards by providing expertise and financial support; and it assists other parts of the UN system in their efforts to advance gender equality across a broad spectrum of issues related to human rights and human development.

### **Norbert A.E.M. PIJLS**

Norbert Pijls is Project Manager at Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in Pristina, Kosovo and is responsible for implementing the SDC funded LOGOS and DEMOS projects on decentralization and local governance. He studied International Comparative Public Administration at the Universities of Rotterdam and Leiden, The Netherlands and at the Indiana University, USA. Previously, he worked for the Agency for International Cooperation of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities with a focus on promoting political, fiscal and legal decentralization, strengthening local government service provision and encouraging twinning with municipalities in European Union countries.

### **Eva SCHMASSMANN**

Eva Schmassmann is Policy Advisor at Alliance Sud, a cooperative between the six major Swiss aid organizations (Swissaid, Fastenopfer, Brot für alle, Helvetas, Caritas, HEKS) which works for sustainable development. Eva Schmassmann has a master's degree in International Relations from the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) and previously worked on minority rights, resource extraction and free trade agreements.

### **Regula ZWEIFEL**

Regula Zweifel is Co-Vice President of allianceF, an association that was founded in 1900 with the aim to strengthen political and economic equality of women in Switzerland. Regula Zweifel was born in Meiringen and grew up in Martigny. She is owner of the company *cultureimpulse* which manages projects in the field of culture, economy and science. Regula Zweifel has a master from the University of Zurich as a cultural historian. Further, she is a trained gerontologist and a project manager.

## **Moderator:**

### **Sabin BIERI**

Dr. Sabin Bieri is head of the Multidimensional Disparities Cluster at the Center for Development and Environment of the University of Bern. Her topics of research are inequality, poverty, sustainability and rural labour markets. Sabin Bieri has field experience in Bolivia, Mali, Laos, Rwanda, and Nepal, and amongst others, is engaged with Women in Development Europe (WIDE), Switzerland.