

## **Concept Note**

### **Community of Practice: Promotion of Social Inclusion of Women and Gender Equality in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

#### **Background**

International commitments to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment have been reaffirmed in several United Nations Conferences and fora including the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which agreed on a Platform for actions focused on twelve critical areas. The '*Outcome and Way Forward document*' that emanated from Beijing Plus Ten review process in 2004 at the regional level indicated that some progress in addressing gender equality concerns in Africa had been made in some areas such as increased representation in parliaments, gender parity in primary education, and development of national plans. Still, these normative gains have not yet significantly impacted the lives of women, especially those living in rural areas, due to implementation gaps. Gender inequalities still persist in access to social capabilities, economic opportunities and political power and the safeguard of women's human rights is not always guaranteed (ECA, 2004). The persistence of gender inequality in all sectors compounds efforts to achieve of the MDGs in Africa.

#### **Objective of the Community of Practice**

The aim of this community of practice is threefold. First, it aims to stimulate discussion and generation of knowledge on the importance of gender equality to national development by identifying the gaps in reflecting gender equality in the existing MDGs and indicators in African countries. Second, it will be an arena for sharing knowledge on how the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender equality. Third, it will help identify supplementary targets or indicators in the MDGs that can enable more effective measurement of social inclusion of women and gender equality in Africa.

## **Core issues to be discussed**

The core issues to be addressed focus on the following questions; (a) Identifying the major forms of gender inequality and the ways women are socially excluded; (b) Experience sharing on how the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender inequalities and social inclusion of women; and (c) Identifying additional MDG targets and indicators that can be used to monitor gender equality and social inclusion of women in development.

### **First week**

(a) During the first week, activities will be focused on identifying the major forms of gender inequality and the ways women are socially excluded. The following questions will be discussed.

1. What are the major forms of gender inequalities in your countries or sub-region? How do they manifest?
2. In which areas are women excluded from participating in economic and social activities?

### **Second week**

(b) The second week will build on discussions of the first week and explore how the MDGs can be used both as a framework and as an instrument to advance the social inclusion of women. Participants will share experiences how the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender inequalities and social inclusion of women.

1. Do the current MDGs, targets and indicators adequately capture progress made on all forms of gender equality? Please refer to all the MDGs.
2. Which aspects of gender equality are not captured in the MDGs? Please refer to all the MDGs.

### **Third week**

(c) Building on the discussions of the first and second weeks, the third and last week will seek to identify additional MDGs targets and indicators that can be used to monitor gender equality and social inclusion of women in development.

What supplementary targets and indicators can be used to monitor progress on addressing gender inequalities?

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