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Development Account project on strengthening social inclusion, gender equality and health promotion in the Millennium Development Goals in Africa

E-Discussion Series

Summary report of the E-Discussion on Promotion of Social Inclusion of Women and Gender Equality in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa

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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	iv
1 Background to the Community of Practice	1
2 Major forms of gender inequality and the ways in which women are socially excluded.....	2
3 Actions made by countries to address social exclusion of women and improve gender equality, challenges experienced and policy implications.....	4
4 Ways in which the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender inequalities and social inclusion of women and the suggested additional MDG indicators.....	10
5 Conclusions.....	11
Annex A Selected Resources	13

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACGS	African Centre for Gender and Social Development of ECA
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoP	Community of practice
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EDPRS	Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HIV	Human Immune efficiency Virus
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Promotion of Social Inclusion of Women and Gender Equality in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa

1.0 Background to the Community of Practice

Under the project “*Strengthening Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Health Promotion in the Millennium Development Goals in Africa*”, the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGS) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a series of e-discussions aimed at providing a platform for experts on poverty reduction, gender, social protection and inclusion and the MDGs to share experiences, learn from each other, discuss and to the extent possible recommend supplementary targets and indicators for the MDGs in the areas of social inclusion, gender equality, disability, ageing, youth, sexual and reproductive health and health equity. The series began with a four-week-long moderated e-discussion entitled ‘*Promotion of Social Inclusion of Women and Gender Equality in the MDGs in Africa*’, that was held from 21 April to 20 May 2008.

The discussion was hosted by the MDGs Poverty Analysis and Monitoring Section of ACGS whose main task is to conduct research and prepare policy papers on the MDGs and poverty; and provide advisory services on the MDGs to member States, Regional Economic Communities, private sector and other stakeholders on poverty reduction strategies and pro-poor policies; and to prepare annual reports on progress towards achieving the targets of the MDGs in Africa in collaboration with the African Union and the African Development Bank.

This community of practice was made up of fifty experts from twenty-two African countries that are actively involved in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The experts were drawn from governments, non-governmental organizations, universities and development partners. The diversity in experience and area of work of this community of practice (CoP) allowed for an interesting and enriching exchange of ideas and country experiences.

The e-discussion had three objectives. First, to stimulate discussion and generate knowledge on the major forms of social exclusion of women and the reasons for persistent gender inequalities; Second, to be an arena for sharing knowledge on how countries are addressing gender inequalities; And lastly, to 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.

This report provides a synthesis of the e-discussion under three key thematic areas: (i) Major forms of gender inequality and the ways that women are socially excluded; (ii) Actions made by countries to address the social exclusion of women and improve gender equality, the challenges experienced and policy implications; and (iii) Ways in which the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender equality and the social inclusion of women and the suggested additional MDG indicators for more effective monitoring of gender equality and social inclusion of women in development. The last section of the report highlights the main conclusions of the e-discussion.

2.0 Major forms of gender inequality and the ways in which women are socially excluded

Discussants broadly identified that African women are excluded socially, economically and politically. Contributors identified specific ways in which girls and women continue to be excluded. For example, in low-income households, boys are given priority to the limited education budget. Perpetual favoritism of little boys over little girls, translates in adulthood into unequal access to employment, health facilities, and decision-making authority. In some families, girls are continuously alienated from their male siblings, taught that boys are superior while all the while being groomed for marriage. In such contexts, most girls, married off without their knowledge or consent, and are seen as a source of income as the parents receive a bride price.

The participants noted that gender inequalities were still prevalent in accessing sexual and reproductive health. The level of control men have over women, determines the general health and reproductive health status of women. Women have limited access to information regarding their sexual and reproductive health and lack power, thus they are unable to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Women living with disabilities are at a major disadvantage because of the physical and financial difficulties that they face in accessing health facilities. They are also discriminated against through the existing social taboos, particularly in rural areas. Participants also noted that elderly women find themselves increasingly dependent and marginalized in terms of accessing health and other social services because of lack of resources.

Participants indicated that rural women are more prone to social exclusion than urban women. However urban women even educated ones face discrimination when seeking employment, within government institutions, political parties, and in society at large. The discussions noted that gender parity in decision-making had not yet been achieved. In most cases, women can only participate in decision-making discussion only with the consent of their husbands. The discussions also indicated that women are subjected to many types of abuse by their husbands (emotional, verbal and physical) and this weakens their ability to participate in decision-making at household level.

In spite of the rise in the number of women in parliament and involved in politics, women are still not involved in significant numbers in political parties. For example in the Comoros, only 28% of decision-making and senior positions in the country's public administration are filled by women as opposed to 72% that are filled by men, and in middle management and technical positions in the public sector, women fill 29% of posts as opposed to 71% by men.

Lack of economic empowerment of women was identified as a major form of social exclusion of women. As noted by the participants from Burundi, women lack economic independence in the household, thus leaving them dependent on the household income that their husbands bring in and manage. Even if women engage in small-scale trading to supplement the household income, it is the husbands who will decide what to do with the additional income who may also confiscate this sum. The discussion noted that most

often, situations such as these tend to affect women with little or no education. Participants were informed that in Mauritania women constitute 29% of the working population and over 67% of women still remain illiterate. Without appropriate education and skills women are excluded from the labour market. In Madagascar, even with equal qualifications, women still face difficulties in being hired, in being treated equally and in receiving equal pay. In the private sector, senior positions remain exclusively male dominated.

The major reasons behind the continued social exclusion of women were identified to include patriarchal values; family ideals; traditional and cultural norms; lack of economic dependence; limited or lack of access to education; under-representation of women in decision-making positions; and women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights. Participants indicated that the root causes of gender inequality are discriminatory traditional practices and beliefs and lack of education. The discussion noted that the notion of male superiority over women is taught from a young age. Participants also noted that social exclusion of women is mainly an outcome of the low investments in the human capital of women at household and national levels.

The primary cause of gender inequality is rooted in traditions followed by lack of education.

Since the social exclusion of women starts at a very young age when they are still girls they are excluded from accessing the important basic essentials for human development (education, health and economic dependence), this leads to a vicious cycle that perpetuates itself across generations. Detailed contribution on the status of women in Madagascar allows an in-depth and contextualized look at gender inequality (see box 1).

Box 1. Focus on Madagascar

Malagasy society is described as being structured, through both age and sex, which increases the risk of domination of girls and young women. At a socio-cultural level, while children are viewed as sources of wealth, male babies are shown preference as of birth as they represent the future and stability of the family and female babies are groomed to take care of household chores. In marriage, women are exchanged for a bride price. As newlywed couples live in the groom's house, this relegates the women to a position of inferiority. Throughout marriage, women are bound to a traditional division of labor. In some cultural groups, widows are passed over as inheritors of their deceased husbands in favor of the deceased's sons.

In terms of education, although legislative provisions state that girls and boys should have equal access to education, girls tend to be disfavored, as they are given excessive domestic chores; in times of economic hardship they are the ones to work as hired help or in the sex trade thus discontinuing their education; and they tend to be less likely to be registered at birth thus lack the proper documentation to attend school. In addition, girls do not receive sexual and family planning education, thus are ill equipped to protect themselves from early marriage, STDs and unwanted pregnancies. Because girls do not have equal opportunities to an education as boys, as adults, they are not able to benefit from the advantages derived from having superior education. While this mostly applies to

women in rural areas, women from urban areas face discrimination in accessing employment, in attaining high-level positions, in holding decision-making positions and in being involved in political movements.

3.0 Actions made by countries to address social exclusion of women and improve gender equality, the challenges experienced and policy implications

Participants shared experiences on the actions that their countries had taken to address gender inequalities and the social exclusion of women.

3.1 The actions taken by countries

A number of African countries have undertaken several initiatives to address issues of gender inequality and social exclusion of women. This section highlights some of the actions that have been done by governments to address gender inequality and improve the social inclusion of women that were identified in the e-discussion.

Ratification of international and regional instruments – Participants noted that their countries had ratified international and regional instruments that promote gender equality and inclusion of women into development. Some countries had made progress in domesticating the frameworks by developing the relevant policies and laws.

Promotion of gender parity in education: Participants noted that governments, NGOs and development partners had put in place strategies to improve the enrolment of girls in schools such as free primary education, increased female teachers to serve as role models and others. In Chad, girls are starting to outnumber boys in schools and in Burundi while the number of school children increased in general that of the girls particularly rose following free primary education.

Promotion of access to health: Concrete actions are being taken by governments to improve gender parity in access to health and improved access to sexual and reproductive health. In Mali the government is providing free health services for caesarean delivery, and treatment of tuberculosis and free access to malaria treatment for women and children. In Burundi the government has applied a policy that provides free healthcare for children of under-five years and for childbirth. This policy reduced infant mortality on the one hand and maternal deaths on the other hand. In Senegal the provision of free childbirth services including caesarean operations and treatment of fistula in medical centres has greatly improved the health of women (see box 2).

Establishment of legal framework that promotes gender equality: Participants noted that many countries have developed legal frameworks that promote gender equality. The Mali Government adopted a new family code, and other laws that allow greater political representation of women and discourages harmful traditional practices on girls and women.

Gender mainstreaming into national development policies and poverty reduction strategies

Countries have developed or are developing national development plans and poverty reduction strategies that have gender mainstreamed. For example in Rwanda, the Government in cooperation with the UNDP and SNV Netherlands is undertaking an MDGs project that aims to engender the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), and strengthen the capacity of local governments to integrate gender in the planning and implementation of the EDPRS at local levels. In Burundi gender has been mainstreamed in all the national development sectors.

Box 2. Focus on Senegal

In terms of bridging the gender gap the promotion of the social inclusion of women Senegal has, through the implementation of specific measures that target women, registered significant improvements that may inspire other African countries. Amongst others, these include

- Significant advances in training and education levels of women with the rate of primary school completion jumping from 59,7% in 1996 to 71,6% in 2002.
- Policies and programmes that consider all health aspects of women and girls resulting in the mortality rate dropping from 18/1000 in 1988 to 10/1000 in 2002 and in the life expectancy rate going up from 54 to 56.37 years the same period.
- Free childbirth and reproductive health services.
- Improving access to means of production and financial resources for women.
- Increasing the number of women in decision-making, government, parliamentarian, administrative and jurisdiction positions.
- Reinforcement of development actors' gender skills through sensitization and training provided by the Ministry of Women's Affairs' "Gender and Capacity Building Project". The project developed methodological guides that take into account gender issues in development projects and programmes.
- Setting up of a Centre of Support and Training for Women at the community level, under the President's initiative, to tackle the problems of accessing information, to promote and protect women's fundamental rights.
- Planned creation of a national directorate for gender equity and equality as well as a watchdog group protecting the rights of women and children.
- Institutionalized equality in fiscal terms, particularly with regards to salary levels. Progressive mainstreaming of gender in the national budget.
- Rights for women to assume medical responsibility for her husband and children.
- Rights for women to join military, paramilitary, police and customs units.

3.2 Challenges experienced by countries in promoting gender equality and social inclusion of women

High dropout rates of girls in education – Countries are still experiencing high drop out of girls from all levels of education partly because of excessive domestic chores, including transporting water and firewood across long distances; early marriages; need to walk long distances to reach the nearest school; economic poverty of families which

forces girls to work as hired help in other households, or in the sex trade; and lack of a birth certificate which disqualifies girls from sitting in official examinations thereby denying them adequate schooling. In rural areas of Chad for example parents may at any moment withdraw their daughters from school and marry them off, particularly if the groom is wealthy and can afford an expensive bride price.

Strong presence of discriminatory traditional practices - In spite of legal, regulatory and administrative advances, women continue to be dominated because of discriminatory traditional practices. This was noted to be particularly true in rural areas where traditions survive unscathed and where more than 75% of the population lives. Participants also noted that relations between men and women are built on the existing gender discriminatory status, which perpetuates values, stereotypes and taboos, thus shaping the various roles taken by women within the family, the community and the society. It is important that sensitisation changes these values and stereo-types at all levels starting from the household.

Continued existence of legal provisions and laws that do not conform with CEDAW
Participants noted that some countries still have laws and legal provisions that do not conform with CEDAW. These gaps in the legal framework severely constrain promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of women in development.

Lack of enforcement of laws that discourage gender discrimination. Participants noted that although countries had adopted several laws devoted to the legal equality of men and women, women are still discriminated against because of their gender due to inadequate enforcement of the enacted laws. Violence against women and girls for example rape, incest, sexual exploitation of young girls and sexual harassment persists, because perpetrators remain largely unpunished.

Violence against women and girls is a major challenge to achieving gender equality.

Lack of knowledge of the supportive legal provisions

Participants noted that men and women's lack of knowledge of legal provisions that had been enacted to protect the rights of women was a major challenge constraining the efforts that governments had done to create a supportive legal framework. It was also observed that complex legal procedures deter women from asserting their rights.

Inadequate funding and expertise - Lack of adequate funding and human resource expertise to support implementation of programmes required for promoting gender equality. Participants noted that Government budget allocated to promote gender equality is still insignificant when compared to the needs.

Lack of adequate social security and protection – Adequate social security and protection is required to improve the ability of women particularly elderly and women living with disability to access health services.

Limited research work and gender disaggregated data – Participants noted that limited research work (both quantitative and qualitative) has been done in a systematic manner on existing disparities between men and women to inform policymaking. They

highlighted that sex and gender disaggregated data was still scarce even though it is required for calculating indicators required for monitoring progress on gender equality.

Absence of watchdog committees tasked with ensuring that women's fundamental rights are recognized

Participants noted that lack of monitoring of the implementation of the supportive legal framework on the ground was limiting the progress that countries had made in promoting gender equality. It is important to have institutions that can be mandated to closely monitor the progress in promoting women's rights at the national and regional levels.

3.3 Policy implications

To address the challenges experienced by countries in promoting gender equality and social inclusion of women, participants proposed the following policy actions:

- **Addressing the root causes of gender discrimination**

Participants emphasized that it was important to address the root causes of gender discrimination – discriminatory traditions/cultural beliefs. They suggested that promoting a culture of gender equality begins in the household and highlighted the need for increased sensitisation and awareness creation on the importance of providing equal opportunities to education, health and other services for male and female children.

- **Domestication of international and regional provisions on gender equality and improved enforcement**

Full domestication of international and regional provisions on women's rights is essential. Participants suggested that it is important that national legislation fully reflects these provisions. They also highlighted that strict enforcement of the legislation need to be adhered to in order to realise the required change. In addition the discussion noted that it was important to fully sensitize both the public and the law implementers about the existence of the new laws and to provide training and assistance to women to enable them to successfully navigate the complex legal procedures.

- **Elimination of gender based violence**

The discussion suggested that it was important to actively fight violence perpetrated against girls and women and ensure that perpetrators are punished. Participants also emphasized that eradication of social and cultural practices that are harmful towards women and girls was important for achieving gender equality.

- **Improved resources and investment for gender equality and inclusion of women into development**

Participants noted that women's human capital is as valuable as men's human capital. It is therefore important to equally invest in the human capital of both men and women at household and national levels. It is important that governments increase resources towards investments that can bring about gender parity in human capital development. Such investments should also address the rural urban differences in gender inequalities. Participants recommended creating an environment in which the inclusion of girls and women is sustainable and not temporary and erratic.

Women's human capital is as valuable as men's human capital.

- **Recognition of the unpaid work of women**

Recognizing the importance and the value (social and monetary) of the time taken by women to carry-to-term, raise and educate their children and by considering financially remunerating women for this time taken.

- **Improved research and collection of gender disaggregated statistical data**

Participants noted that it is important to systematically collect sex and gender disaggregated data and conduct research that is essential for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the social inclusion of women and also to inform policy-making (see box 3). The discussion emphasized that such research should be of qualitative and quantitative nature. Participants noted that it is important to conduct participatory rapid assessments and gender analysis to establish poverty differentials among boys and girls and women and men.

Box 3. Research to inform policy-making

Example 1: In West Africa, the network “Regentic” recently undertook a study that showed the extent of gender based digital divide in French West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal). This research is informing decision-makers and political appointees responsible for information, communication and technology policies who want to implement inclusive policies that take into account gender-based particularities. In addition, the indicators and targets that measure the digital divide of this pioneer work offers researchers and institutions within the information technology society, the tools, the methodological support and a baseline to measure the evolution equity within society.

Example 2: In Ghana during the implementation of the first Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy a Poverty Social Impact Study was undertaken to establish poverty differentials among various groups. This has led to development of a Social Protection Strategy as well as the establishment of a Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty programme, which is targeted at providing monthly stipends for economically vulnerable women and socially excluded groups.

- **Scaling up measures that economically empower women**

Participants suggested that it is important to scale up measures that can economically empower women. This includes among others measures to improve women’s access to land, property, and technologies and to other means of production. Participants also suggested increasing the proportion of female entrepreneurs who have access to development programmes on training, credit financing, support on marketing and trade. Creating an enabling environment that enables more women to work in the formal sector such as affirmative action measures. Promote equality between men and women on salary, leave, and pension.

Improve women’s rights to land and property.

- **Strengthening women’s political participation and decision-making**

Participants recommended that there is need to institute measures of positive discrimination to improve the number of women participating in national decision-making institutions (president's office, parliament, government) and other key public and private decision-making bodies. Support for women's participation in planning and budgetary processes at national and local levels can strengthen women's influence in decision-making and enhance recognition of their priorities and needs. In this regards strengthening of the national women's councils and local leadership in gender based planning and budgeting is essential.

- **Strengthening girls' and women's access to education and training**

Although some progress had been achieved towards gender parity in primary education, participants suggested that there was need to increase rates of primary and secondary education completion by both boys and girls; enrolment of girls in tertiary and vocational education; and literacy rates amongst boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 25, as well as amongst adult women. Participants also suggested that there is need to introduce in the school curriculum topics on gender equality, gender based violence and STDs/AIDS education.

- **Strengthening girls' and women's access to health including sexual and reproductive health**

Improved geographical and financial access of health services to women is required if development is to become more inclusive of women. Participants suggested the need to increase the access rate to contraceptive methods by women in the reproductive age group; increase the proportion of teenage girls and boys who have access to information as well as high quality reproductive health services; increase the proportion of the male/female population that have access to information, prevention and treatment against HIV/AIDS. The discussion also emphasised improved investments to increase the proportion of households who have access to clean water, sanitation facilities and cleaner sources of energy.

Improve women's and girls' access to health including sexual and reproductive health.

- **Strengthening of social protection**

Participants suggested strengthening of social protection to promote the social inclusion of women in development especially vulnerable women such as women living with disabilities, elderly women and women living with HIV/AIDS.

- **Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms**

The discussion suggested that there is need to strengthen close monitoring of the implementation of the supportive legal and policy frameworks on the ground to ensure that some progress is made in achieving gender equality and the social inclusion of women.

- **Documentation and dissemination of information on promoting gender equality and the social inclusion of women**

Participants noted that sharing of information is important within countries, between countries and internationally and is critical to the success of achieving gender parity.

There is need to intensify documentation of experiences with successful and unsuccessful practices and widely disseminate this information. It is important for member States, development partners and international and regional bodies to identify information exchange systems that can facilitate wide exchange of this information in the region.

4.0 Ways in which the MDGs can be reinforced to address gender inequality and social inclusion of women and suggested additional MDG indicators

The discussion highlighted that gender equality and the social inclusion of women is a key element of any strategy that aims to minimize social conflict and tap into the productive potential of marginalized groups. Meeting the MDGs requires addressing social exclusion and all its manifestations because without tackling the reasons why women are more likely to be poor, it is not possible to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Participants underlined the fact that the present MDGs do not adequately measure gender disparities in all aspects of life and social exclusion of women. They emphasized that gaps in the current MDGs include: violence against women; women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services; the proportion of women living in poverty; women who achieve full and productive employment; the completion rate of different levels of education by girls; equality in wages between men and women; time used by boys and girls, women and men to fetch water and fuel wood; proportion of aid that is used to promote gender equality; and proportion of women to men who are living with HIV/AIDS.

The final aim of the e-discussion was the identification of additional targets and indicators that can be used to monitor progress made in the promotion of gender equality and the social inclusion of women in development. Contributors in the e-discussion suggested that in order for the MDG targets and indicators to be effective in measuring the social inclusion of women into development, countries need to collect sex and gender disaggregated data for the existing MDG indicators. Additionally, participants noted that most quantitative indicators mask qualitative issues that give rise to inequalities and suggested that it is crucial to undertake qualitative analysis to unpack the issues behind the figures.

Participants proposed the following supplementary indicators that can be used to reinforce the MDGs to address gender inequality and social inclusion of women.

Suggested supplementary MDG indicators

MDG 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Proportion of women to men living below the poverty line.
- Proportion of women to men who achieve full and productive employment and decent work.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Gender parity ratio at all levels of education.
- Proportion of girls and boys completing primary and secondary education.

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Incidence of gender based violence per year.
- Wage gap between men and women in formal employment.
- Proportion of women in decision making positions of local government agencies.

MDG4: Reduce child mortality

No additional indicators were suggested that fall under MDG 4.

MDG5: Improve maternal health

- Proportion of women and girls who have access to health centres and quality services.
- Proportion of women in the reproductive age group who have access to contraceptive methods.
- Proportion of teenage girls and boys who have access to information as well as high quality reproductive health services.

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases

- Ratio of women to men aged 15 to 24 who are HIV positive.

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Time used by boys and girls, women and men to fetch water and fuel wood.

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- Proportion of aid or development assistance spent on women's empowerment and gender equality issues.

6.0 Conclusions

While there is a need to appreciate the social, cultural and economical variations that exist among and within African countries in terms of gender relations and the exclusion of women, the contributions allow us to conclude on several matters. Africa cannot achieve the MDGs when the human capital of women (who constitute more than 50% of the continent's population) is underdeveloped. The major forms of social exclusion of women and gender inequalities were identified to include social, economic and political. Women are socially excluded when they fail to access key social services such as health (including sexual and reproductive health), education, skills training opportunities, sanitation, clean fuels and they are subjected to violence. Women are economically excluded when they are discriminated against in the labour market and in accessing factors of production such as capital and technologies; and fail to own land and property. Women are politically excluded when they fail to participate in public and private (in the home) decision-making spheres to bring their priorities and needs into the agenda. The major reasons behind the continued social exclusion of women were identified to include patriarchal values; family ideals; traditional and cultural norms; lack of economic dependence; limited or lack of access to education; under-representation of women in decision-making positions; and women's lack of knowledge of their legal rights.

It is clear from the discussions that although governments have implemented policy and legal reforms and scaled up strategies to promote gender equality, many challenges

abound. Some of the challenges identified include strong presence of discriminatory traditional practices; continued existence of legal provisions and laws that do not conform with CEDAW; lack of enforcement of laws that discourage gender discrimination; lack of knowledge of the supportive legal provisions; inadequate funding and human expertise, lack of adequate social security and protection; limited research work and availability of gender disaggregated data and absence of watchdog committees tasked with ensuring that women's fundamental rights are recognized.

There is need to address the root causes of gender discrimination which the participants indicated to be discriminatory traditions/cultural beliefs and lack of education. Promotion of a culture of gender equality is needed starting from household level. Public awareness campaigns that particularly target parents and guardians on the importance of providing equal opportunities for boys and girls from a young age are essential. Equal access to education is necessary for all levels of education in order to groom a future generation shaped by notions of gender equality; and providing at least access to literacy programs for adult women is necessary to redress past discrimination.

Improvements of resources and investment allocated for gender equality and inclusion of women into development are essential since women's human capital is as valuable as men's human capital. Improved geographical and financial access of health services to women is required if development is to become more inclusive of women. Strengthening of social protection especially for vulnerable women such as women living with disabilities, elderly women and women living with HIV/AIDS is key to achieving inclusive development. It is important to scale up measures that economically empower women such as measures to improve women's access to land, property, and technologies and promotion of an enabling environment that allows more women to work in the formal sector. The unpaid work done by women needs to be recognised. There is need to institute measures to improve the political participation of women.

Eliminate violence against women and girls.

Participants also indicated that improved research and collection of sex and gender disaggregated statistical data is critical for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the social inclusion of women and for policy-making.

Participants identified areas where the MDGs need reinforcing and suggested supplementary indicators to reinforce effective monitoring of the social inclusion of women into development. As a general recommendation, all indicators need to be sex and gender disaggregated. Contributors suggested additional indicators to be focused on violence against women; women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services; the proportion of women living in poverty; women who achieve full and productive employment; the completion rate of different levels of education by girls; equality in wages between men and women; time used by boys and girls, women and men to fetch water and fuel wood; proportion of aid that is used to promote gender equality; and proportion of women to men who are living with HIV/AIDS.

It is crucial to monitor girls' completion rates for all education levels.

Annex A. Selected Resources

English:

1. [Millennium Development Goals - Basics](http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.html) - <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.html>
2. [Millennium Development Goals - List of Targets and Indicators](http://www.undp.org/mdg/goallist.shtml) - <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goallist.shtml>
3. [Assessing Progress in Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals 2008 Report](http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2008/docs/AssessingProgressinAfricaMDGs.pdf) - <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2008/docs/AssessingProgressinAfricaMDGs.pdf>
4. [Millennium Development Goals 2007 Report](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/docs/UNSD_MDG_Report_2007e.pdf) - http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/docs/UNSD_MDG_Report_2007e.pdf
5. [Millennium Development Goals 2007 Update on Africa](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/docs/MDGafrica07.pdf) - <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/docs/MDGafrica07.pdf>
6. [The African Gender and Development Index](http://www.uneca.org/acgs/Publications/AGDI_book_final.pdf) - http://www.uneca.org/acgs/Publications/AGDI_book_final.pdf
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