

2010

French strategy for gender equality



Why gender equality is a priority

When it comes to equality between women and men, there is no such thing as neutrality

All economic and development policies impact gender equality either by reducing, maintaining or worsening disparities between men and women.

When a country sustains a socio-economic environment that encourages gender inequality, it condemns itself to failure, as 50% of its vital forces are brushed aside.

Gender disparities are not caused by accident

● The invisible labor of women compensates for shortfalls in public spending (education, health, infrastructure). It creates and strengthens essential social ties, but is neither recognized nor taken into account in GNP figures.

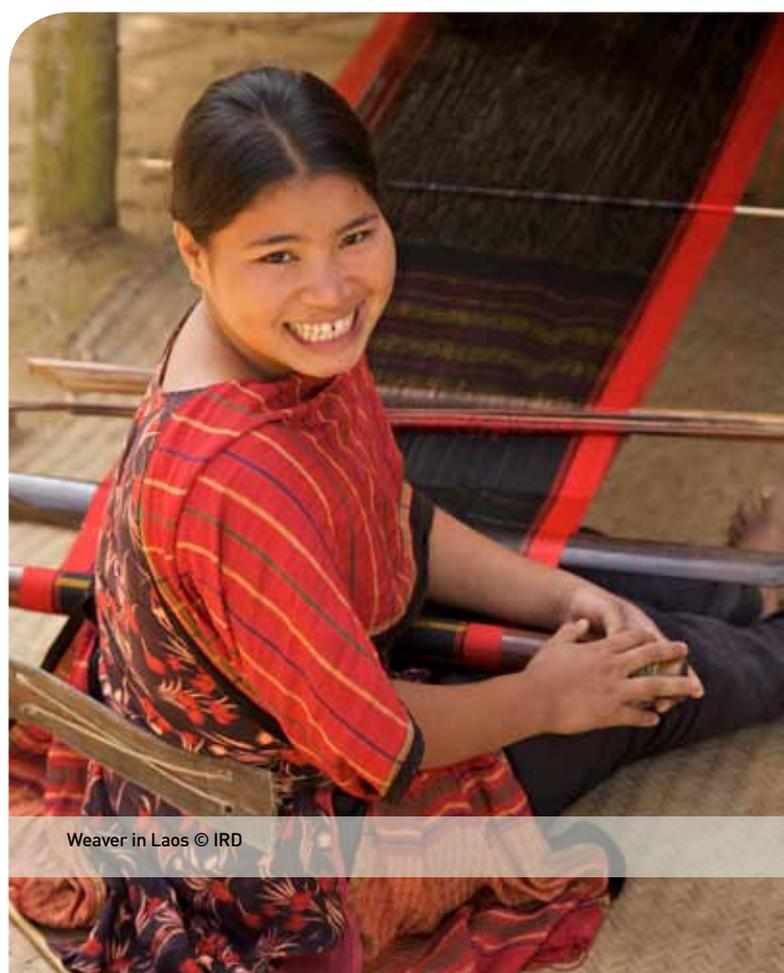
● Inequalities persist and are sustained by existing, mainly patriarchic powers, be they of religious or cultural origin, or based on dominant economic models. These disparities therefore become a structural element of societies that is difficult to abolish or even reduce.

● These inequalities form a market: human trafficking, forced marriage, low wages and exploitation of cheap labor are all major sources of enrichment, used to the detriment of women. Such trafficking lies at the heart of systems of corruption and social violence, which are incompatible with the implementation of effective State governance.

Under such conditions, how can the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that directly concern women be achieved without altering the balance of power between the sexes ?

Many studies have shown that improving gender equality promotes...

- Economic growth in general, and particularly in sectors with a strong female presence ;
- Food sovereignty ;
- Good conflict management ;
- Environmental management and sustainable human development ;
- Good governance and democracy ;
- Sustainment of social systems, both within and outside the family ;
- Gender mixing, which automatically leads to the political and economic enrichment of societies.



Weaver in Laos © IRD



Diagnosis

Without women's involvement and recognition of their contributions to society, development does not occur

Today's predominant situation often means women are excluded from development processes *(see box below)*.

Wage equality does not exist anywhere, and unemployment, job insecurity and unskilled and part-time work primarily affect women. Despite the growth of

micro-lending, investments that encourage women's economic empowerment are insufficient (€500 on average), short-term (six to twelve months) and have prohibitive interest rates (over 18% a year). Interest rates on loans granted to men are much lower. Certain studies have shown, for example, that if female farmers in Kenya were given the same financial aid as men, their land would yield over 20% more than that of their male counterparts.

INEQUALITY IN NUMBERS

- **In Europe**

Women earn 15% less than men for every hour they work.

- **In Africa**

Women occupy only 15% of paid jobs and receive a mere 10% of the wages paid.

Women account for 60% of the HIV-positive population in Sub-Saharan Africa and for 75% of new HIV-positive 15-24 year-olds in Africa.

- **In the world**

Women account for 70% of the 1.2 billion individuals who live on less than a dollar a day.

They perform two-thirds of the number of hours worked in the world and produce half of the world's food.

They receive only 10% of total income, and possess less than 2% of all land.

They receive less than 5% of bank loans.

Over 500,000 women die every year in pregnancy or childbirth.

Of the 72 million children worldwide who are not enrolled in school, 55% are girls.



Street vendor in Ecuador © IRD/Michel Dukhan

Too many girls not enrolled in school

In 2006, despite an overall improvement, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were furthest from equality in terms of access to primary school. This gap is even more obvious in secondary education (Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009, *Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters*). School fees and facilities (lack of separate latrines), lack of safety (particularly in transportation), early marriage and sexual violence are some of the key factors explaining why many girls leave school when they reach puberty.

THE ASMADE/ASTER PROJECT

The ASMADE/ASTER project in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) supports women who work as street food vendors and in cereal processing. It aims to improve not only the quality of products but the way they are traded and managed as well. It empowers women to negotiate more effectively with public authorities, to participate in professional federations representing their trade and to take part in local politics, thereby furthering their rights and the recognition of their role in the economy. €100,000 were allocated to this project.

Migrant women at risk

95 million women account for close to half of all international migrants in the world.

They form a large proportion of the globalized and “delocalized” labor in free zones. In 2005, out of 17 million African migrants, 47% were women, compared with 43% in 1960. This increase was particularly high in the sub-regions of Eastern and Western Africa. Women account for 50% of economic migrants and often migrate alone. Although migration is an opportunity for some women, the rights of most are not respected, especially in the employment sector.

Out of today’s 40 million refugees who have fled an armed conflict or massive human rights violations, 75% are women or children.



Street food vendors in Burkina Faso © IRD



Excessive violence

against women

Worldwide, one out of every three women has been raped or been the victim of some kind of abuse at least once in her life.

Traditional forms of violence (sexual mutilation, forced marriage, stoning, "honor" crimes) decline very slowly : there are 136 million female victims in 40 countries. In France, though one woman dies every other day due to domestic violence, these recurrent murders are presented as mere news items rather than a social deficiency.

Underpaying women

a bad bet

Unpaid female labor in Africa is estimated to be worth more than \$15 billion. The term "care" is used to refer to the invisible work of women (childcare, housework, and so on) that compensates for shortfalls in public spending, including education, health, and infrastructure. The remuneration of this "care" would have a stimulating effect on economies and cause GNPs to rise by about 20%. Only 40% of women's labor is paid, compared with 80% for men. In Latin America, ending gender inequality in the job market could increase women's salaries by 50% and raise average national production by 5%.

KEY PARTNERS AND FRENCH INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

In France :

- l'Observatoire de la parité, placed under the French Prime minister ;
- national Advisory Committee on Human Rights ;
- Ministry of Labor, Department of Women's Rights ;
- l'Agence française de développement (AFD) ;
- Coordination Sud ;
- NGOs that have already integrated gender equality into their programs and actions ;
- the association Genre en Action ;
- local governments.

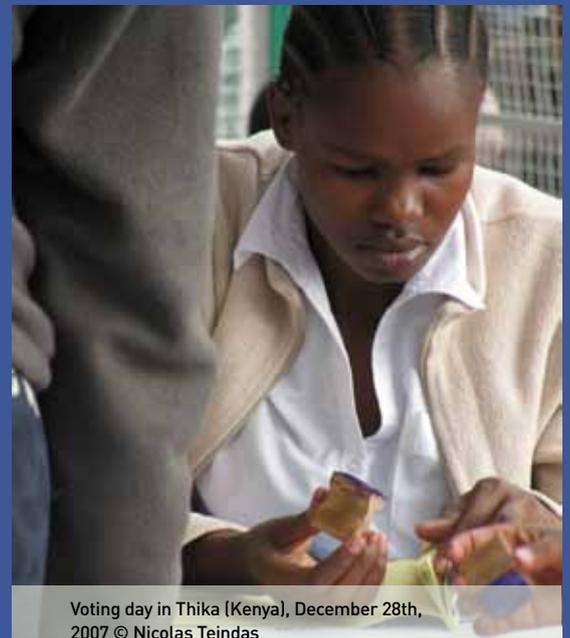
Multilateral organizations :

- the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ;
- the World Bank ;
- the European Commission ;
- the United Nations ;
- the International Organisation of la Francophonie (IOF) ;
- the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The gender equality and development platform convenes French players involved in gender equality twice a year. It plays an advisory role in guiding and monitoring French international cooperation and development policies.



Workshop on sexual exploitation and abuse in Sudan © WFP/UN



Voting day in Thika (Kenya), December 28th, 2007 © Nicolas Teindas

Strategic orientations of France

Goals pursued

and indicators of action by France

French action is carried out in accordance with the Strategic Orientation Document validated by the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Co-operation and Development (CICID) in 2007, which focuses on two main goals:

- 1 improve the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of development policies and programs backed by the incorporation of gender equality issues and the balance of power that conditions these issues;
- 2 spawn far-reaching and lasting changes in the relationships between women and men, in order to increase respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of both sexes and accelerate development in developing countries.

These orientations must lead to improvements in the three most critical areas of women's lives:

- access to effective family planning;
- Improved financial independence and well-being through economic factors;
- Opening of doors to public life and participation in governance structures as active contributors to development.

The resulting actions can target women or men as direct players or beneficiaries, and must help reduce gender inequalities. For instance, in the fight against violence, working with men or working to understand the mechanisms that lead to violence in men are relevant areas for action.

Furthering the legal framework

The universality of human rights requires that we improve the situation imposed upon women without further delay.

Despite the international legal framework, there is always a discrepancy between formal and actual equality,

and this difference has consequences on women's lives. The reservations made by certain countries before ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) severely limit the convention's application at national levels.

Although international, national and regional regulatory frameworks increasingly refer to the necessity of gender equality, women's rights are sometimes questioned in the name of cultural relativism. It is particularly important to point out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights needs to be an essential component of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) and the associated programs and budgets.

In November 2009, the Union for the Mediterranean adopted a declaration to strengthen women's role. The Francophone Declaration on Violence against Women was adopted in New York by the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF) at the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2010. These two declarations are new advancements for women's rights.

Capitalize on the MDGs

In 2000, the international community set eight Millennium Development Goals. Their 10th anniversary will be celebrated as part of the UN review summit taking place alongside the 64th United Nations General Assembly in September 2010.

If the MDGs are achieved, women – the principal victims of the under-development these goals aim to reduce – would see significant improvements in their lives.

Four of the eight MDGs directly concern women:

- **goal 1 ("eradicate extreme poverty and hunger")** : between 1990 and 2015, halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day;
- **goal 2 ("achieve universal primary education")** : by 2015, ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school (five years of schooling);
- **goal 3 ("promote gender equality and empower women")** : eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015;



INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

1946	UN Commission on the Status of Women
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1961	International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights
1975-1985	United Nations Decade for Women
1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
1994	United Nations International Conference on Population and Development Cairo Programme of Action
1995	United Nations World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action (action for equality, development and peace)
2000	Millennium Development Goals (Goals 1, 2, 3 and 5)
2005	Beijing Plus 10 UN General Assembly on MDGs
2008	UN Security Council Resolution 1829
2009	Union for the Mediterranean declaration on reinforcing women's role in society UN Security Council Resolutions 1888 and 1889 on violence in conflict situations
2010	Beijing Plus 15/OIF Declaration on violence against women

- **goal 5 ("improve maternal health")**: reduce the maternal mortality rate by 75% between 1990 and 2015.

\$300 million are currently devoted to promoting women's empowerment. This is equivalent to less than 1% of the United Nations programs budget (around \$30 billion per year). In comparison, close to \$6 billion annually are devoted to children solely by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). According to the World Bank, \$80 billion are needed over five years to achieve MDG 3: "promote gender equality and empower women."

The maternal mortality rate decreased by 1% per year between 1999 and 2005, which is far from the 5.5% necessary to achieve MDG 5. According to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), an investment of \$23 billion per year is needed to enable women to avoid unwanted pregnancy (2005). The G8 has already made reducing maternal mortality and access to reproductive health care one of its priorities for 2010.

women in a given country. Internal and external factors continually modify these relations: education, technology, economic policy, job market, armed conflicts, food crises, the nature of society and its interference with religious teachings.



Access to healthcare in Georgia © MAEE/F. de la Mure

A societal approach

Development assistance must invest more in promoting gender equality.

Gender equality relations vary depending on culture, from one social group to another and within a single culture. They can combine with other parameters such as social class, religion, age or the political status of

In addition to the need for women's involvement in development programs, intervention in the social relationships between the sexes is also required. Gender equality is based on the construction and distribution of feminine and masculine social roles, which are often characterized by inequalities to the detriment of women.

As opposed to biological gender, the social construction of female-male relations evolves over time and space. It is part of individuals' education and can be evidenced by legal norms: in the confinement of women to the private sphere and men's privileged access to the public sphere; in family law which assigns different rights and obligations based on gender. Women are therefore victims of stereotypes that deprive them of certain functions or attributions (activity/passivity, strength/weakness).

Gender equality therefore requires framework for sociological analysis and practical, efficient tools, specific programs and systematic integration of this aspect in all development-related programs.

Plan of Action for 2009-2011

In December 2008, Alain Joyandet launched a Plan of Action in favor of gender equality for the 2009-2011 period. This plan aims to ensure that gender equality is better incorporated into French actions toward development assistance.

To date, €30 million have been allocated:

- €21 million from the Agence Française de Développement;
- €6 million from 30 embassies through Social Funds for Development;
- €3 million from central administration via the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP) "Gender and economic development: women as contributors to development".

The French institutional system receives support from:

- the Directorate-General of Global Affairs, which encompasses the Global Goods Directorate, which handles gender equality matters;
- The economic and financial unit of the French Ministry for the Economy, Industry and Employment, which monitors

- Official Development Assistance at the World Bank;
- the AFD, in charge of bilateral and multilateral implementation.

EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL

The gender equality approach implies pro-actively restoring the balance to social relations between the sexes. This includes financial aspects: not only are additional funds needed for education and health, it is also important to ensure that these funds are used equitably.

For example, an education system that encourages the enrolment of girls must include:

- facilities such as separate latrines so that young girls can continue attending school;
- school cafeterias;
- appropriate academic programs and books;
- family planning awareness-building;
- plans against violence at school;
- The involvement of parents and communities.





TWO EXAMPLES OF PRIORITY SOLIDARITY FUNDS (FSP)

Gender and economic development

This Priority Solidarity Fund, endowed with €3 million, takes action in three areas :

- support for promising economic projects ;
- reinforcement of the technical and organizational capacities of women and women's organizations ;
- support for advocacy in favor of increased female participation in governance and improved integration of gender in policies to fight poverty.

Eleven projects in seven West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Togo) are being conducted by fourteen French NGOs in two promising economic sectors :

- food processing ;
- cottage industries and small business.

Pro-activism in West Africa

The "Gender and economic development" Priority Solidarity Fund in West Africa, launched in October 2009 by Alain Joyandet, French Secretary of State for Cooperation and Francophonie, aims to promote the personal, economic and decision-making empowerment of women in food processing and entrepreneurial jobs in West Africa. The integration of a gender equality approach shed light on the following facts :

- women work on average 17 hours a day compared with 10 hours a day by men ;
- they have less access to resources and land ;
- they are under-represented in professional bodies. Training and advocacy activities are carried out in partnership with men to reduce these inequalities, so that women can be fully recognized as active contributors to development.



Mango seller at the Osogbo market, Nigeria
© Nicolas Teindas

Actions underway

- 1 Use of OECD “gender markers” in France’s Official Development Assistance declaration ;
- 2 Assessment of French action using indicators enabling an evaluation of the level of across-the-board integration of equality. These indicators shall also apply to AFD actions, with a view to obtaining accurate data for the next peer review by the OECD’s development assistance committee ;
- 3 Monitoring and renewal of actions undertaken on MAEE’s Social Funds for Development (FSD) to analyze current policies ;
- 4 Structuring and promotion of French positions in the various international bodies relative to gender equality ;
- 5 Monitored implementation of the FSP “Gender and economic development: women as contributors to development” and capitalization of the fund as a pilot program ;
- 6 Intensification and extension of working themes and partnerships with NGOs and foundations ;
- 7 Widespread appointment of “gender equality” correspondents in embassies and creation of a consultative structure ;
- 8 Development, conjointly with all relevant players, of methodologies and indicators based on existing models used at the European level or recognized by the United Nations ;

- 9 Organization of specific training courses for MAEE and AFD officers and diffusion of “best practices,” including through academic publications or concerning the knowledge gained and lessons learned from the FSP.

SAMPLE PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE FSD

In Benin, the NGO Action Plus created two training workshops to protect young at-risk girls from forced marriage and human trafficking. With a budget of €38,904, this project enables young girls to learn a profession.

In Burkina Faso, a micro-credit fund worth €225,037 was established by Mutualité femme et développement to assist women with limited access to loan opportunities. The fund has benefitted numerous groups of women in rural areas.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the NGO Douze Roses Pélerines manages a project to promote women as farming entrepreneurs. With a budget of €65,467, this project has benefitted 150 women.



Visit to a reintegration workshop for female victims of conflict-related violence © MAEE/F. de la Mure



FRENCH COMMITMENTS IN FAVOR OF GENDER EQUALITY

- ① Place the reduction of gender inequities at the heart of the political dialogue. This entails performing or encouraging strong political advocacy in favor of gender equality and the defense of universal rights, in bilateral and multilateral bodies ;
- ② Guarantee a cross-cutting approach to gender equality in all of the policies, fields of intervention and instruments that characterize French cooperation. This mainly entails :
 - incorporating gender equality into the goals of our cooperation ;
 - conducting sociological diagnosis and gender-specific impact studies upstream of programs ;
 - using cooperation tools and mechanisms that integrate the gender equality approach, including in evaluations and assessments.



Primary school in Afghanistan © WFP-UN/Fardin Waczi

DGM/Directorate-General of Global Affairs,
Development and Partnerships
Global Public Goods Directorate



Philippe Thiebaud,
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*Deputy Director
of Global Public Goods*

Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

The missions of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs are :

- summarize information on the changing global economy and put it into perspective, prepare decisions on the French government's foreign policy ;
- draft France's foreign policy ;
- coordinate France's international relations ;
- protect French interests abroad and assist French nationals outside France.

The creation of the Directorate General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) in April 2009, as part of the reform of the Ministry, enables diplomacy to anticipate, identify and respond to the challenges of globalisation more effectively.

Confronted with global issues that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens and multiple actors, the Ministry intends to emphasise the need to tackle global issues, in the firm belief that every major economic, cultural and societal issue calls for collective action with more outward focus, anticipation, interministerial coordination, responsiveness, interdisciplinarity and a resolutely European approach.



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