

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR EXHIBITION TO COMMEMORATE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2008

THEME: "FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY"

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MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE & ZAMBIA, ON BEHALF OF THE
ZAMBIA UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM (UNCT)

Minister of Gender in Development, Hon. Patricia Mulisikwanda MP
Governor of Bank of Zambia, Dr Caleb Fundanga
Acting Permanent Secretary, GIDD
United Nations Resident Coordinator, Aeneas C Chuma
Chief Executive and representatives from the Financial Sector
Representatives of NGOs engaged in supporting Gender
Friends from the Media
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and privilege for me to represent the United Nations System in Zambia on this important occasion. The global theme for the 2008 IWD Commemoration is "Financing for Gender Equality". Honourable Minister, Governor, distinguished guests, it is extremely laudable that to commemorate this Day, the Financial Sector in Zambia – led by the Honourable Minister for Gender and the Bank Governor – has decided to mount this important exhibition. How fitting it is to see the Bank of Zambia, in the lead, and setting an example for other financial institutions in Zambia.

There can be no equality without women and men having equal and equitable access to financial opportunities. Equality of opportunity is one thing, such as women and men having equal opportunity to access finance. But equity of outcomes is also important.

I recall a study that my own organization commissioned in an Asian country – it showed that women and men had equal access to finance; but it also showed the men were likely to borrow on average 25 times the loan size that a woman could borrow! So, **equality and equity must go hand in hand.**

The UN is primarily a **rights-based organization**, and each of the individual UN agencies applies rights-based approaches in its particular area of competence or specialization, and in its particular sphere of work.

Financing for gender equality can be looked at on three different levels – Macro, Meso and Micro:

1. At the **macro level**:

- a. Is the “Gender Ministry” (Ministry of Gender and Women in Development) receiving adequate core funding to really make a difference?
 - b. Is each and every Government Ministry allocating sufficient resources to promote equality of opportunity for women and men? Is it visible in their budgets?
 - c. Is Gender Budgeting being applied?
- This approach is promoted by UNIFEM – the specialized UN Fund for Women.
- 2. At the **meso or institutional level**:
 - a. Are women’s organizations receiving adequate financial support to fulfil their mandates?
 - b. Are MFIs and FIs providing women with equal access to financing?
 - c. Are **all** support agencies allocating sufficient funds to ensure that they serve the needs of women as much as men?
- The UN has developed tools to build the capacities of these organizations, enhance gender mainstreaming, and improve their advocacy and voice (e.g. UNDP, ILO, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEM).
- 3. At the **micro level** – the level of the family, the household and the individual woman:
 - a. Do women have access to finance to help them and their families get out of poverty?
 - b. Are sufficient resources allocated to provide basic healthcare, education and social protection for women and their families?
 - c. Are women receiving equal pay for work of equal value?
- Some of the UN’s work at the micro level is on display this morning.

This rights-based approach of the UN can also be seen throughout the “life cycle”, or from the cradle to the grave, and where we work closely with Government, Civil Society and the Cooperating Partners.

UN Organizations in Zambia allocate significant resources to improve the survival prospects for the girl and boy child at **childbirth** and into the **early years**, and they strive for safer childbirth and maternity protection. They finance programmes on prevention of **HIV & AIDS** targetting young women and men. (e.g. UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS)

The UN System in Zambia invests in supporting **basic education** which promotes and protects the rights of young girls to keep out of child labour, to stay at school and become the educated mothers of tomorrow (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, ILO among others.)

The UN in Zambia dedicates resources to **skills training** that will help younger and older women find decent employment opportunities in the labour market (e.g. ILO, UNIDO, UNIFEM).

The UN Agencies in Zambia provide resources to help women access micro-finance and to enable them to have food security and to create jobs for themselves, their family members and others, and to generate income through **self-employment, small enterprise development and small-scale farming** (e.g. UNDP, UNFPA, ILO, FAO, WFP, UNIFEM).

Increasingly, UN agencies are working on basic **social protection schemes** to assist older women and grannies in their vitally important role of caring for orphaned relatives.

The UN System in Zambia has recently reorganized itself to **step up** and **better coordinate** its already significant support for gender equality. The UNDP has been given the lead role with the ILO as the deputy lead role on behalf of all the UN agencies. This is particularly important at the time when the UN and the Cooperating Partners are aligning themselves to support the Government and GIDD in implementing its new Gender Support Programme, to be launched shortly.

Financing Gender Equality is not only the **right thing** to do, it is also the **smart thing** to do for Financial Institutions – as they reach out to women, who are the largely unbanked sector of the economy.

Hon. Minister, in conclusion more needs to be done to sensitize and engage men in promoting gender equality. Gender equality is not a “women’s issue”. It is an important issue for all of society, and men have a very important role to play.

Hon. Minister, ladies and gentlemen, thanks to the support of the Bank of Zambia, you can see on display today the work of many of the UN Agencies operating in Zambia.

I thank you all for your attention.