

Sustainable Development need of the 21st Century

The Millennium Development Goals reaching the finishing line in 2015. The global development community is looking for a new sustainability agenda to guide development efforts beyond 2015.

On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. These 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

We are all as relevant stakeholders here to evaluate sustainable development from feminist perspective. Gender Equality means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality does not mean "the same as". In other words, promotion of gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same. Equality involves ensuring that the perceptions, interests, needs, roles, responsibilities and priorities of women and men will be given equal weight in planning and decision-making. Women also have a critical role to play in all of the SDGs, with many targets specifically recognizing women's equality and empowerment as both the objective, and as part of the solution. Goal 5 is known as the stand-alone gender goal because it is dedicated to achieving these ends.

There is a dual rationale for promoting gender equality. Firstly, equality between women and men-equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities-is a manner of human rights and social justice. And secondly, equality between women and men is also a precondition for sustainable development. The perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of both women and men must be taken into consideration not only as a matter of social justice, they are necessary to enrich development processes (Office of the special adviser on gender issues and the advancement of women, UN/CH rev. August 2001).

Women, who make up half of the world's population, have benefited more than men from the progress in economic and social development in the last three decades. They continue to be overrepresented among the world's most vulnerable groups, although, there are many results which have obtained from field studies are also shown that gender equality is the fundamental issue regarding to economic efficiency. For instance, the same opportunities regarding to required agricultural raw materials and vehicles are given to the women farmers in Kenya as men farmers, the amount of agricultural products could increase by more than 20 per cent. Another dramatic example is from Tanzania. If reducing time that required for to spend household cares, women coffee and banana growers increase household cash incomes by 10 %, labour productivity by 15% and capital productivity by 44%. However, we have to accept that women's empowerment is a key process in reaching gender equality and, through that, sustainable development. The processes for empowering women have to be realized along four steps. Firstly the nature of the problem is identified. This means that the prevailing gender gaps where women continue to be at a disadvantage are identified and recognized as important. In this process it is important to consult

women themselves to better understand their needs and concerns. Secondly, on the basis of this evidence-based analysis, key steps to create a safe, just and enabling environment are undertaken through both targeted policies and gender mainstreaming. Thirdly, to contribute to sustainable development, women need to be agents of change and therefore building their skills and capacities is crucial. Finally, women at all levels of activity and decision-making need to be involved: women's full and equal participation is essential.

On the other hand, Sustainable Development Goal 8 has been designed to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all by 8 targets. Target 8.3 directly aims to support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

In developing countries, the primary barrier to economic growth is often not so much a scarcity of capital, labour or land as it is a scarcity of both the dynamic entrepreneurs that can bring these together and the markets and mechanisms that can facilitate them in this task. Women entrepreneurs have greater constraints on their economic actions relative to men. There is a significant gender gap in the entrepreneurial activity rate across the world (Allen et al. 2008). A GEM study of 18 economies from 2002 to 2010 suggests that women's entrepreneurial activity is lower than that of their male counterparts at different stages of development (Kelley et al. 2011).

Women own only 1 per cent of the world's wealth, earn only a 10 percent share of global income, occupy just 14 per cent of leadership positions in the private and public sector, while women produce half of the world's food, they own a mere 1 per cent of its land. Even though, treating women as the second gender means ignoring and underestimating huge potential human resources. Although there is a consensus among scholars that women can play key role in the entrepreneurial phenomenon, women-owned businesses are said to comprise between one-quarter and/or one third of all businesses.

Entrepreneurship often gives women the flexibility to handle their domestic responsibilities at home, while also providing financial support for their family (Bertaux and Crable 2007). In other words, for some women who need to work at home, entrepreneurship can be a practical solution to earn income and reduce unemployment rate and poverty (Sarfaraz et al. 2013) in less developed countries. But, in general, the entrepreneurial gap between women and men decreases with economic development level (Kelley et al. 2011). In other words, as the economies move from factor-driven stage to efficiency-driven stage and to innovation-driven stage, the gap between men and women entrepreneurs decreases from 5.2 percentage points (lower for women) to 4 points and to 3.4 respectively (ibid).

Table 1: Regional comparison on women’s participation in firm ownership, in management and as workers

Region	% Firms with female participation in ownership	% Full-time female workers	% Firms with female top manager
All countries	33.1	28.9	17.2
East Asia & Pasific	52.4	38.7	22.5
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	36.2	28.1	18.7
Latin America&Caribbean	38.9	31.3	-
Middle East & North Africa	20.2	17.7	-
OECD	31.7	-	-
South Asia	15.6	16.1	7.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	29.1	22.9	15

Source: World Bank Enterprise Surveys (<http://enterprisesurveys.org>)

Access to Finance is a major constraint for women entrepreneurs. In developing countries especially, it is difficult to conduct a thorough analysis of whether a female entrepreneur faces discrimination when applying or obtaining a loan, given the lack of information on variables to control for in the study. But a study using 2005 data from 34 countries of Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific confirmed the hypothesis that women owned or managed firms are more constrained than men’s firms. Globally, women-owned businesses only access between 2 and 10 percent of commercial bank finance. This holds true in emerging markets, where women-owned firms represent 31-38 percent of all small and medium enterprises (SMEs), but have unmet financial needs close to \$300 billion every year. Only 20 percent of women-owned firms had over US \$100,000 annual revenue, compared to 33 percent of men-owned firms. Moreover, Firms run by women are also usually smaller than those operated by men in terms of number of employees, asset value, and annual turnover, besides being less profitable and productive, probably due to other constraints such as difficulties obtaining financing. A study that looked at 34 countries in developed and developing economies in Europe and Asia found that female-owned firms had fewer employees overall than male-owned firms (six versus nine employees), were about 1.5 years younger, and mainly operated in the service sector.

In the post-2015 development era, multi-stakeholder partnerships are expected to play an increasingly important role in the implementation of sustainable development. The proposed Sustainable Development Goal 17, which reads “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, recognizes multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries. Collective action through social networks and civil society groups has been a formidable force in advancing gender equality as well. Women’s rights groups, political parties, trade unions, state-sponsored mass organizations and civil society groups have a direct hand in shaping the policy and institutional environment through advocating policies, designing interventions and implementing programs thus strengthening the situation of women in the economy in the form of employment and/or entrepreneurship in order to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda.

