

Special High Level Meeting between the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

April 14, 2008

Notes for remarks of Roundtable 3: Supporting the development efforts of the least developed countries, including through trade capacity-building

Cecilia Alemany, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) on behalf of the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development

Mme. Chair,

I am Cecilia Alemany from the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), and I am speaking on behalf of the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development.¹ As other civil society representatives we are very concerned about the fact that the world's major donors are not doing enough to support development efforts and reduce poverty and inequality in the developing world.

As recent estimations from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows, the Official Development Aid (ODA) from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members for 2007 shows a drop from 0.31% of their combined gross national income in 2006 to 0.28% in 2007. Part of the explanation is that there is no debt relief in 2007 figures.² However, debt relief as well as Aid for Trade (AfT) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was supposed to be additional to ODA allocations and this is not really what is happening.

If the current aid trends are not substantially challenged by proactive aid policies and an unprecedented increase of aid flows, the targets set in the Monterrey Consensus, and the Paris Declaration will not be achieved, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be another target to refine for ten years more. Today the majority of the people living in poverty, are women and girls. **The international community has to take a serious commitment in Doha to change these trends, and build on the Monterrey Consensus.**

1. Supporting the development efforts of the least developed countries

A statement from LDC Watch³ starts saying that "the increase in number of the LDCs from 24 in 1971 to 49 today, and ironically, after three decades of special development attention, three UN LDC conferences and three specific Programs of Action, clearly proves the failure of existing development paradigms including the international aid agenda to effectively address the development challenges and constraints in these poorest countries".

National leadership and ownership is a key element in the Monterrey Consensus, and we can analyze some of the answers from the international community to LDCs from this perspective. When ownership is not considered and country programs are not driven from the ground, several authors and policy makers have an easy answer: "x" Southern government has no capacities to develop and decide its own policies. And this is a dangerous argument, and many times it is applied to LDCs. If we want to build a partnership for development in the sense of the MDG 8 and the main goal of the Monterrey Consensus we cannot accept simple answers like this kind of argument. We all agree that we need a holistic approach, but **what are we doing to build this holistic approach in the international cooperation with LDCs?**

The Report of the Secretary General on the Follow up and implementation of the Monterrey

¹ FfD Women's Working Group statement, Informal Review Session on Chapter IV, "Increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development", 15th – 16th April 2008.

² OECD, Debt Relief is down: Other ODA rises slightly, 4th April 2008.

³ LDC Watch Statement, THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND

Consensus⁴ is very clear about the need for policy space: developing countries (and LDCs specially) should carefully take their trade commitments according to their level of development and the need to retain their ability to implement the most appropriate and

