



Gender Action's second biannual update presents recent achievements and a myriad of exciting projects to ensure that big International Financial Institution (IFI) investments promote and do not violate women's rights.

I. ACHIEVEMENTS

Civil Society Squelches World Bank Attempt to Weaken Reproductive Health Commitments

Leaked versions of the World Bank's proposed new Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Strategy threatened to effectively eliminate the Bank's 30 year old support for reproductive health. Gender Action helped coordinate the emergency response from civil society, which led key members of the World Bank's Executive Directors to reject the draft and restore commitment to family planning. The approved strategy, however, restored discussion of reproductive health in an isolated section toward the end of the strategy. The strategy avoided mentioning reproductive health in the Executive Summary, Introduction and most of the text despite the Bank's gender strategy commitment to mainstream it into all Bank health activities. The new HNP Strategy also takes a retrograde permissive position on user fees for health services for the poor reversing the Bank's previous position to eliminate them to achieve its poverty reduction mission. To learn more, visit our Sign-on Letter webpage.

Tracking the Gender Impacts of Extractive Industries

Boom-Time Blues: Big Oil's Gender Impacts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sakhalin, jointly published by Gender Action and Central and Eastern European Bankwatch Network (CEE Bankwatch Network) found that IFI extractive industry projects increase prostitution, HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. Boom Time Blues received significant press and spurred the World Bank to create a webpage dedicated to Extractive Industries and Gender which calls for "the improvement of the impact of extractive industries on women." Since historically Bank web pages do not translate into more gender-sensitive investments, Gender Action continues monitoring and advocacy to hold the Bank to its promises.

Outstanding Support: IFIs Must Stop Contributing to Violence Against Women

On International Women's Day, 2007 Gender Action led a call signed by 126 organizations and individuals around the world condemning IFI investments for intensifying poverty, trafficking in and violence against women, prostitution, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. The Call insists that so long as the IFIs continue to operate, they must stop attaching policy prescriptions to their loans which deepen poverty and must strengthen safeguards to protect women and other vulnerable groups.

II. CURRENT PROJECTS

Mapping IFI Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Spending

This first comprehensive report to determine the quantity and quality of all IFI spending for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS will provide essential analysis needed to influence IFI investments in these areas. It will also survey IFI commitments related to reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and assess how harmful IFI loan conditionalities such as restricting public spending undermine governments' ability to address these public health imperatives.

Gender Analysis of World Bank Post-Tsunami Reconstruction

This project will provide gender analysis of the World Bank-coordinated multi-donor trust fund overseeing post-Tsunami reconstruction in Indonesia. Results will feed into local groups' advocacy, especially to ensure that projects meet the needs of marginalized women. In the future, we hope to work with colleagues in Indonesia to monitor the gender impacts of post-Tsunami reconstruction projects.

Gender Guide to World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Policy-Based Lending

In April 2007 we officially launched our Gender Guide (see Events). The Guide provides tools to Southern and Northern citizens groups to conduct gender analyses of World Bank and IMF policy-based loans. These loans typically require poor countries to adopt policies that cut government expenditures, effectively choking social spending and deepening poverty particularly among women. Guide annexes include a glossary of terms, a list of resources, and a toolkit for stakeholders to analyze sectoral and economic policies for gender equality. The Heinrich Böll Foundation provided support to publish the Gender Guide, which will be a key resource at Böll's Summer School on Gender and Macroeconomics in August (visit: http://www.glow-boell.de/de/rubrik_5/8_1731.htm for more details).

IFI Gender Rights Accountability

Gender Action and our partner, the Center for International Environmental Law, are finalizing a comparative guide on IFI gender policies and accountability mechanisms, including steps on how to take cases to each IFI accountability mechanism. This project will help people harmed by gender discrimination in IFI projects to take their complaints to IFI accountability mechanisms for the first time. The Guide will also be a training resource for the Heinrich Böll Foundation Summer School on Gender and Macroeconomics.

Gendered Impacts of World Bank Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) Programs

We are currently finalizing a report detailing the extent to which World Bank-financed PCR operations address gender issues, recommending that they systematically address violations against women's rights and promote gender equality to make peace work. It builds on The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Challenges in Development Aid, by Marcia Greenberg and Elaine Zuckerman, published in June 2006 by the World Institute for Development Economics Research.

Anti-IMF Campaign

Gender Action continues to be an active member of the first concerted global campaign to 'Shrink or Sink' the IMF. IMF policy-based loans violate women's rights. For example, IMF-mandated tariff reductions undermine the livelihood of farmers, the majority of whom are women in the world's poorest countries. The campaign seeks to end IMF control over the policies of low-income countries and eliminate the IMF's surveillance and gatekeeper roles determining donor finance. To mark the ten year anniversary of the East Asia Financial Crisis—which was largely precipitated by IMF policies—this year Gender Action and other campaigners are organizing a conference to highlight alternative, human rights-centered economic policies and financing mechanisms.

III. ACTIVITIES

Coalition-Building

In the last six months Gender Action continued expanding and solidifying its global network. We joined the United Kingdom-based Gender and Development Network, a diverse membership organization working on gender and development issues. We also joined the Publish What You Pay Campaign which aims to help citizens of resource-rich developing countries hold their governments, corporations and the IFIs accountable for the management of revenues from the oil, gas and mining industries. Gender Action participated in the first ever North American IFIwatchnet meeting aimed at strengthening coordination and cooperation among civil society groups monitoring the IFIs worldwide. In response to demand, Gender Action provided inputs into the Environmental Law Institute's Handbook on Public Participation in International Waters Management and the NGO Forum on ADB's gender strategy.

Events

Gender Action kicked off civil society events around the World Bank and IMF April 2007 Spring Meetings by launching our Gender Guide to World Bank and IMF Policy-Based Lending at a workshop supported by the South Asian Women's Leadership Forum. Elaine moderated the session where Suzanna Dennis presented the Guide, followed by Lidy Nacpil of Jubilee South's powerful examples of harmful IFI reforms in the Philippines and a lively discussion. We closed with a moving poem written and recited by monét cooper of the Jubilee USA Network. Also as part of the Spring Meetings, Gender Action co-sponsored, 'National Sovereignty Versus Aid Cartel in the Global South' which highlighted the diminishing relevance and legitimacy of the IMF and examined newly emerging alternative sources of financing for borrower countries. This event was co-sponsored with

Jubilee USA, Action Aid USA, 50 Years is Enough Network, Center for Economic and Policy Research, and the Center of Concern.

In December 2006 the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS) invited Elaine to discuss the gendered impacts of economic conditions attached to IFI loans at 'The Policy Space Debate: Does a globalized and multilateral economy constrain the ability of developing countries to pursue development policies?' WWICS published Elaine's follow-up article, "Policy Space and the Gender Impacts of International Financial Institutions" in [The Policy Space Debate](#) edited by Bhumika Muchhala.

In November, Gender Action and CEE Bankwatch Network launched [Boom-Time Blues: The Gender Impacts of Big IFI Financed Oil Projects](#) with support from the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The panel featured presentations by Suzanna and Fidanka Bacheva-McGrath of CEE Bankwatch Network's Bulgaria office, with comments from Manish Bapna of the Bank Information Center. Liane Schalatek of the Heinrich Böll Foundation North America moderated the panel and Elaine provided a welcome and introduction.

III. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After serving for two years on Gender Action's Board of Directors, Geri Palast returned to our Advisory Council. We thank Geri for her hard work.

We are pleased to announce that Nadia Martinez has joined Gender Action's Board of Directors and took over as Secretary. A Panamanian national, Nadia is currently the Co-Director of the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network at the Institute for Policy Studies. We are also delighted to welcome Emily Sikazwe, the Executive Director of Women for Change based in Lusaka, Zambia to the Board of Directors.

IV. CHALLENGES

We continue to work tirelessly in order to meet Gender Action's funding needs but our finances remain precarious. To provide assistance or advice on fundraising, please contact Elaine at elainez@genderaction.org.

With great appreciation for your support,

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