

**Eighth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting
Kampala, Uganda, 11-14 June 2007**

Kampala Communiqué

1. The 8th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (8WAMM) was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 11-14 June 2007. Delegations from 32 countries attended the meeting. The meeting was opened by H E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. The keynote address was delivered by the Hon Luisa Dias Diogo, Prime Minister of Mozambique.
2. The Meeting was chaired by the Hon Syda Bbumba, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Republic of Uganda. All delegations expressed their appreciation to the host Government for the hospitality and excellent conference arrangements for the meeting.
3. Ministers commended the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat particularly the Gender Section in assisting countries in the implementation of the Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005-2015.
4. Ministers acknowledged that increased investments in gender equality must be a priority to ensure sustained economic growth, the achievement of democracy, peace, security and development.
5. Ministers expressed their concern that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are seriously off-track are the ones based on the achievement of gender equality: improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, (MDGs 3, 5 and 6).
6. Ministers emphasised that the timely implementation of the Commonwealth PoA for Gender Equality 2005-2015 requires adequate resources and the operationalisation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as agreed, will require full commitment by member countries of all governments.
7. Ministers noted that substantially more effort is required to achieve gender equality as evidenced by the following statistics in Commonwealth countries:
 - Only five out of the 53 countries have achieved 30 per cent representation of women in national parliament;
 - 30 million children are not in primary school, the majority of those are girls;
 - 60 per cent of HIV and AIDS cases globally are in the Commonwealth, and a growing proportion are women and girls;
 - 300,000 maternal deaths per annum; and
 - Some Commonwealth countries are amongst those with the highest infant and maternal mortality rates.
8. The Meeting discussed the following agenda items:
 - Tracking the Money for Gender Equality
 - National Women's Machineries (NWMs) and Public Sector: Role in Financing Gender Equality

- Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality
- Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy.

Tracking the Money for Gender Equality

9. There were four Ministerial Roundtables on Aid Effectiveness; Gender Responsive Budgets (GRBs); Microfinance and Innovative Financing for Gender Equality; and Gender and Trade. Ministers' conclusions from the Roundtables included:

- the importance of developing indicators for tracking the money that is being allocated by governments and donors for gender equality and women's empowerment;
- the need to develop and enhance capacity for the implementation of GRBs. Finance Ministers must take the lead in implementing GRBs working closely with NWMs. Gender Audits and impact assessment must be undertaken by respective ministries;
- the need to build women's capacity to access markets, develop products and create an enabling environment for women to scale up their businesses to enter global markets. It is imperative that women participate in trade policy formulation and negotiations; and
- the critical role of micro-finance and innovative financing for women's empowerment and they called for the greater involvement of women in managing micro-finance. Given that there are good practices across the Commonwealth, they emphasised the sharing of lessons learned.

National Women's Machineries and Public Sector: Role in Financing Gender Equality

10. Ministers stressed that strong NWMs are needed to achieve gender equality and underpin the achievement of wider social and economic goals. NWMs need authority and resources to be effective.

11. Strong NWMs are important now, more than ever, to ensure that national development plans and new aid modalities reflect gender equality. Enhanced responsibility and accountability in the public and private sectors will ensure improved and equitable socio-economic outcomes.

Financing HIV and AIDS Interventions: Implications for Gender Equality

12. Gender inequalities lie at the heart of the HIV epidemic. Ministers called for strengthened national programmes on prevention, treatment, care and support, including ARV treatment, female condoms, microbicides, and research on HIV vaccine.

13. Stigma, cultural and gender stereotyping contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence and decreases their ability to protect themselves and negotiate safer sex. This calls for a co-ordinated multisectoral response.

14. The increased feminisation of HIV and AIDS requires enhanced and broader access to gender sensitive sexual and reproductive health services as well as dialogue between women and men, girls and boys.

15. Women and girls bear the disproportionate costs of care yet lack rights to resources such as access to land, finance and information. Ministers emphasised the need to implement policies and commitments to address gender inequality in HIV and AIDS funding and programming.

Investing in Gender Equality: Promoting Peace and Democracy

16. Ministers recognised the uneven and slow progress in achieving the minimum 30 per cent target of women in leadership and decision-making at all levels, and urged governments to provide and implement appropriate laws and policies through constitutional and legislative reforms to achieve gender balance.

17. They highlighted the critical importance of providing financing and voter education, in particular, for women, in order to promote and achieve inclusive democracy and good governance.

18. Acknowledging the negative consequences and impact of conflicts on women and girls, Ministers strongly urge governments to provide resources to address the challenges in conflict and post-conflict situations, including Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR).

19. Ministers noted that since women and girls bear the brunt of conflict, and also participate as combatants, the need for their involvement in peace negotiations and post-conflict management is critical. Thus, the Ministers urged governments to provide access to women to participate and be represented in these processes.

20. Ministers agreed to the establishment of a Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security.

Other Priority Issues

21. Ministers raised other issues of concern which hinder the full and equal participation of women and impede the socio-economic development of Commonwealth countries. These include:

Maternal mortality

Ministers noted that it is within the grasp of Commonwealth countries to make major strides to reduce persistently high maternal mortality rates.

Education of Girls

Ministers highlighted the critical importance in investing in girls' education.

Violence against women and girls

Ministers recognised that the on-going level of gender-based violence, most pronounced by male violence against women in Commonwealth countries, is both a shameful abuse of human rights and a significant barrier to positive economic and social outcomes.

Partnership with Men

Ministers noted that changing attitudes and mindsets, and working in partnership with men and boys is critical.

Dialogue with Partners

22. Ministers acknowledged the substantive contributions of Commonwealth intergovernmental bodies, associations and civil society organisations who met under the auspices of the Partners Forum from 8-10 June at the same venue.

23. Ministers further recognised that the challenge of prioritising gender equality can only be addressed effectively through coordinated action and genuine partnership with civil society. Ministers underscored the critical importance of empowering youth and providing resources to build their capacity to participate at all levels.

24. Ministers viewed partners as a valuable source of human, financial and technical capability. They reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate with partners to improve co-ordination.

Gender Architecture

25. Ministers supported the creation of a strong, unified, independent and properly resourced UN entity for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Emerging Gender Issues

26. Ministers noted that emerging issues as they relate to women, such as Climate Change, Migration, Digital Divide, Diversity and Disability, are matters to be considered when the Plan is reviewed in 2010.

Next Meeting

27. Ministers warmly welcomed the offer of the Government of Barbados to host the Ninth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (9WAMM) in 2010.

Commonwealth Secretariat
Speke Resort & Conference Centre
Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda
June 2007