



**JOINT- LAUNCH BY AFDB-IDEP-UNDP OF THE GENDER AND  
ECONOMIC POLICY MANAGEMENT (GEPMI-Africa)**

**HOTEL RAMANDA PLAZA, GAMMARTH, TUNIS, TUNISIA: 29 OCTOBER 2010**

***DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE***

## 1. Background

The endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by Heads of State and Governments in September 2000 was a turning point in the fight against poverty and throughout the world. While two specific goals, namely goals 3 and 5, are dedicated to gender equality, each of the eight goals has gender dimensions. Indeed, gender equality and women's empowerment are not just goals in their own right, but are critical prerequisites to the achievement of all the MDGs.

There has been progress toward meeting the MDGs since 2000, but that progress has been uneven and slow. Much remains to be done to make the MDGs a reality in the lives of women and men, girls and boys. UNDP's recent international assessment on "*What will it take to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?*" suggests that while the developing world as a whole remains on track to achieve the poverty reduction target by 2015, an estimated 1.4 billion people were still living in extreme poverty in 2005. Moreover, it is estimated that the crisis will leave an additional 50 million people in extreme poverty in 2009 and some 64 million by the end of 2010 relative to a no-crisis scenario. As it has been well established, women constitute the majority of the world population and the majority of the poor.

What holds many countries back from achieving the MDGs is persistent and pervasive gender inequality. Because of gender inequality in access to and control over social, economic and political resources, women and girls are more affected by poverty than men and boys; they also find it difficult to escape from poverty.

Indeed, where development progress is lagging is where the needs and status of women and girls are given low priority. This is seen clearly in the assessment of progress on MDG5, which seeks to reduce maternal mortality and achieve universal access to reproductive health care. Despite progress in this area, 1,000 women died every day in 2008 from complications of pregnancy, childbirth and unsafe abortion; 99 percent of them were in developing countries.

Investing in women's empowerment and gender equality not only will improve the lives of individual women and girls, but will also yield high economic returns and lead to greater development progress.

The study "Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" published by the World Bank and co-signed by four other institutions working extensively on Africa (The Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the African Economic Research Consortium and the Coalition for Africa) suggests *that promoting women's education and training, and promoting their access to productive assets including land, credit and time-saving technology could contribute to reaching the 7 per cent annual growth rate needed to achieve MDGs in Africa*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 2000 "Can Africa Claim the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Washington, D.C.

At the same time, the cost of *not* investing in this area is steep. Research shows that “failing to reach MDG3 on gender equality and women’s empowerment will lead to heavy economic costs. Missing the target for gender parity in primary and secondary education could lower a country’s annual per capita growth rates by .01-0.3 percentage points.”<sup>2</sup>

## **2. The Global Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative (GEPMI)**

It is against this background that UNDP, in collaboration with leading international and regional economists, has developed the global Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative (GEPMI). The global GEPMI is a comprehensive capacity development and advisory services programme whose overarching objective is to contribute to the achievement of MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals by making economic policies and poverty reduction strategies deliver equitably to women and men, boys and girls.

GEPMI has three interlinked components:

- 1) A three week Short Course on Gender-Responsive Economic Policy Management to build the capacity of middle level government policy makers, parliamentary staff and civil society organizations (CSOs). The course’s 12 modules address gender issues in all aspects of economic development (economic analysis, poverty reduction, statistics, employment, unpaid care work, macroeconomics, trade, taxation, gender responsive budgeting, etc.).
- 2) GEPMI-Tailored Country level advisory services and capacity building workshops to respond to countries’ specific needs. These services are delivered by our team of regional experts whose quality we assure through regular training and continuous knowledge sharing.
- 3) A Master’s of Arts in Gender-Aware Economics (MGAE), –the first of its kind in the world– responding to a long-term objective of generating a new cadre of economists capable of integrating gender as a variable for economic analysis and a key determinant of economic policy management. MGAE is being pioneered by the Faculty of Economics at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

The implementation of GEPMI began in Asia-Pacific in June 2010 and in Africa in June 2010. The first Asia-Pacific Short Course was held at Miriam College in Quezon City, Philippines in June 2010. The course focused on enhancing capacities in gender-responsive policy making, especially regarding macroeconomic issues such as trade, fiscal and monetary policies, finance, and the economic crisis.

GEPMI-Africa is being implemented in partnership with African institutions, namely UN-IDEP

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<sup>2</sup> (Abu Ghaida and Klasen, 2004).

for the Short Course and Makerere University for the Master's of Arts. The Short Course goes from 11 -26 October 2010 for the Anglophone and 8 to 29 November 2010 for the Francophone at UN-IDEP. The first intake of the Master's of Arts began on 4<sup>th</sup> October at Makerere University.

### **3. Strategic partnership between the African Development Bank (AfDB) and UNDP**

The two institutions will partner in expanding and sustaining the implementation of GEPMI in Africa. Such a partnership is informed by:

- The coherence of their mandates;
- Their strategic roles and contribution to Africa's development;
- Their commitment and actions towards women's empowerment and gender equality.

GEMPI brings added value to this synergy by making the interventions of the two institutions more effective and more efficient.

The partnership on GEPMI will start with the joint-launch of the initiative at the Bank's African Economic Conference (AEC) scheduled for 27-29 October 2010 in Tunis, Tunisia.

#### **3.1 Objectives of the Launch**

The African Economic Conference (AEC) is an important economic gathering and high-level policy dialogue on the African economic policy development landscape that brings together African economic policy makers, economic researchers, development partners and CSOs. It is, therefore, a unique opportunity to launch GEPMI Africa and to engage with key decision makers on the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into economic policy management.

Fitting into the AEC, the launch aims to introduce GEPMI-Africa to African economic policy development decision makers and to discuss the added value of gender equality to economic policy management.

#### **Specific objectives of the launch are:**

- Familiarize African policy makers and development partners with GEPMI-Africa;
- Discuss GEPMI-Africa added value to the agenda for Africa's Economic Recovery and Long-Term Growth towards poverty reduction and the achievement of the MGDs and other internationally agreed development objectives;
- Share with senior African policy makers and development partners the implementation plan of GEPMI-Africa and seek their support.