

This section will cover:

Why international institutions may be relevant to your advocacy

- how to use international agreements, processes and data to frame your advocacy work
- how to influence international institutions



The planning processes covered in sections three, four and five can apply to local, national or international campaigns. In section seven, national processes were considered. In this section we look at international institutions and processes.

1. THE RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR ADVOCACY

Above the level of national governments are the regional and international institutions, processes, rules and frameworks through which international policies are determined and regulated. Some of these international institutions and processes are incredibly influential, making them difficult to ignore. However, advocacy directed at the major international institutions is not easy. They are large, powerful and very experienced at dealing with criticism. If you do decide to make them one of your advocacy targets you will need to find strong allies to work with.

Even if you do not target international institutions in your advocacy, it is still worth understanding what they are doing. They may be putting pressure on your government which will constrain its ability to meet your objectives or they may provide you with opportunities. In particular, they may be a way of making your ideas and proposals seem more acceptable to your national decision makers.

Why consider international organisations?

They may provide support for your advocacy

- International agreements can justify the legality of your asks to your government
- Their jointly agreed goals may coincide with yours, making yours look more acceptable
- Their processes, information or analysis may provide opportunities for your campaign

They may be causing the problem

- They may be the key decision makers who can take the action needed to overcome your problem – so they should be one of your targets
- Their influence may be preventing your national government from acting the way you want them to

2. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGREEMENTS, COMMITMENTS AND RESEARCH

2.1 THE OPPORTUNITIES

International agreements or charters will be agreed on by a majority of governments and some international institutions and are therefore seen as credible. Many international agreements, while not perfect, aspire to a fairer world than the one we currently live in. As such, they are useful tools in helping to make your own goals seem more acceptable to your government and other decision makers, and strengthening the legitimacy of your advocacy – you have the right to hold your government to account for implementation of these international commitments. If you are trying to change the political agenda or policy environment it is extremely useful to be able to quote international targets or research which supports your point of view (see **section four, 3.3**) on mapping the policy environment). You will also find a list of key international agreements which relate to women’s rights in the resources section (section 9).

The United Nations (UN) is a more democratic institution than the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, and perhaps as a result, has less power. This does mean though that agreements originating through the UN system are more likely to reflect your aspirations than those of the international financial institutions.

2.2 THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

The Millennium Development Goals can be a useful tool. They are a set of agreed goals, rather than a charter or convention. Governments around the world agreed to halve world poverty by 2015 and listed the things which need to be done if this goal is to be achieved. The list is far from complete but it provides a useful tool. If your issue comes within the MDG targets, or can be squeezed to fit, then it will gain much greater legitimacy in policy debates.

CSOs around the world are now framing their advocacy work by saying: “IF we are to achieve MDG x then we will have to do....”

WOMEN’S RIGHTS All the MDG targets are held back by gender inequality and the denial of women’s rights. The table in **Annex Two** shows how you might use this kind of argument.



The MDGs have goals and targets (in the language of this toolkit – aims and objectives). These are set out on the next page.

GOAL

TARGET

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Target 5. Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Target 6. Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

Target 7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 8. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Target 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 10. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 11. Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Target 12. Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction both nationally and internationally)

Target 13. Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (includes tariff- and quota-free access for Least Developed Countries exports, enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries [HIPC] and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction)

Target 14. Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing

- states (through the Program of Action for
- the Sustainable Development of Small Island
- Developing States and 22nd General Assembly
- provisions)
- Target 15. Deal comprehensively with the debt
- problems of developing countries through national
- and international measures in order to make debt
- sustainable in the long term
- Target 16. In cooperation with developing
- countries, develop and implement strategies for
- decent and productive work for youth
- Target 17. In cooperation with pharmaceutical
- companies, provide access to affordable essential
- drugs in developing countries
- Target 18. In cooperation with the private sector,
- make available the benefits of new technologies,
- especially information and communications
- technologies

Some countries have produced national targets relevant to their local context. The Civicus toolkit gives examples for Vietnam, Bulgaria, and Lesotho. Check if this has been done in your country as it might provide more relevant detail. If there is a process to define national targets you might want to join in. Your objective might be to get your aim as one of the national targets. Don't be constrained by the existing MDG framework, Vietnam wasn't!

(See <http://www.civicus.org/toolkits/mdg-toolkits>)

The UN has produced a number of reports relating to MDG 3. It can be useful to see if your arguments fit within what is being said in the publications – and use it!

- Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals was produced by <http://progress.unwomen.org/gender-justice-and-the-millennium-development-goals/>
- Gender Equality Now was produced by UNIFEM for the 2008 MDG summit and has useful background. If your issues appear here then linking it to the MDGs may give it much more weight with your government as well as the international community. <http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/GenderEqualityNow.pdf>

Example SEND-Ghana is a policy research and advocacy organisation working to promote gender equality in Ghana. SEND-GHANA and the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights jointly produced the first ever independent civil society MDG Monitoring Report in 2008. Findings from this report were used to influence action on the MDGs. Five advocacy events were organised at district and national levels which resulted in the parliamentary select committee on poverty

agreeing to use the report to promote increased budgetary allocation to achievements of the MDGs.³⁸

Example The MDGs have been particularly useful for groups campaigning on reproductive health and rights. UK INGO Interact calls for female condoms to be made more widely available as a crucial way for women to protect themselves from HIV. Linking their demand to the MDGs has given the issue credibility, and a sense of urgency. Organisations working on maternal health have similarly found that framing their policy asks in relation to the MDGs have made decision makers more receptive.

As 2015 approaches and it becomes increasingly apparent that the targets will not all be met, new debates are being initiated. The 'post MDG agenda' is beginning to be defined, providing opportunities to potentially influence the longer term political agenda to incorporate women's rights as a key dimension.



TOOL Useful Resource

- See the Millennium campaign aimed at achieving the MDGs, linked to the UN itself, <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/>
- On the MDGs go to: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>

2.3 CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. It is still seen by many women's organisations as the best international set of principles on women's rights (although there are gaps).

'It provides the foundation for our work. We situate everything we do through CEDAW as the overarching treatise that then rolls down to the regional and national levels.' Bernice Sam, National Programmes Co-ordinator, WILDAF, Ghana



TOOL Useful Resource

A summary of the Articles can be found at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

CEDAW covers all areas of discrimination against women, including:

- Political and Public Life
- Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice
- Prostitution
- Representation
- Nationality
- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Economic and Social Benefits
- Rural Women
- Law
- Marriage and Family Life
- Violence against Women

Ways to use CEDAW

(i) Articles in CEDAW may be used to lobby for new laws, reform of existing laws or changes in the constitution

If your objectives are covered in the articles in CEDAW you can cite them when calling for specific legal changes or policy reform.

'In the routine advocacy work that we do as a member of the Afghan Women's Parliamentary Working Group we also use some of the articles from the Convention. Whenever the government is passing a law or policy on women's rights or gender equality we strive to implement the CEDAW Convention in order to make space for some opportunities for women.' Shahnaz Kerami, Advocacy Manager at the Afghan Women's Resource Centre

WiLDAF is a member of the Ghanaian women's rights network, NETRIGHT. This network used CEDAW Articles 4 (temporary special measures) and 7 (women's rights to participate in public and political life) together with CEDAW General Recommendations 23 & 25 (increasing women's share of political seats) to call for positive action to increase the number of women elected to political office.

(ii) Reviews of a country's performance under CEDAW can be influenced to include your recommendations

Every Government that has signed on to CEDAW has to report on its performance – providing an advocacy opportunity. Many NGOs

have produced 'shadow' reports which are submitted to the CEDAW Committee to provide a civil society view on what is really happening in the country. This process can be a valuable tool. If your advocacy is successful your recommendation may be contained in the CEDAW Committee's concluding observations. Governments do not have to accept these recommendations – but the process and reports will publicise and legitimise your objectives.

The CEDAW Reporting Process

All state parties to the Convention submit initial and periodic reports every four years on implementation of CEDAW to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee). The CEDAW Committee is composed of 23 independent experts and monitors implementation of the Convention based on reports received from state parties. It is helpful to understand the steps in the process:

1. Preparation of State Party Report / Shadow Report
All state parties to the Convention submit initial and periodic reports on implementation
2. Pre-session (List of Issues and Questions)
A pre-session working group, composed of between 5 and 10 Committee members, reviews the report and prepares a list of critical issues and questions
3. Reply to the List of Issues and Questions
This list is sent to the state party, with a request to respond within 6 weeks
4. Constructive Dialogue
The CEDAW session begins reviewing the report and response to the list of critical issues and questions, then the Committee and state parties discuss in plenary.
5. Concluding Observations
These include concerns and recommendations from the CEDAW Committee. The Committee also produces general recommendations, by which it draws attention to a specific issue at the global level.

See **Annex Three** for more information on the process.

You can influence the CEDAW review process in three main ways:

- Submit reports or country specific information to the pre-session working group
- Attend pre-session or session working groups and provide information in plenary
- Submit alternative reports (shadow reports) for the CEDAW session

A CEDAW Committee member's perspective:

'The CEDAW shadow report is very useful and the CEDAW Committee takes the recommendations from NGOs very seriously—this helps them to see what the situation is really like on the ground and whether the government report reflects these concerns.'

Dorcas Coker-Appiah is Director of the Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Centre in Ghana and served as a CEDAW Committee member since 2004

Example

Peruvian organisation DEMUS used the shadow reporting process when the Peruvian Government was reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in 2007. At the time the government only provided compensation to women who had been raped. In its shadow report, DEMUS argued that compensation should be extended to all survivors of sexual violence including enforced prostitution, enforced sterilisation and mutilation. As a result, the CEDAW Committee recommended specifically that the Peruvian government expand the definition of sexual violence — and award compensation to survivors.

(iii) Specific articles can be cited in legal cases

A less used route is to cite particular articles in CEDAW as part of domestic law cases.

Example

Womankind partner Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association (ZWLA) used Article 16 of CEDAW in the case of *Margaret Dongo vs. The Registrar General of Zimbabwe* in March 2009. ZWLA successfully argued that the Zimbabwean Guardianship Act, which states that married women have no guardianship rights over their children, is contrary to Article 16 of CEDAW.

(iv) The Optional Protocol can be used where a woman feels her rights under CEDAW have been violated.

This protocol does not create additional rights but establishes procedures for addressing and redressing violations of rights set out in CEDAW. However, it is optional – signing up to CEDAW does not mean a State

has to sign up to the Optional Protocol. Theoretically this avenue is available for any woman living in a country where the Optional Protocol has been ratified – in fact it has rarely been used.

The Protocol contains two procedures:

- A Communications procedure through which the CEDAW Committee can review complaints to decide if rights guaranteed by the CEDAW Committee have been violated and identify remedies for victims
- An Inquiry Procedure through which the CEDAW Committee can launch an inquiry into grave or systematic violations on its own initiative.

Both of these mechanisms have rigid rules of procedure and admissibility criteria.

Example **Optional Protocol - First Successful Use of CEDAW in a Rape Case.** In the Philippines, women successfully used the Optional Protocol of CEDAW to appeal a rape case. The CEDAW Committee ruled that the Philippines government violated the rights of Karen Vertido, a female rape survivor, when a local court dismissed her rape allegations due to “gender-based myths and stereotypes.” The Philippines Government must now implement the recommendations made by CEDAW, including ensuring immediate measures in rape cases and impartial and fair legal procedures. CEDAW also urged the government to review its definition of rape and to train its judges, lawyers, law enforcement officers and medical personnel in a gender-sensitive manner to understand crimes of rape and other sexual offenses.³⁹

(v) Using CEDAW to change the policy context and raise public awareness

In addition to the specific mechanisms, discussion of the provisions of CEDAW can be a good way of legitimising your ideas in the eyes of decision makers and of helping women to see that the struggles they face are recognised by the international community.

Example In Ghana, the coalition NETRIGHT used a women’s manifesto during election campaigns, based on CEDAW, to call for more women politicians.

TIP If using CEDAW, first check that your country has signed on to the Convention, and if they have made any reservations exempting them from particular sections.



2.4 REGIONAL AGREEMENTS

In addition to CEDAW, there are also regional agreements which can be particularly useful as they will be more relevant to your national context, and cannot be dismissed as ‘Western feminism or imperialism’.

Africa Women’s Protocol

The Africa Women’s Protocol is a type of women’s rights charter. It arose partly as a result of the failure of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights to address women’s rights. Agreed in 2003 it came into force in 2005. However, in order for this and other international legal agreements to be effective they must be incorporated into national law (known as domestication). Many CSOs in Africa have used the Protocol in their advocacy work and it can be a useful tool for framing your message (see **section five, 4.4** on framing).

‘We use the African Union Protocol on Women’s Rights to raise awareness with ordinary women and they identify more with it — it is home-grown and addresses issues that affect African women, such as the rights of widows, the right to peace. ...In campaigning for the Zimbabwean Domestic Violence Act, we used the Protocol because the arguments about standards are more convincing with politicians because they apply to the African context. The government has adopted an anti-Western stance and is very hostile to the UK, EU and UN, so the African Protocol is much more useful now.’

Netsai Mushonga, National Co-ordinator, Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe

Example

Zambia ratified the Protocol in 2006. Since then women activists, including Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), have used the Africa Women’s Protocol to lobby for changes in Zambian law. A constitutional review was taking place and this provided them with an excellent opportunity. The group made a submission to the Constitutional Review Commission. Action-oriented research allowed the group to demonstrate the impact that the current law had on women’s inequality and poverty particularly in the areas of HIV and AIDS, widow inheritance, and land rights. They also created allies, partly through a national consultation in which other CSOs were made aware

of the campaign. WLSA have been successful in ensuring that provisions in the protocol were reflected in the Matrimonial Causes Act and a bill on Domestic Violence.⁴⁰

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment & Eradication of Violence against Women (or the Belém do Pará Convention)

This Convention entered into force on 5 March 1995 and permits individuals and groups from ratifying countries to submit complaints regarding state inaction to protect women from violence. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights receives these complaints and monitors treaty compliance. Women's organisations in Latin America have found this Convention useful:

'It allows us to widen the coverage of women's rights. Governments have to prepare national reports on measures adopted to prevent and tackle violence against women—and any person can lodge complaints of violations to the Inter-American Commission that oversees the Convention'

Maria-Ysabel Cedano, DEMUS, Peru

2.5 BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Fourth World Conference on Women was convened by the United Nations in 1995 in Beijing. The Conference focussed on 12 areas of concern and adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in order to address these concerns. In 2000, Beijing+5 reviewed progress and further committed to achieving the goals set out in the platform for action. In 2010, the UN Commission on the Status of Women passed a political declaration reaffirming governments' commitment to the Beijing agreements and stating that the full implementation of the Beijing documents is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Although not many governments have mobilised the necessary political will or resources to implement commitments made at Beijing, the platform for action continues to provide a useful framework for advocacy at the local, state and global levels. In particular, it can be an effective tool for pushing for new policies and legislation to incorporate a rights perspective and it also reinforces CEDAW. For example, the CEDAW Committee has requested that state parties take

into account the 12 areas of concern in their country reports.

The Beijing Platform for Action Critical Areas of Concern

1. Women and poverty
2. Women and education and training
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy
7. Women power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and media
11. Women and environment
12. The girl-child

2.6 RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The UN provides a wealth of useful data which could complement the research you have done through your own projects, perhaps demonstrating that what you have found is in fact a global problem or that your data shows that the situation in your country is worse than elsewhere.

Useful sources of information include:

- Womenwatch has useful facts: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/statistics_and_indicators_60.htm#worldswomen
- The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm>
- A key UNIFEM report, which will now be the flagship publication of UN Women, is Progress of the World's Women. This is published every other year, looking at a particular area. The latest one is on Access to Justice. If there is a report linked to your area of work see if the ideas or arguments you want to put forward are included – and quote from the relevant report. www.unifem.org/progress
- The World Bank produces the widely read World Development Report the most recent of which is on gender. This may well provide data you can use to frame your advocacy points. For the latest on this see: <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0,,menuPK:7778074~pagePK:7778278~piP>

Example In the 1980s and 1990s, campaign groups around the world called for an end to the harsh economic conditions which the World Bank and International Monetary Fund imposed on governments as a price for receiving overseas aid. During the campaign to end these structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), UNICEF (the UN agency on children) produced a report outlining the detrimental impact of SAPs on poverty reduction. This report was extremely helpful in reinforcing what CSOs had already been saying and added legitimacy to their advocacy work.

3. THE INSTITUTIONS AS TARGETS

3.1 THE UNITED NATIONS

Trying to influence the UN process itself is a mine-field of bureaucracy. The relative lack of power of most UN agencies also makes them a less obvious target for advocacy than other international institutions. However, there will be times when it is worth engaging. For example, the process leading up to the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 (and the follow-up in 2000) involved thousands of CSOs all advocating for particular approaches to be adopted.

Ways to influence the UN:

- By influencing international agreements or goals
- By working with particular UN agencies to influence their policies or programmes

Example Women Won't Wait (WWW) is one of the strongest examples of an international advocacy coalition on women's rights. It includes organisations and networks working to promote women's health and human rights in the battle against HIV and AIDS and to end all forms of violence against women and girls. A central objective is to increase the level of resources from multilateral donors. At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in 2008, WWW used the opportunity to hold member governments to account for commitments they had made at a previous UNGASS in 2001. (The UN General Assemblies include representatives of all the governments in the United Nations). Lobbying was backed by a well-researched report 'Show us the Money'. A toolkit entitled Act Now! was also made available for CSOs who wanted to join the campaign.⁴¹

The specialist agencies

The UN has a number of specialist agencies which produce policy reports and fund programmes. They vary in size and influence. If you work on reproductive health then UNFPA will be relevant to you. For work on children, UNICEF is important.

Until recently UNIFEM was the key agency relating to women, but partly thanks to an international CSO campaign there is now a new stronger agency called UN Women. For more information see:
<http://www.unwomen.org/>

Example The GEAR campaign (Gender Equality Architecture Reform) is a good example of an international campaign. It played a key role in establishing the new UN Women's Agency. It is now campaigning to ensure governments commit enough resources for the agency to be effective.⁴² The campaign brought together organisations from around the world. In Pakistan, CSOs formed the Civil Society Alliance (CSA) on UN Women to try to influence the policy and practice of the new organisation. A meeting was held so members could understand the challenges and opportunities facing the agency. A draft position paper was then shared with with Government, civil society and donor representatives at a National Consultation in Islamabad.⁴³

UN allies

If you are interested in trying to influence a UN process or agency you will certainly need to find allies that you can work in alliance with. The following are good places to start:

- One of the leading NGOs advocating on gender at the UN is WEDO – Women's Environment and Development Organization <http://www.wedo.org/category/themes/global-governance/unreform>
- Peacewomen have a guide to advocacy on 1325 at the UN http://www.peacewomen.org/peacewomen_and_the_un/un-basics/gender-and-advocacy-at-the-un

More information:

- UN-NGLS is the part of the UN with the job of liaising with CSOs. http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=article_s&id_article=798
 - They have a guide to the UN system for NGOs that is quite out-dated but has a good overview. http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/ngo_guide.htm
 - They also have a guide which looks more at processes 'Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the

United Nations: A Guide: http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/DMUN_Book_PAO_WEB.pdf * For more of their publications see: UNNGLS publications - <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?rubrique113>

- UN Women watch <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>. This website has lots of information about what is happening on women within the UN.
- The international feminist network DAWN has an article with reflections of feminist advocacy at the UN <http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/newsletters/2010-June.pdf>

3.2 THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS – THE WORLD BANK AND INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are sometimes known as the Bretton Woods institutions or International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

They are less democratic and much more powerful than the UN.

There are several ways you might want to influence the IFIs:

- On specific projects
- On their economic or sectoral strategy for your country
- By holding them to account for their policies e.g. on gender equality and women's rights.
- On their accountability to you as citizens and to your Parliamentarians

The World Bank

The World Bank (WB) makes loans to low and middle income countries. One of their objectives is Poverty Reduction – so it's important to hold them to account.

(i) How their work might relate to you:

- The WB lends money for big projects like roads or schools. If you are supporting people to, for example, get access to clean water their operations will be relevant to you.
- You may be working with local communities affected by WB projects. In the past money lent for the building of dams has caused particular concern with local groups protesting the flooding of wide regions and even villages.
- The World Bank co-ordinates other donors and so plays a lead role in determining the kinds of conditions which may be attached to loans made to your government. These can affect core budget

decisions like levels of government spending in different areas, or the cost of utilities like water or electricity. If you are doing any kind of budget tracking then WB operations will affect you.

TOOL Useful Resource

The Bank Information Centre is based in Washington DC, close to the World Bank. They have provided a toolkit and are an excellent source of information <http://www.bicusa.org/en/Page.Toolkits.aspx>. They should also be willing to help if you have more specific questions.



The World Bank will have a Country Director – usually based in the capital city. Find out who they are at www.worldbank.org/countries.

TIP Don't be fobbed off with External Relations staff – they may be useful but they may just see their job as keeping you out of the way. Civil Society Liaison people may help you find out who you need to talk to – but again make sure they are not your only contact.



(ii) World Bank projects

If you are concerned about a planned World Bank project which you think may have negative impacts, then one place to start is with your Executive Directors (EDs). Executive Directors make up the governing Board of the World Bank, and your country will be represented by one of them (Most EDs represent a group of countries). They have the power to stop projects or, more often, to ensure that CSOs are consulted in design stages and that certain safeguards are in place. If you want to consider this type of advocacy consult: <http://www.bicusa.org/en/Document.102441.aspx>

Find out who your ED is at: www.bicusa.org/wbexecutivedirector

(iii) Economic policy and budgets

The World Bank will prepare a Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) which lays out its objectives for lending to your country. These are very difficult to influence, but if a network exists which is trying to lobby the process then it may be worth getting involved. You can find out when the next CAS for your country is at: www.worldbank.org/cas.

Many governments will also prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which is supposed to be the Government's own road map although it will often be heavily influenced by donors. Again this is hard to influence but if a coalition of CSOs is already in place you may want to join it. It may have a slightly different name e.g. Poverty Strategy Paper. See www.worldbank.org/prsp This will also be useful to know when you are seeking to influence national development strategies –

see **section seven, 4**).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The IMF is smaller than the World Bank and does not make the same kind of project loans, but in many ways it's more powerful. Its primary job is to ensure global financial stability. It gives a 'seal of approval' to countries determining whether they are deemed creditworthy. It can therefore exert great pressure on governments, particularly those dependent on international donors for aid.

- If you are looking at national budgets, cuts in public spending, taxation policy etc. then you may need to consider the IMF as well as the World Bank.



TOOL Useful Resource

The UK based Bretton Woods Project has more information on the IMF: <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/institution/imf/index.shtml>

The IFIs and your government

The precise roles of the World Bank and IMF vary from country to country so you need to find out which is more influential in your case. There will be a World Bank Office in your capital city. This will be the first place to start. Your Finance Minister will be the formal link person with both the World Bank and IMF. In most countries, the World Bank and IMF must formally be accountable to national Parliaments.



TOOL Useful Resource

The World Development Movement (a UK based NGO) has produced a toolkit which may be useful particularly if you want to work with Parliamentarians in influencing the World Bank and IMF. <http://www.wdm.org.uk/sites/default/files/toolkitforlegislators19012007.pdf>

Example

In the 1980s and 1990s, an international campaign called 50 Years is Enough was mounted against the World Bank and IMF economic conditions called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). While this campaign didn't change the nature of economic policy espoused by these institutions it did prevent some of the worst excesses, and ensured that the impacts of their policies on poverty reduction would from then on come under close scrutiny. Part of the success of the campaign was in linking the northern based NGOs with access to decision makers to southern based CSOs who had the evidence on the ground of the adverse effects of Structural Adjustment Policies. Good evidence was combined with strategic lobbying and media work. Increasingly, representatives of southern

CSOs became the spokespeople which all gave added weight to the campaign.

The IFIs and gender

Advocacy groups working on the World Bank and IMF, particularly those focusing on economic policy rather than on projects or sectoral issues, have not always taken a strong gender perspective. This can make it difficult to identify allies.

TOOL Useful Resource



Gender Action is an organisation which aims to provide links between those working on international finance and those working on gender. They have prepared a Toolkit for those working on international financial institutions to ensure that their work is engendered. In particular it includes useful ideas of allies and ways to approach certain issues at the IFIs namely: Climate Change; Extractive Industries; Commercial Banks; Debt; Accountability and Indigenous Rights. Their publication 'Gender Action links' will also give you ideas on how to approach these institutions on the above issues.

You can access the toolkit here: http://www.genderaction.org/publications/IFI-Watcher_Toolkit.pdf.

The international network AWID has also produced a guide to gender advocacy at the World Bank and IMF: http://www.globalizacija.com/doc_en/e0035neo.htm

If you want to argue that the World Bank or IMF are violating their own gender policies, or that their gender policies are not good enough, then the following will be useful:

- Heinrich Böll Foundation, Gender Action, CIEL, "Gender Justice: A Citizen's Guide to Gender Accountability at International Financial Institutions" 2007. http://www.genderaction.org/images/Gender%20Justice_Final%20LowRes_2007.pdf
- Bretton Woods Project, World Bank moving backwards on gender? <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/art-565923>
- Long, Carolyn, "The Advocate's Guide to Promoting Gender Equality at the World Bank", Women's Edge, April 2003. - <http://alexanderhamiltoninstitute.org/lp/Hancock/papers/Promoting%20Gender%20Equality%20at%20the%20World%20Bank.pdf>

3.3 TRADE AND THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

Some CSOs have tried to influence the way trade takes place between countries. The World Trade Organisation, along with Regional trade agreements, has a wide range of influence.

For more information:

- Mariama Williams on feminist advocacy on trade and the WTO: http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=299&Itemid=191
- An introduction to trade agreements for US Citizens: <http://www.citizen.org/Page.aspx?pid=1328>
- Third World Network is an international network covering a range of issues including trade. They have offices in Asia and Africa. <http://twnafrica.org>
- AWID summarises a basic guide to the WTO here: <http://www.awid.org/Library/What-role-does-the-WTO-play-in-the-international-arena2>

38 <http://www.sendwestafrica.org>

39 <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/what-we-do/success-stories/top-10-wins-for-womens-movements>

40 http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning/gender/downloads/Prog_Ins_Protocol_Zambia.pdf

41 www.womenwontwait.org

42 <http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/GEAR-Campaign-UN-Women-Born!-Civil-Society-Celebrates-Creation-of-Gender-Equality-Entity-After-Four-Years-of-Advocacy>

43 http://www.gearcampaign.org/news_events/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/September-2010-UN-Women-Perspectives-from-Pakistani-Rights-Activists.pdf