

Towards A More Gender Equitable Macro-Economic Agenda

Introduction:

An international conference on the above theme was held in Rajendrapur at the BRAC Conference Centre from 26-28 November 1996. The conference was organized jointly by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva. The workshop was a unique event in which scholars from around the world exchanged views and research findings as to how to make macro-economic policies in all countries of the world more responsive to the needs and concerns of women and to more effectively promote gender equality. Five countries undertook major research work on this programme: Bangladesh, Morocco, Uganda, Jamaica and Vietnam. The findings from the research were not only discussed by the scholars from the core group of countries but also from Canada, Australia, UK, Hungary as well as donor representatives such as SIDA, UNDP, ADB and the staff of UNRISD.

Inaugural session:

The conference was inaugurated by the Minister for Agriculture of the government of Bangladesh (GOB), Ms. Matia Chowdhury and presided over by the Executive Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Mr. Rehman Sobhan, and the Director of UNRISD, Mr. Dharam Ghai. The list of participants is given in the Annexure. In his introductory speech Sobhan highlighted the importance of policy dialogues and mentioned that the approach of these dialogues had been to try and expose important policy issues, backed where possible, by substantive research to a process of dialogue, where those who actually made the policy decisions could address these issues with professionals, beneficiaries and the victims of such policies. He elaborated further that, in this context, research was not considered as an academic exercise rather it was to be brought into the political mainstream so as to both enlighten and influence the political discourse. At the same time getting researchers injected with a sense of realism through a feedback from the political process. This mutually beneficial interaction between researchers and policymakers ensured such research could lead to informed decision making on the part of political leaders whilst giving researchers a sense of exposure to the constraints of policy making. He also appreciated the initiative taken by UNRISD in organizing this project on a global scale and in recognizing the importance of making policy research more relevant through dialogues written in the third world involving key players in the policymaking process.

Dharam Ghai, in his introductory remarks, welcomed all the participants and thanked the UNDP for initiating this project through which the workshop has been organized. He also thanked SIDA, Netherlands Directorate of International Cooperation and CPD, for their support. Ghai specially appreciated the enormous effort invested by CPD in arranging such a major international conference.

Ghai then spoke on the objectives and functions of UNRISD and pointed out that the organization was set up in 1963 to give prominence to issues of social development. As

such, the central objective of this UN organization was to promote global and comparative research on key social problems and issues. The organization also provided a forum for interaction and discussion of major social problems. All the meetings were attended by researchers, policy makers, and officials of UN agencies, bilateral donors and representatives of civil society organizations. In recent years, UNRISD had been working to make an intellectual contribution to major world events such as the series of major world conferences that had taken place in the 1990s. The organization was particularly active; in the preparatory process for the Social Summit and the Beijing Conference on Women. In the last five years UNRISD had conducted research on themes such as *ethnic conflicts, political violence, socio-economic impact of production and trade, drugs, the social consequences of structural adjustment, environment, social policies and welfare states, social effect of globalization and Gender and macro-economic policies.*

Ghai informed the meeting that the present project titled Technical Cooperation and Women's Lives was begun in late 1993 and for UNRISD it was the first large-scale work on gender issues. Its central objective was to enhance gender sensitivity in the design of macroeconomic policies. In order to fulfill this objective the project had sought to synthesize the current state of knowledge on this subject in some key areas, the results of which had been published as a number of Occasional papers. These papers had, aroused a great deal of interest and were made available to policy makers, researchers, and donor agencies. According to Ghai, the major focus of the project had been on building a knowledge base in developing countries and in organizing policy dialogues among policy makers, researchers and women agencies. Ghai observed that the workshop was arranged to review the state of progress in the major activities of the gender project and to begin the process of drawing lessons for wider application in policy design. He also pointed out that at the end of the current project a follow up project entitled gender; poverty and well being would be undertaken by UNRISD. The new project would focus on a gender analysis of poverty concepts and indicators.

The next speaker in the inaugural session was David Lockwood, Resident representative of UNDP, Dhaka. UNDP was the main sponsor of UNRISD's gender project, expressed his satisfaction about progress in this UNDP project: He emphasized the need for looking at economic growth from a qualitative perspective rather than the traditional emphasis on quantitative indicators. He pointed out that UNDP welcomed the increased focus on the role of women in the promotion of sustainable development. He felt that the challenge was to facilitate the transformation of knowledge linking the macro to the micro in the development process with a view to address and rectify the detrimental effects of macroeconomic policies which on the global level had contributed to an increasing feminisation of poverty. He emphasized the empowerment of women in Bangladesh in order to enhance their quality of life. In this regard, he appreciated the participation of women in the last election, where, according to him, the voter turn out was extraordinarily high. Highlighting various problems faced by women in Bangladesh, Lockwood suggested that it was high time to address these issues at the policy making level, and such policy making processes should identify and prioritize the issues which Bangladeshi women themselves perceive as their most acute problems. He argued further that gender sensitive planning, particularly with regard to economic policies, was vital.

Lockwood pointed out that although women are increasingly employed in the garment factories, they still had considerably less access to formal sector jobs compared to men. Besides, women were also concentrated in the low-paid jobs. In this respect, there was a definite need for policy makers to create a working environment responsive to the needs of women and men alike. This would include the enforcement of existing labour laws as well as the elimination of discrimination against women. In addition, the macroeconomic policies must take into account the enormous non-formal sector that was the source of livelihood for the majority of poor peoples. He recommended that the non-formal sector should be encouraged by the provision of an economic, political and legal environment which would be conducive to growth while protecting the fundamental rights of the people, especially women. Appreciating the role of Grameen Bank in providing credit to women, Lockwood felt that the scope of such credit schemes should be strengthened further, in order to ensure women's empowerment and participation in every sphere of economic life.

In the inaugural session, the keynote address was made by Naila Kabeer of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex. Her paper was titled Gender and the Macro-Micro Divide; A women's eye perspective. She reviewed some of the literature which was focused on the burdens of structural adjustment on women as well as the opportunities provided by adjustment. She pointed out that the globalization of adjustment policies had given a new and important impetus to the recent work of the gender economists. Kabeer mentioned that there were those who believed structural adjustment policies and economic policies in essence was gender neutral and it was the world, which had been gender-biased. On the gender hand there are economists who feel that indeed the policies were not neutral but deeply biased. The latter group argued that concern for human well being was not normally included in the design of macroeconomic policies. Naila Kabeer also reviewed some of the literature on the micro level consequences of changes in macroeconomic policies. She divided the whole literature into two parts (1) the literature, which looked at the burden of adjustment and the ways women, had sought to cope, and (2) the literature which pointed out the opportunities for women and the ways women had sought to respond.

Citing examples from all these studies, Kabeer was of the opinion that many of these studies had moved from macro to the micro level, but to get a clearer picture, at some stage, the analysis needs to go from the micro to macro. She also suggested that a gender analysis of structural adjustment had to explain its negative impact of women, where it was negative, and analyse the social relations which underscored the incidence of macro policies.

Matia Chowdhury, Minister of Agriculture in her inaugural address argued that the concept of considering the interests of women in the macro agenda had come at such a time when it was increasingly felt that only male livelihood and male-earnings were not sufficient to sustain society. Previously, the tendency in this country was to confine women within the household, while today this perception had greatly challenged in both the rural and urban areas. For example, in the past, when an educated women became a bride she was valued by other household members because of her educated status, but

when she expressed her desire to work outside the household, she had to face considerable opposition from her family. As regards dowry, the Minister felt that the concept of dowry now-a-days was more relevant to non-working rather than working women. Dowry was a shameless demand from the bridegroom's family based on the institution that because the women would not be working, the bride's family should give their maintenance cost. She pointed out that previously women were involved in stereotyped jobs such as teaching and nursing, but in recent years they have entered into a diverse range of activities. The Minister observed that women were also migrating abroad in search of work and sending remittances to their families. She further mentioned that it was not well recognized that agriculture and animal husbandry were activities initiated by women who since ancient times had been responsible for this economic activity, around their homestead. This was especially true of matriarchal societies. Patriarchy dominated systems evolved at a time when production relations became more complex. But Ms. Matia felt that with the progress of science and the diminished significance of manual labour women could again reassert themselves in their productive roles, especially in the age of microchips and the technological revolution. Besides, society was now better adjusted and positioned to accept a more diversified role for women.

Matia Chowdhury focussed on some of the issues relating to gender which should be addressed by policy makers on a priority basis. These issues included, amongst others, law and order, female education, social rights for women and the role of NGOs in facilitating the empowerment of women. She expressed her hope that the workshop would lead to some important policy directions for the government and policy makers, which could empower women and bring about substantial changes in their status and livelihood.

In this session the vote of thanks was offered by Nasreen Khundker, Dept. of Economics, University of Dhaka and Research Fellow, CPD, who had coordinated the Bangladesh component of the gender study. In her address Khundker suggested that macro-policies should move beyond structural adjustment policies and should not be confined only to the concerns of growth and stabilization. She felt that the many dimensions of inequality, particularly that of gender, should also be the focus of macro policy. She thanked the chief guest for her participation and demonstrable concern about the issues under discussion at the workshop. She also thanked all other participants for attending the workshop.

Session I: Gendering Economic Policies: The Role of the State, Civil Institutions and International Organisations.

Panel I: Feminist Initiatives to Gender Macro-Economic Policies in Canada and Australia

In this panel the speakers were Zeynep Enden Karman and Marian Sawyer. The discussion in this panel was chaired by Myruna I. Jarillas of the Philippines.

The paper titled Feminist Initiatives to Gender Macro-economic Policies in Canada was prepared by Zeynep Erden Karman for this workshop, and its objective was to analyse

the process of feminist engagement with the state in the area of macro-economic policy making. The author discussed various feminist initiatives to engender macro-economic policies in Canada. She observed that as a country with well-developed national WID machinery and strong women's movement, Canada had made significant advances on the issue of gender equality in the past decades. As an introduction Karman gave an account of the evolution of the status of the WID machinery in Canada. In this regard, a big achievement had been to establish an independent organization called the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) in 1973, funded by the government. In 1976, following International Women's Year, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women was given the responsibility for ensuring that the concerns of women were integrated into the overall government planning and decision making process. The integration strategy recognized the need for early interventions in the policy-making process, programmes, and legislation on women and men. In 1976 the Status of Women, Canada (SWC) was formed as the federal government body mandated to provide leadership, expertise, and strategic advice to the Minister, and to federal government departments and agencies on issues affecting women. In 1995, the Federal Programme Review led to the integration of the women's program into SWC. The program Review also integrated the independent research, dissemination, and public information responsibilities of CACSW into SWC.

At present, the SWC's regional structure allows it to establish and maintain contact with women's organizations across the country. 111 Canada, a well developed network of women's organizations contributes to the setting of local and national agendas for gender: equality, providing direct services to women and children, and educating all sectors of the public and government on issues relevant to gender equality. At the international level SWC collaborates with other federal departments to represent and promote the government's commitment to women's equality. In 1996, SWC undertook broad consultations on ways to enhance its working relationship with organizations and individuals interested in the advancement of women's equality, the development of a new Independent Policy Research Fund, and the future direction of the Women's Program. The on-going process of consultation with women's organizations is an integral part of the government's policy.

Karman also illustrated how feminists had attempted to incorporate gender issues into the macroeconomic policy process in Canada. For example, it was through the work of femocrat's (feminists as well as bureaucrats) and activists alike-that unpaid non-market work had been rightly defined as a macro-economic policy issue. Over the past decades, feminist economists had been instrumental in demonstrating that women's ability to participate in the paid labour force is inextricably linked to their unpaid caring little reproduction tasks, and these tasks made an important contribution to overall economic activity and human development. Data shows that household work done in Canada was worth between 30.6% and 46.3% of the Country's GDP, depending on the method of estimation. In terms of time, women carry out 65.6% of all unpaid household work, and the average value of their work was between \$ 11,920 and \$ 16,860 per year.

Besides, the SWC also supported the development, at Statistics Canada, of a satellite account to the national accounts that included measurement and valuation statistics on

unpaid work. In 1996, the Canadian census for the first time included questions on unpaid work, e.g., childcare, household work and care and assistance of the elderly. The inclusion of unpaid work in the census had served to illustrate the importance attributed by feminists to measurement and valuation issues of women's work.

Drawing similar examples from the Child Support and Canada Pension Plan Reform, Karman pointed out that it was a strong national WID machinery and gender policy analysis expertise, together with the collaboration of committed feminists working from inside and outside the bureaucracy, that formed the necessary conditions for achieving maximum success in focussing attention of policy planners on the contribution of women to the economy.

The other distinguished speaker in this panel was Dr. Marian Sawer who concentrated on feminist activities in Australia. She noticed that Canada and Australia had similar institutions to address the issue of women. She informed the workshop that Australia had a 22-year history of developing strong policy machinery to engender public policy. The non party organization Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), was set up in 1972 and succeeded in placing demands of women at centre stage during the federal election of that year. WEL was regarded as the 'reformist' wing of the new women's movement, but it also attracted many women who believed that it was time to move on from talk to practical action. It was the successful intervention by WEL in the 1972 federal election, which triggered the appointment of women's adviser to the Prime Minister in 1973. Again, WEL members inside and outside the government worked on a model for women's machinery which they presented to the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration set up by the Labour government. The model consisted of a woman's co-ordination unit within the central policy co-ordination agency of government, linked to a network of departmental women's units, responsible for monitoring policy at the point of initiation.

Sawer also mentioned that internal femocrat advocacy was effective in brokering government funding for a very wide range of women's services run by women for women in accordance with collectivist principles. However, the traditional bureaucrats obstructed these initiatives. But with the return of Labour to government in 1983, the Office of the Status of Women (Australia) returned in triumph to the department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and was able to reassert its role in coordinating a network of departmental women's units. Under the federal labour governments of the 1980s and 1990s, OSW and femocrats elsewhere in government, were to influence policy over a range of sectors such as the quintupling of the national childcare programme, increased funding of women's services, legislation requiring private sector companies to develop equal employment opportunity programmes, shifting of family support to primary carers, national programmes on violence against women, programmes to promote equal opportunity for workers with family responsibilities, etc. Many of these new programmes were developed through an elaborate process of consultation with women in the wider community. Sawer found that there was one aspect of Australian women's policy machinery, which was not replicated in Canada, which consisted of government-funded women's information services'.

Inside the bureaucracy, OSW was responsible for significant new co-ordination exercises such as the Women's Budget Program, which required all departments and agencies to

account for the impact of their activities on women in a Budget document. Sawyer pointed out that the Women's Budget Program was the world's first in terms of educating bureaucrats to disaggregate the impact of their mainstream programmes, rather than simply highlighting programmes for women. She also mentioned a different kind of feminist strategy to engendering economic decision making which was the development of satellite accounts incorporating the value of women's unpaid work into the national accounting system. She argued that this had a great influence in recognizing women's indispensable role in society and the economy.

Beverly Aderson-Manley was the discussant in this panel discussion. She mentioned the various salient features of the national machinery in Australia and Canada to advocate issues related to women. She argued that the strategic location of these machineries within and outside the government was very crucial. She also admitted that sometimes it was very difficult for these machineries to work, and for that reason women's participation should be linked both inside and outside the government, so that they could influence the policy making process in their favour more effectively.

In this discussion, Ms. Smita Nagraj pointed out that in the process of globalization more women were being employed in some key sectors such as Ready-made Garments (RMG). But the issue of equity should not be considered only from the point of view of equal participation of men and women. She argued that women were being employed in the garments industry because they were more disciplined and less prone to unionism. Karman also felt that this stance of various governments, that globalization imposed a constraint on taking measures which would benefit women could be challenged.

Panel II: States in flux: The Implications of Democratization and Economic Transition for Gendering Macro-Economic Policies

The discussion in this panel was chaired by Mr. Dag Ehrenpreis and the speakers were Ms. Maria Nemenyi and Ms. Patricia Alexander. Mr. Mirza M. Hasan was the designated discussant in this session.

Maria Nemenyi's paper titled *Gender Implications of Democratization and Economic Transition in Hungary: The Changing Situation of Hungarian women* focused on the various macro-economic phenomenon that were influencing women's participation in the market and its changing pattern in Hungary. Nemenyi observed that the socialist system, in sharp contrast with all its promises, was able neither to combat poverty, nor to guarantee equal right to women. On the other hand, in the process of transition to a market economy, parallel to the progress of privatization and the growth of the private sector, the preservation of a costly welfare system based on a government redistributive mechanism came under scrutiny and began to erode. Nemenyi pointed out that although, in the 1990s, Hungary witnessed a rapid increase in unemployment rates it was a remarkable fact that women were in a better position to defend their jobs compared to men. Women however did not do better in terms of wages and career opportunities. Also, when they became unemployed, their chances of finding another job were worse than those of men. During the decades of socialism, the unemployment of women in Hungary settled at the minimum figure possible both socially and demographically. In 1990 the employment figure of women between the ages of 15 and 54 was 77,2 percent, way above the equivalent figure in developed market economies. By 1995 this figure dropped

to 55.8 percent. In fact, just in five years (from 1990 to 1995) the rate of employed women was reduced from 45 percent to 31 percent. In addition to the roughly 20 percent decrease in the number of active women job holders between 1986 and 1995, a doubling of the number of dependent and inactive women in the active age group of the female population was also registered.

Nemenyi indicated that as a result of the marked changes taking place in the past ten years the daily tasks of child care were now being done mostly at home. In families where the parents raise their children together, the day care of children at home went up from the earlier figure of 37 percent to the current rate of 58 percent. This was only partially explained by the defensive strategy of seeking refuge from unemployment in one of the child-care related welfare schemes. The other explanation could be given in terms of closing down of day nurseries, Kindergartens and other child care institutions, accompanied by the rising expenses of the remaining ones.

Among other things Nemenyi mentioned that the growing number of small and intermediate enterprises formed one of the important features of the social and economic transformation in Hungary. According to various sources, private enterprises mostly attracted middle-aged men, although in the past few years, there had been a shift in this direction, so that both women and younger men were also becoming involved. Nemenyi also presented some of the survey results regarding women's involvement in private business, as entrepreneurs as well as workers. Bearing in mind the economic recovery predicted for the near future, Nemenyi hoped that it would be possible to improve the living standards of men and women and decrease the unemployment rate.

The next speaker was Dr. Patricia Alexander in her presentation focussed on how economic transition in Asia had impacted on women. She pointed out that the transition economies of Asia were understood as a success story in contrast to the initial few years of experience in parts of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. She identified four factors that influenced the impact of transition on women. These factors were (a) women's educational attainment and their participation in public life (b) the extent to which the State has organised support for women's family responsibilities or reproductive role (c) changes, under transition programmes, in legal codes and regulations that strengthened women's existing claims to ownership or use of assets and (d) the change in the overall growth rate of national income following the commencement of the reform process. These factors explained the difference between the experience of women in the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and women in East and Southeast Asia (ESA) China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Laos and Vietnam.

Patricia Alexander observed that whereas in the ESA countries there was strong evidence that many women were enjoying wider employment choices and higher personal incomes as a consequence of the development of factor markets, in the Central Asian countries much evidence indicated that women's incomes, security and equity were all under attack. Further, in all of the transitional economies of Asia, there were indications that the social conditions supporting the enhancement of women's status and the discharge of their family responsibilities were under significant threat. Thus while opportunities had generally increased in ESA countries, in certain areas, it had been reduced in the CARs.

Alexander also found that where economic expansion had been slowed or reversed, as in the CARs, women were at a disadvantage in competing for jobs, whereas in parts of China and Vietnam, economic growth had compensated for reduced public sector employment and services.

While conditions at the outset varied greatly among the transition countries, and among regions within each country, in general it was in the CARs that women enjoyed the highest status, educational attainment and public participation, followed by China and Vietnam, and then Laos and Cambodia. Women's participation in the labour force at the outset was very high in all the transition economies, in both paid and non-wage productive work. Generally, more than 70% of women were economically active. Participation in paid employment was highest in some of the CARs followed by China and Vietnam, corresponding to the greater development of wage employment in these economies as a whole. The educational attainment of women was high in the CARs, and also in China and Vietnam. But in Cambodia and Laos, literacy levels of women were as low as 24% and 35% respectively.

Drawing on some experiences from the economies of Vietnam, China, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Alexander argued that while expansion of markets created by the transition could be of benefit to women, the conditions of any such benefit were that transition enabled women to achieve greater mobility than before as they participate in labour markets, and that these markets provided women with equivalent access and returns to those enjoyed by men. In countries where women already enjoyed significant mobility, such as the CARs, this was less important. Alexander also acknowledged that countries where growth rates had declined, this had a much greater negative impact on women. For example, in Mongolia, the maternal mortality rate doubled in three years between 1990 and 1993.

Mr. Mirza M. Hasan was the discussant in this panel. Concentrating on Maria Nemeny's presentation, Hasan pointed out that women were the principal losers in the transition process. He argued that during the period of socialist rule women used to derive benefits from various social policies such as health care facilities, maternity leave etc. But now in the context of drastic privatization of the economy those social policies would make female labour very expensive. Therefore, female workers will be vulnerable to redundancy from restructuring. Mirza Hassan argued for a deeper understanding as to how women's role in terms of participating in the social and economic life of a country would be affected after the transition. He pointed out that women's relative status might improve or not after the transition, depending on the regimes that were in power and the regimes that would replace the previous ones.

Panel III: Attempts by Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies to Gender Programme Assistance

The discussion under panel III titled Attempts by multilateral and bilateral agencies to gender programme assistance was chaired by Ms. Najma Chowdhury and the speakers were Ms. Rosina Wiltshire of UNDP, Ms. Marjan Karoon of DGIS and Mr. Dag Ehrenpreis of SIDA.

Initiating the discussion, Rosina Wiltshire observed that UNDP sought to facilitate and support the national agenda and that its major partners were the governments of the concerned countries. So the problem was whether the government itself had an agenda to strengthen women's concerns in its national policies. She argued that one of the key aspects of gender programming was to evaluate budgetary allocations. Evaluating these budgetary allocations it was found that only 1.7% of the total expenditure went to women specific projects. Considering only the mainstream projects the corresponding figure was found to be 6.7%. Thus it could be inferred that in terms of budgetary allocations women's interests was not given due attention.

Rosina Wiltshire informed the workshop that the UNDP had initiated training programmes (i.e. negotiation and advocacy training programmes) which were being supported and monitored closely in 20 countries. Another remarkable aspect of gender programming was its institutional dimension. The UNDP decided that gender sensitization within the UNDP should take place so that at the professional and the highest level of decision making women's participation could be ensured. Regarding the problems of gender programming, Wiltshire observed that the decision making process within the UNDP had tended to be very hierarchical. Besides, at the national level, the UNDP programmes were negotiated with the government and women were rarely represented at the negotiating table to be able to influence the decision making as to what should constitute the national priority, with the result that gender issues were often not on the table for discussion. Mentioning a few other problems, she pointed out that the senior level managers within the organization were supportive of the process of gendering programme assistance. She however acknowledged that such commitment was absent from the mid level managers. The major progress so far achieved, according to Wiltshire, was that there had been a conceptual shift towards making the organization and its programmes more gender sensitive.

The next speaker was Marjan Karoon of DGIS who concentrated mainly on the institutional and bureaucratic struggle to get gender issues incorporated into the macroeconomic agenda. Mentioning her own experiences in Tanzania, she pointed out that in the 1980s, about 80% of the Netherlands's aid to Tanzania was program oriented and related to issues of macroeconomics, but it failed to address women's concerns. She pointed out that during the time of structural adjustment in Tanzania there were several gender-oriented programmes such as gender and poverty, gender and education, etc. but all these programmes actually did not have any linkage between gender and macroeconomic policies. She then elaborated the efforts made to bring gender issues into focus. Initiatives were also taken to examine how programme aid was handled by various donors, and in such exercise the activities of ODA, SIDA, USAID and Netherlands were evaluated. The whole purpose of this study was to come up with some concrete suggestions so that gender issues could be integrated into programme aid. One of the important recommendations that came out as the upshot of this research was to influence the concerned country's (in this case the Netherlands) strategy on gender.

Karoon informed the participants that her agency had also designed some basic training programmes on gender and macroeconomics. She felt that such courses should be introduced at the Universities in Amsterdam.

In his speech, Dag Ehrenpreis argued that the overall objective of Swedish Development Corporation was to raise the level of living of the poor and this broad objective also had several sub goals, one of which was to achieve gender equality. This goal of gender equality was also officially adopted by the Swedish Parliament in recent years. He astutely observed that gender equality was not only an important objective in itself but it was also an important means for raising the standards of living of people in poor countries. He pointed out that in the Beijing conference the issues of gender inequality and feminization of poverty were of chief concern. He emphasized that the effect of adjustment on poverty and survival strategy of the poor should be investigated and a comprehensive strategy should be designed to overcome these problems.

Dag pointed out that SIDA supported action programme in which women are seen not only as victims, but also as potential agents of change in relation to poverty eradication. He then elaborated the findings of the Poverty Reduction Task Force that worked in SIDA for the period 1994 to 1995, and the process of gender mainstreaming elaborated in that report. He also admitted that the gender perspective of poverty reduction programmes that came out from this study was not satisfactory but that this deficiency would be met in the follow-up programmes of SIDA. He apprised the participants that the next report would include issues of human rights, sustainable livelihood, infrastructural development from a gender perspective, education and health, environmental sustainability from a gender perspective, and the process of urbanization from a gender perspective. He expressed his hope that the report would be a very useful input to policy development work.

The discussant in this session was Ms. Ingrid Bide. She appreciated the various initiatives and actions taken by the agencies to make the women's issues more focussed. She argued that in re-shaping and re-structuring the activities and programmes of the concerned agencies there should be both participation and commitment from the member states.

Ms. Nasreen Khundker, at this point, argued that unless there was something tangible and concrete policymakers could not focus on such issues. She regretted that in the conference there was nothing, which could be regarded as a conceptual breakthrough. She categorically mentioned that macroeconomics traditionally dealt with aggregates. The key question in such issues was output and employment fluctuations, movement in inflation and interest rates. So it was not only gender inequality, rather any kind of inequality had never been the focus of macroeconomics. As a result, it should be decided first whether a new domain of analysis should be incorporated in macroeconomics and for this serious analysis and hard thinking were most essential. She mentioned that in the 1970s some attempts were made to develop a framework such as Social Accounting Matrices so that the issues of inequality, particularly related to poverty, could be addressed in macroeconomic analysis. Khundker also observed that unless a concrete framework is developed to integrate wider inequality and gender issues into the analytical framework, macroeconomics could not address these issues within its modes of analysis.

Regarding the donor's role, Nasreen Khundker observed that sometimes the donor's programmes are contradictory in nature. She mentioned that in one of the development projects in Bangladesh, the long term goal was to increase female enrollment in schools, but at the same time there was a provision for compulsory religious education up to class XII. She wondered how these two issues could be made consistent in the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh. At this point Dharam Ghai also supported Khundker's point, and further added that there should be a well-designed co-ordination effort amongst the policies of various bilateral and multilateral donor agencies.

In a query from Naila Kabeer, Dag informed the workshop that there had been reorganization in SIDA, and the old SIDA had been merged with three other official aid agencies. The level of gender-awareness in those three organizations was very low. So there was an apprehension that it might hamper the process of gendering the SIDA programmes. But he pointed out that the present Swedish government and the new management at SIDA would be taking serious steps in tackling such problems.

Panel IV: Opportunities for Institutions of Civil Society to Influence the Policy Process: Reflections on the Concept of Policy Dialogue

This part of the workshop was chaired by Mr. Akmal Hussain, Secretary, Ministry of Education, GOB and the designated speakers were Mr. Yusuf Bangura and Mr. Rehman Sobhan. Initiating the discussion, Yusuf Bangura explained the concept of policy dialogue. According to him; the concept of policy dialogue received much importance as a mechanism for promoting focused, equitable, violence free and sustainable development. He then presented five models of policy dialogue: *corporatism, technocracy, power sharing, entryism, and global sustainable pluralism*. He analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of these models; the kinds of outcomes (potential or real) that can be associated with each model; and how gender issues have fared or are likely to fare in each type of model. He then, made a comparative analysis between the global sustainable pluralism model and the corporatist model. He expressed the view that although the global sustainable pluralism model was popular in the development discourse for mainstreaming gender into policy making, the progress in promoting this model is likely to be slow, less purposeful, and dependent upon large infusions of resources and external leverages compared to the hitherto successful corporatist model, which did not explicitly target women as the main beneficiaries of the policy contract.

According to Bangura there were four major constraints to the institutionalization of policy dialogue for gendered development, especially for developing countries. These constraints relate to the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse on development; the effects of globalization on the balance of power among key institutions in international, national and local settings; the rigidities of national bureaucratic cultures; and the unequal patterns of development and contradictions within gender constituencies. He then recommended a set of policy suggestions for overcoming the constraints. The suggestions included a case for flexible gendered theories or ideologies for promoting economic reforms and development; empowering of gendered institutions in the global, development agenda; discretionary use of power by international and donor organisations in poor and

vulnerable countries; support for secular movements whose progress was linked to the pursuit of universal goals of equity; adoption of focused, long term perspectives and well funded strategies to institutionalise gender in national bureaucracies; improving upon the density and social reach of gender social movements; and ensuring that issues of balanced representation and accountability are taken into account when gendered policy dialogue teams are established in global and national settings.

Rehman Sobhan, in his presentation, discussed his experience with the process of policy dialogues in Bangladesh. He argued that there has been considerable confusion over what should constitute civil society. The traditional definition was really built upon the differentiation between the military and civil society, which emerged at a time when military regimes in the third world took control of the State. In the contemporary period, there was a tendency to distinguish between civil society, defined as the government and its executive bodies, and rest of society. There was also a debate about the inclusion of political parties who do not happen to be included the government. He pointed out that it was very difficult to define the status of political parties, which were represented in Parliament in contrast to those who failed to be elected. Thus regarding the definition of civil society, Sobhan thought that it was a gray area in the context of Bangladesh. Sobhan also discussed the arguments arising out of the tendency to identify by donors NGOs as the embodiment of civil society.

Sobhan further argued that the task in the Bangladesh context was to rescue the dialogue process from the hegemony of the World Bank, the principal donor agency, which managed to influence and limit the discourse through their unequal relationship with the domestic bureaucracy and their capacity to co-opt the professional classes through offer of consultancy contracts. But he also mentioned that in Bangladesh some spontaneous initiatives within civil society had managed to generate enough political pressure, to influence the policy discourse within the government. He recalled his effort to produce a task force report in 1991 to provide an alternative set of policy advice to the incoming government to influence the policy making process the government and in Parliament. But he regretted that the hard labour given in the Task Force Reports was largely futile, because the new government took up where the autocratic government had left off in subordinating its policy agendas to the development paradigm perpetuated by the World Bank over the last decade.

Prof. Sobhan then explained how the *Centre for Policy Dialogue* initiated the process of public dialogues in Bangladesh. He elaborated that the idea was not only to involve the bureaucrats and donors in this process, but also to bring political players led by the concerned ministries and agencies, the principal figures in opposition, the business community, NGOs and academicians into this process: since they were all collateral parties to the policy making process either as producers or consumers of policy. Through this exercise, Prof. Sobhan felt that a tradition had developed for promoting policy debates within Bangladesh. He also mentioned that such dialogues took place where representatives of both the government and opposition participated despite the fact that the opposition had been boycotting the Parliament. He however pointed out that such dialogues could not as yet generate adequate pressure because of the disarticulated nature

of civil society, whereby enough synergy could not be generated from such a dialogue process to pressurise government's to rethink their policy agendas. Sobhan regretted that there the tendency on the part of government to let the donors influence the agenda of the government still remained strong.

Sobhan argued that if the initiatives for prooting an active discourse with civil society were to come from the government's side such initiatives of CPD could be treated as a having accomplished some of their objectives. Thus, in formulating policies the government should continued to be influenced by the donors. However, thus far these were little evidence of any spontaneous interest within the GOB in appreciating the functional value of such a dialogue process. Whilst ritualising the process of promoting domestic opposed to making a genuine effort to involve the representatives of civil society in policy consultations. Sobhan found that some interesting developments had, however, been forthcoming in this direction as the new government had already set up 6 or so national commissions with representatives from civil society, to formulate domestically conceived policy alternatives to guide the new government.

Sobhan then explained the objective of preparing an Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development which had been an exercise initiated by CPD in 1995. He argued that previously, the evaluation of the performance of the economy was limited within the Country Economic Memorandum (CEM) prepared annually by the World Bank to guide the discussions at the Bangladesh Aid group meeting in Paris every April. The CEM was, in fact, the document of choice of the donors and had been widely used by the government as well as Bangladeshi researchers in evaluating the state of the economy. Sobhan that argued that as such evaluation could as well be done by the country's own economists as who were of high calibre.

Sobhan concluded by observing that the strength and weakness of civil society would remain historically specific to a particular country. In Bangladesh, civil society had traditionally remained underdeveloped but in recent years it had emerged as a much more pro-active force in influencing the domestic policy discourse. He indicated that a well-designed dialogue process could play an effective role in promoting the role of civil society in influencing policy.

Panel V Industrialization, Export Promotion and the Changing Pattern of Women's Employment in Bangladesh

In this panel, discussion was centred on the research report of the Bangladeshi team. The research team comprised of Ms. Nasreen Khundker, Ms. Nazli Kibria, Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Ms. Rita Afsar and Mr. Debapriya Bhattachariya. The discussion was chaired by Mr. Mujibul Hag.

The first presentation in this panel was made by Nasreen Khundker. Khundker observed that in Bangladesh, the pattern of women's employment had changed, on account of changes in industrial policies and interventionist policies of NGOs such as Grameen Bank. Citing the figures from macro data she pointed out that woman's participation in the economy had increased in both the urban and rural areas. In case of the former, this had been mainly due to the fast growth of the ready-made garments industry which

mostly employed female labour. In rural areas, most of the NGOs had involved more and more women in self employed activities. Khundker argued that this pattern of women's employment was likely to continue in future. She also explained the causes of increased female participation in the garment industry.

Nasreen Khundker summarized some of the main findings of the research team. One of the conclusions was that women were over represented in the lower skill-grades and that they were crowding into a narrow range of industries and jobs which partly explained the lower average female wages compared to the average male wages. It was also found that labour supply decisions of women, particularly of young age, were made in the context of household cooperation and conflict in an interplay of factors such as that of fear of a failed marriage, family crises of various types, desire to expand their horizons, and financial independence. Khundker pointed out that the households were adopting a long run maximizing strategy where factory-work was seen to be a way of accumulating dowry. Referring to Nazli Kibria's work, she also mentioned that community attitudes towards the working women were not always favorable. But it was also noted that the community was important in mediating entry of women into the garments industry by providing information and network relations. Kibria also found that factory work in formal employment in many cases led to an occupational shift from domestic service to industrial employment.

Khundker then explained how these findings could be used to influence macro-policies. She pointed out that the broad implication was that macro-economic policies had to be focused on poverty alleviation and also in creating a more enabling environment for women's work. She argued that the lack of public investment in industry (e.g. in the garment industry) had affected women's well being. As a result, sectoral policies had to be gender equitable and in this case, besides the State, the employers should also make the necessary contributions towards providing training and other services.

Referring to S.I. Khan 's study, Khundker mentioned that there was an unequal relationship between employers and workers in the garment, industry, which could be corrected through better industrial relations. The employers even took unlawful actions to. prevent trade-unionism in this Industry. She suggested that a greater participation of workers in management should be ensured. Khundker informed the workshop that the allocation of state funds for women had been minimal, less than 1 percent of total social sector expenditures. For funds allocated to the ministry of Women's Affairs, total resource flows during the period 1989-1995 had been lower than what Grameen Bank alone had disbursed as credit to its members. Khundker argued that the analysis of public expenditures suggested that there was not only a need for a greater flow of resources to women, but also that there were considerable scope for reallocation of these expenditures.

Simeen Mahmud, in her presentation, discussed various aspects of labour use in rural Bangladesh. She argued that unlike men, women spent the major proportion of their working time for expenditure saving household production, and this general pattern had persisted over time. She however argued that the labour mobility of women between home production and market production was constrained both by supply and demand

factors. The major supply constraints had been gender-differentiated responsibility for household production and gender specific access to human capital. The major demand constraint on women's mobility had been the segmented and sex segregated nature of the labour market. Citing various statistics Mahmud, however, showed that the allocation of labour time for women, to market production relative to household production had been increasing.

Considering the fact that it was not always possible to distinguish whether women 's movement into the labour market had resulted from 'demand pull' or 'supply push' factors, Mahmud felt that the implications for women's well being could be very different in the two cases. She pointed out that micro-credit programmes had influenced the demand for female labour by raising the productivity of self-employment and inducing the need for hired labour. It had also increased the supply of female labour by improving access to resources and human capital. She however noticed that despite institutional support, which induced women to participate in market work, supply barriers persisted to confine women's participation to less productive sectors.

The next speaker was Rita Afsar who presented the paper titled *Absorption of Female Migrant Labours in Formal Manufacturing Sectors: Some Sociological Implications*. The purpose of this paper was to highlight how migrant female labourers in the formal manufacturing sector of Bangladesh cope with urban society and fit into the urban labour market. The paper also focussed on migration motivations and the role of information in the process of labour migration.

Afsar found that migrant workers came to Dhaka pre-dominantly in search of jobs, irrespective of whether they were long-term or recent migrants. This was particularly true for male workers in both garments and 'other' manufacturing sectors, and female garments workers. In the case of female workers located in 'other' manufacturing units, job search related migration accounted for nearly 40 percent; of the residual share, education and associational migration accounted for 30 percent each. Almost all female workers irrespective of type of industries had not been formally employed prior to migration. Afsar in her survey found that the average land size of owned land held by male and female workers employed in garments factories was 1.3 and 2.0 acres respectively whilst for their counterparts in the other manufacturing units, the corresponding figures were 3.7 and 2.5 acres. respectively. In fact, the average landholding held by the household of female garments' worker was the lowest (1.3 acres) compared to male garment workers (2.0 acres) and female non-garments workers (2.5 acres). Thus, she concluded that female garments factory workers, were on average poorer compared to both male and female workers employed in 'other' factories.

Afsar pointed out that 40 percent of garment factory workers and a quarter from 'other' manufacturing units migrated to Dhaka for their present job and as a result, nearly half of the migrant workers knew about the nature of the job and its wages. However, this varied significantly by gender, nature of occupation: and type of factory. She observed that the information base of a male worker in the garments factory was stronger than for his female counterpart, irrespective of skill level, and the reverse was true for other

remanufacturing units. It was also found that in the case of garments factory workers there had been an increase in the proportion of workers who had information about wages and the nature of the job, along with the dispersal of skills, in their industry. The number of female workers in the garments factory migrating between 1991 -1996 and those who had job related information was significantly higher than those who migrated between 1980 and 1990. Increased access to information by female workers implied wider and greater networking among recent female workers entering the garment factories. It was also found that family and employers' agents emerged as important informal sources of information. In contrast, for workers of 'other' manufacturing units, formal source such as advertisements in the newspapers was quite important as an information source.

Regarding women 's bargaining position at the workplace, the study found that a large number of women bargained for better working conditions such as higher wages, paid leave, changes from the night shifts, etc., at par with their male counterparts, and the outcomes did not differ much along gender lines. Yet, women more often than men, were likely to be penalized through salary cuts due to their greater propensity to take sick leave. Women workers were more susceptible to sickness and fatigue arising out of their multiple burdens of domestic chores, child care and office work as well as a systematic deprivation in their entitlement to a more equitable share of food within the household which had been inflicted on them since their childhood.

From the survey it was also quite obvious that migration appears to be predominantly to be a family strategy for income maximization. Female workers were found to depend largely on family members to cope with the urban situation. To overcome the prevailing negative social attitudes towards independent female workers, which constrained their access to accommodation in the urban areas, they tended to live with one or two family members in sub-let arrangements or with their brothers or sisters or aunt's or uncle's family based in and around the urban areas where their work place may be located. In sharp contrast to the female garment workers, living in messes or boarding houses was much more common among male workers employed in garment factories rather than to live in sub-let arrangements. Family based living arrangements gave working women the necessary protection from theft and other untoward incidents and provided them necessary support services such as childcare. In the absence of a cheap and safe public transportation system, almost 90 percent of female garment factory workers chose to live in areas adjacent to their factories from where they could walk to their workplace. In many cases, however, these were no quick jaunts within the neighborhood but involve commutes of an hour or more to and from works, offer in the early hours of the day and take in the evening a after night still. The survey, however, revealed that the sexual harassment of the garments factory workers on the roads tended to be insignificant; casual reports of assaults on these young girls walking to and from work, tends to contribute to the tensions of their urban life.

Afsar regretted that neither the government nor the private employers provided hostel or housing facilities for women workers. In recent years a few initiatives had been taken by some NGOs, but the facilities remain highly inadequate. Thus the researcher suggested that whilst there was a general need for low income housing in urban areas! low-cost

hostel facilities for working women, particularly unskilled garments factory workers suggested the need for urgent policy intervention. She also drew the attention of the policy makers on the need for cheap and safe public transportation. Afsar argued that due to constraints on horizontal mobility, women very often had to compete for the same type of jobs. Thus, as a result of this 'crowding-in effect', wages paid to women were generally lower than those earned by their male counterparts.

Debapriya Bhattachariya, in his presentation presented some macro data on women's participation in the economic activities of Bangladesh. He pointed out that in the manufacturing sector 11 percent of the workforce is female. However, if we limit our span to the production workers, the women's share of this part of the work force rises to 17 percent, of which 93% of all formally employed female workers were located in the textile and apparel sector.

Bhattachariya raised the issue whether the rapid growth of female employment in the garments industry would be sustainable. Referring to an estimate of labour force demand, he observed that under a normal scenario for trends in the labour market female employment would increase by 7.7 percent, but under an accelerated growth scenario this could increase to 9.4 per cent per annum over the next ten years. He, however, argued that there are some problems in accepting such projections. Although 90% of workers employed today in the garment industry were women, their participation in the faster growing knit-wears and hosiery industry was as low as 4 percent. At present export earnings from knit-wear and hosiery had risen to 22 percent of total earnings from the garments sector. It was therefore of some concern that female employment in one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy had been minimal. The second fast growing activity within the clothing and apparel sector was the dyeing and finishing sector. With the increase in backward linkages, there was no doubt that this sector would grow very rapidly. But at present, within the dyeing and finishing industries, the women's participation rate remained as low as 2 percent. Similarly, if the local textile sector developed in the process of developing backward linkages, the share of women's employment might not increase significantly, since at this moment, this sector's female worker participation had been only 10 percent. Thus, Bhattacharya concluded that within a process of globalization, which drove the move for rapid structural shifts in the patterns of industrialization the women's participation in the adjustment process, as far example, in backward linkage in the textile sector, industries might be severely constrained in the near future. He, however, argued that if product diversification did indeed take place the textile industry could also move from cotton fabric to a silk fabric base, whereby women's employment could also rise significantly, as the silk sector employed 41% women in its total labour force. Similar developments would occur if more and more handloom fabric were drawn upon as inputs to the RMG sector (where female participation was 50 percent). In this area Grameen Bank's recent initiative to upgrade handloom fabrics (Grameen Cheek) to provide inputs to the RMG sector is a most promising development. Thus Bhattacharya was of the opinion that women's participation in future will depend on the type of product diversification and the nature of the growth of the backward linkage industries.

Bhattacharya presented another interesting finding. During the early 1990s the value added in the RMG sector had gone up from 23% to 31% whilst profitability also went up from 13% to 24% of value addition. This indicated that the share of wage costs declined from 11% to 7%. This suggested that in this process of growth in output and employment in the garment industry there might have been a fall in real wages of the workers as well as a redistribution of income from the workers to the owners of the garment factories. He pointed out that in order to maintain the export competitiveness of the garment industry skilled workers were being substituted for unskilled workers at a higher wage rate. Secondly, it was also found that despite productivity increases of both labour and capital, skilled workers did not enjoy sufficient upward mobility. From this situation, Bhattacharya argued that there was functional gender segregation within the labour force, which placed limits on the upward mobility and skill acquisition of female workers. He contended that if these issues are not addressed urgently and effectively, female workers could be exposed to a process de-skilling and redundancy along with more careful planning of the process of structural change in the textile industry. Bhattacharya suggested some policy intervention to overcome these problems, likely to be faced by women workers in the days.

The designated discussant on the research output of the Bangladeshi team was Ms. Rahma Bourqia who regarded the study to be very rich and excellent. She found that the state of female labour and its impact on exports as experienced in Bangladesh was quite similar to that in Morocco. She pointed out that woman's participation in the labour market should be treated as a factor of social change and development, particularly when women were contributing significantly to the export earnings. She noticed that a process of feminization was taking place in the export industries. She supported Simeen Mahmud's finding that since agricultural activities were not profitable for women and their families, it demanded more non-agriculture jobs. She observed that in the factory work for many women were valued more highly than their domestic work. Bourqia argued that although women's participation in the formal workforce was increasing, their condition at the workplace and other associated problems were not correctly addressed. She posed the question as to what extent a factory job empowers a woman. She found two important challenges, which needed to be urgently addressed by the policy makers. First, how to make the export industries internationally competitive and at the same time how to ensure a better environment in the industries in terms of women's participation and working conditions, especially access to training, use of technology, fair wages, protection of women's rights, etc. The second challenge was how to make policy makers and employers more gender sensitive. She emphasized on developing a conceptual framework which would link working conditions, efficiency and competitiveness in terms of the export market. She argued that industries where women were efficient and productive also enjoyed a relatively better working environment.

Taking part in the discussion, Hameeda Hossain pointed out that in order to find out the causes behind migration, the researchers should not be confined to the economic explanations, which was usually related to the poverty situation of rural Bangladesh. In fact political causes should also be emphasised which was related to the repression of women within the family and society, and particularly gender relation, within the family.

Again, many employers would like to employ women from their own villages and from their own kinship circle. She felt that the issue of health vulnerability of women should be discussed more seriously. In this regard, cultural factors that affect the health situation should be taken into account, especially as to why women usually took more leave than men. Hossain wondered at the research finding that the number of incidents of violence against working women had been insignificant. She argued that the incidence of violence both on the street and at the workplace was, in fact, increasing. Regarding the bargaining power of women, she questioned as to how women were effected to bargain on an individual basis, given that collective bargaining at various industries and RMG industries in particular, was not allowed. She re-iterated that the issue of health insurance for women should be given special attention. This was because as profitability in the garments sector had been increasing it could be interesting to know how much of this increased profit was actually filtering down to the workers.

Taking the floor, Rushidan Islam Rahman said that the discussion in the workshop had failed to consider the macro aspects of gender issues and it concentrated only on the micro issues. She enquired about the impact of liberalization on women's well being. She suggested that a basic to be investigated related to the extent to the liberalized economy increased the opportunities question should be for women participate in the formal labour force. Referring to an estimate presented by Debapriya Bhattachariya regarding the gender gap in wages, Rushidan pointed out that part of this discrimination could be explained by skill, education, human capital endowment, etc., which had not been highlighted in his study. Regarding micro credit schemes of various NGOs, she argued that currently much of the micro credit was chanelled to family enterprises, which were dominated by male workers. So just the fact that women were borrowing from NGOs did not necessarily mean that credit inputs generated female employment. Commenting on Rita Afsar's study, Rushidan suggested that an effort should be made to link rural labour markets to urban labour markets to the establish the wages in which the rural market was integrated to the urban labour market through generation of employment in the garments sector.

Naila Kabeer pointed out that trade unionism in the garments industry could only be beneficial to women if they worked on issues related to women's welfare. She observed that in this country trade unions were usually seen as an extension of the political parties, and as such it could not protect the interests of the working class. She observed that the provision for minimum wages could be seen from a different angle. For example, for males, a minimum wage might be a priority issue but for a women, some form of child care support could be more important than realising a minimum wage. She also gave some other 'examples to indicate that the work related demands of men and women could be different. Kabeer argued that women had fewer options and as a result they had to accept many things which men would find intolerable. The employers thus had the incentive to exploit the lack of options open to women in society. Thus, whenever women bargain they can rarely do so with as much resolution as men. Citing her own research finding, she observed that women first entered a factory as a 'helper', then learnt the machine work and often moved to other factories where they presented themselves as

machine operators, in order to obtain a higher wage. So women had to adopt different strategies to strengthen their bargaining position.

Pratima Paul Mazumder in her comments suggested that the impact of wage employment on the health of workers should be examined. She thought the research carried out by the first generation researchers on women in the organized sector could not tackle this issue adequately, so this task should be completed by the CPD research team who happened to be the second generation of researchers working on this particular issue. She stated that the coping mechanisms of the migrant female workers should be studied, particularly how they coped with diseases to which women had become vulnerable. Commenting on Debapriya's paper, Majumder mentioned that she had undertaken a comprehensive study, including variables such as, education, skill, length of services, training etc to explain the gender gap in wages, and found that not all of the wage discrimination could be explained by these factors. So gender discrimination in wages remained an issue.

Regarding the issue of profits accruing to the entrepreneurs, Rokeya Rahman and Nurul Kader Khan pointed out that one should take into account that the entrepreneurs had to assume tremendous risks. Nurul Kader Khan strongly denied the contention that there was discrimination in wages in the garments industry. He also added that individual bargaining was not the norm. Referring to the statistics provided by Debapriya on the profitability of the garments industry, Nurul Kader Khan reminded every one that during the year 1995-96, 600 RMG industries had closed down. Khan thus argued that the business was a risky one and these risks had to be taken into account when the profit margins of the industry were reviewed.

Panel VI Female Employment, Industrial Models and International Competitiveness in Morocco

The speakers in this panel were Mr. Sa ad Belghazi, Ms. Rahman Bounqia and Ms. Rabea Naciri. They presented the country report on Morocco.

Initiating the discussion, Sa ad Belghazi told the workshop that Morocco was typical of many developing countries in having experienced a rapid growth of female wage employment over the past twenty years, with a strong concentration of women workers in the export sector. At the very beginning Belghazi summarized the findings of his research. The first finding was that the growth of the export sector in the 1980s was based on female employment and competitiveness based on low wages. The low wages were correlated with female employment. Besides, women were also discriminated against in terms of wages. Their final finding was that low wages were no longer the source of comparative advantage for Moroccan industries. Belghazi argued that the low level of female wages acted as a disincentive to producers to seek productivity increases and raises the share of capital in production. By extension, the international competitiveness of Moroccan industry could be improved by increase in wages, insofar as wage increases would prompt producers to make productivity improvements, assuming they have the capacity to adopt improved production methods.

Belghazi also attempted to estimate the gender gap in wages and he found that across the urban labour market as a whole, the average female wage was 21.1% lower than the average male wage. However, there was considerable variation in the wage gap and in wage trends among different economic sectors. He found that in the clothing industry the level of wages was lower compared to other industries and the level of wage discrimination by gender was also lower than in many other industries.

Through some quantitative exercise Belghazi found that the causes of gender discrimination remained in large part unexplained. He suggested that the causes needed to be sought in social processes outside the labour market. However, combining the findings on competitiveness and productivity with those of the functioning of the urban labour market Belghazi felt that in Morocco it should be possible to reduce wage discrimination by gender, without penalizing Morocco's international competitiveness. He further added that seeking to increase women's wages in the export sector, in pursuit of gender equality, should induce employers to improve productivity. He pointed out that clothing producers might have already taken steps in this direction as the rate of increase in wages had been higher in the textile and clothing sector than in any other part of the economy. One explanation might be that in order to try and maintain their market share in an increasingly competitive export market, producers had chosen to try to improve product quality, and in pursuit of this strategy had increased wages to retain their best (women) workers and reduce turnover rates.

The second paper by Belghazi titled *The Determinants of Women's Wages and of Wage Discrimination by Gender in the Textiles and Clothing Sector in Morocco*, attempted to estimate earnings functions by gender in two different parts of the urban sector in Morocco. These two sectors were the export-oriented part of the textiles industry, comprising clothing and carpets, and the rest of the Moroccan industry and services sector. The analysis showed some interesting differences between the wage determination process in the export based textiles sector and the rest of the economy. In the export based textiles sector there was a strong relation for men between household head and wages, which existed in much weaker form for women. Years of experience had no effect on male earnings at all, as against a very slight one for women. A primary diploma had little effect on women's wages, but a very strong positive influence on male wages. For all other qualifications, except secondary level diplomas, the returns to education for men are much more favorable than for women. Using the estimated wage functions, Belghazi found that the wage gap by gender was much less in the carpets and clothing industry (9.3% as against 42.88% in other sectors).

The next speaker from Morocco was Rahma Bourqia. Her presentation was based on a survey findings drawn from 15 industries in Morocco and as such it focussed on two levels of investigation viz (1) level of the managers at the industries and (2) level of women workers. The study covered 225 workers of which 87% were women. She observed that women worked in these industries against the backdrop of wider social disadvantages or discrimination, and this social discrimination and disadvantage was being reproduced at the workplace derived from discrimination created by both socio-cultural and economic mechanisms.

Bourqia found that in the process of recruitment, younger women were chosen since these women came to the industries without experience or training and they were offered much lower wages. She pointed out that during the training period the wages were extremely low, and in fact in the name of training it was the employers and the managers who stood to gain. Regarding the hierarchy and division of labour within the factory, it was found that women were discriminated against. According to Bourqia, within the factory women were generally docile, and were compelled to work at their maximum level of intensity. For example, if it was required to produce 40 pieces within a specified time, the female workers were made to produce 60 pieces. In fact, the general pattern of human resource management was totally gender biased, and women were not encouraged to develop their skills or take initiatives in the work place.

Bourqia noticed that the practice of gender inequality within the factory led to low wages for women. Besides, women's work such as sewing was lowly paid compared to the tasks assigned to male workers. Again, the hours of work changed according to the workload and production requirements. In fact, the rules and regulation from the management side were not made clear to the employees. She argued that unless the present culture of management in the factory was not improved, the discrimination against women could not be eliminated.

The last speaker from the Moroccan team was Rabea Naciri. The subject of her presentation was Political Dialogue in the Moroccan Context. She observed that the political system of Morocco was characterized by strong *polarisation* of political interests between the King of Morocco on the one side and the opposition on the other. The logic of the dialogue was to alternate between confrontation and compromise. The strategy was linked to a political system based on a co-optation of political *elites* and *clientism*, and this was a closed system with limited participation. Rabea pointed out that the women's movement emerged only after 1980 in the face of a great financial crisis due to structural adjustment policies. Since then the political dialogue had widened to embrace new social and political groups. In this context, the question of gender occupied a particular position because the rise of religious fundamentalism traditionally treated the male as superior to women. She, however, pointed out that Islam never restricted women's participation in work. In this context, the political significance of the issues and consequences of the women's movement meant that it came to play an important political role. However, one of the major problems was that Morocco did not have any institution to arrange dialogues on gender issues. For all these reasons, the goal of the women's movement was to bring all progressive groups together and follow a strategy which included entry of women into civil society, bureaucracy, give them more focus in the media and to build up alliances with the political opposition parties.

Rabea Naciri mentioned that the state did interfere and obstruct such initiatives taken by various groups. On the other hand, the women's movement obtained some support from the academic community. She pointed out that despite the fact that women's unemployment rate (30%) was higher than that for men (16%), it was usually argued that women do not seek work. She felt that the UNRISD project could help in promoting dialogues on gender issues in Morocco. Rabea Naciri observed that women were increasingly being employed in the export industries on account of their lower skills and

lower wages. She argued that the enterprises were benefiting from the social discrimination against women.

The discussant in this panel was Debapriya Bhattachariya. Regarding the issue of women's participation in export industries, Debapriya commented that the scenario in Bangladesh and Morocco tended to be quite similar. Referring to, the findings of the first paper (by Sa ad Belghazi), he pointed out that in estimating the earnings functions the researcher assumed that productivity was a function of wages, rather it would be other way round. Debapriya explained that if productivity grew that would ensure higher wages. In this regard, he suggested that productivity growth through upgradation of technology and human capital development should be the appropriate course for the employers to follow in order to ensure export competitiveness. At this point, Nasreen Khundker differed with Bhattachariya's argument and argued that according to the efficiency wage theory the relationship between productivity and wages can be alternated. She argued that even in the context of Bangladesh there were some micro studies that had revealed that introduction of higher wages could help increase productivity. Commenting on Rahma Bounquia's paper, Khundker suggested that in order to analyse the impact of training on women one had to consider whether training had impacted on the vertical mobility of female workers. Mh Matthew Lockwood at this stage argued that wage functions were not enough to capture the extent of discrimination, particularly since women's employment was increasingly concentrated in one or two special types of industries.

Answering the comments on the relationship between productivity and wages Sa ad Belghazi argued that although wages were supposed to be determined through a process of bargaining, there was enough evidence in Morocco to support the proposition that increasing the wages could enhance productivity. He told the workshop that the entrepreneurs also agreed that higher wages could lead to higher productivity.

Rahma Bourquia, responding to the comments on her paper pointed out that there might be some problems in determining the rate of discrimination, but evidence indicated that they were lower in the new industries such as knitwear rather than the traditional industries such as carpet. She also argued that the new industries were competitive in the world market whilst the traditional ones were not. She however felt that the discrimination against women was not only manifest in the form of wages rather the whole working environment was inimical to women's concerns.

Panel VII Influencing the Policy Process through Gender Training for Senior Government Officials in Jamaica

The session was chaired by Mr. Hasnat Abdul Hye, and the speaker was Ms. Beverly Anderson-Manley. In her speech Manley observed that a number of social policies taken up in Jamaica had suffered under the structural adjustments measure which had a differential impact on women and men. She however pointed out that there had been numerous attempts by successive administrations to alleviate poverty and to address the issue of subordination of women. Although some success had been registered, she felt

that there was a great deal to be done in terms of equity issues for the majority of women and men in society.

As regards the initiatives taken to address women's issue Manley mentioned that some professional women formed a consultative group on gender whose main task was to engender the industrial policy of Jamaica. As a result of the activities of the group, the (NIP) the recently promulgated, New Industrial Policy had included a section on gender, although gender was not mainstreamed in the document. She also elaborated on some of the recommendations made by the consultative group on gender and pointed out that the government had expressed its commitment to implementing those recommendations, and a steering committee had been appointed by the Prime Minister of Jamaica to establish a commission on Gender and Social Equity. She informed the workshop that Jamaican society was undergoing a number of reforms in the public sector and these reform processes had provided a point of entry for the consideration of gender issues. She pointed out that within this perspective, an UNRISD workshop had taken place in Jamaica in November 1995. Prior to this workshop, several attempts were made mainly by the Bureau of Women's Affairs, with funding provided by donor agencies, to carry out gender sensitization seminars throughout the public sector. She however noticed that seminars at the sectoral level, without the prior commitment of permanent secretaries (who headed the individual ministries), and without the commitment of the parliament, would have little impact or sustainability. Manley also mentioned that an evaluation of the Bureau of Women's Affairs had been completed, which promised to be critical, as the government remained committed to restructure its machinery to realize gender empowerment.

Manley then presented some of the findings of the UNRISD/PIOJ (Planning Institute of Jamaica) workshop: she informed the meeting that the participants of the Jamaica, workshop had developed a checklist of questions which would be used to assess the extent of gender discrimination at the work place. The participants also developed a similar method to evaluate the macro scenario with regard to gender and equity. She mentioned that a proposal was made to form a commission on Gender and social equity to evaluate and monitor macro economic developments so that it could be assessed whether economic growth created jobs, ensured participation of women, and above all whether it was sustainable. Manley assessed the outcome of the Jamaica workshop to be very rewarding.

The discussant in this session was Ms. Zeynep Erden Karman. Karman emphasized the importance of gender analysis which according to her, was essential in formulating policies. She pointed out that the impact of policies on men and women should be made available to policy makers so that they could promptly respond to it and necessary steps could be taken in advance. She also felt that research results should be related to policy issues and policy questions.

Karman supported Manley's idea that men should be involved actively in the process of engendering. But Karman suggested that the right kind of people should be chosen for such a training process, which should cover people from all walks of life from policy makers to the working population. According to Karman, there was an apprehension that a

one-shot training could process could rapidly become ineffective. That's why she recommended that the training process should be designed under a well developed system so that the lessons learnt could be sustainable and applied at the workplace.

In response to a query, Manley informed the Rajendrapur workshop about the content of the workshop in Jamaica. She added that participants in the latter workshop made a commitment to follow gender neutral policies in different areas addressed by the workshop. She also pointed out that efforts were being made to persuade each ministry to include gender training within their training budget, as all the ministries had a budget for such training programme.

Taking part in the discussion, Myrna I. Jarillas of the Phillipines shared her country's experience with this type of gender directed training. She pointed out that such training in the Philippines consisted of two parts: The first one was gender sensitive training and the second one was gender responsive planning. In the first one, personal issues were discussed and these were addressed through workshops. The gender responsive planning was technical in nature and was based on the Harvard framework of gender-based analysis of development. She also mentioned that in the Philippines an initiative had been taken in which all training institutes of the government were asked to integrate gender issues in their regular training programmes.

Simeen Mahmud expressed the opinion that there was very little conceptualization about how all macro issues were gender issues as argued: by one of the participants in the conference. She pointed out that theory and concepts were important in developing training material for engendering policy. Debapriya also supported Simeen's point and felt that the whole project and program approach had its own limitations so it was more important to look at the macro variables. He observed that sometimes it was very difficult to find out the relationship between macro indicators and gender. He urged the researchers to explore ways to resolve this problem of linking gender issues with macroeconomic development.

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Panel VIII: The Gender Dimension of Agricultural Policy in Uganda

The discussion in this panel was based on the research findings of the Ugandan team which comprised of Ms. Deborah Kasente, Mr. Charles Gashumba and Ms. Beatilda Bisangwe. This round of the discussion was chaired by Mr. Yusuf Bangura and the designated discussant was Mr. Matthew Lockwood.

Initiating the discussion Deborah Kesente told the meeting that their research was attempting to directly respond to some of the outcomes of the workshops that took place in Uganda. She observed that these workshops were attended by government officials, representatives of NGOs and other research institutions. Various women's groups also took part in the workshops and many issues were discussed which deserved special attention. The first important issue that concerned the participants was the impact of the reforms on the agricultural sector. This was considered very important since women in

Uganda formed the biggest proportion of farmers, and yet they could not directly participate in the policy making process. Deborah also observed that women were not in a position to exploit the incentives provided under the new agriculture policy of the government.

At this stage, Chales Gashumba came with some statistics to illustrate the importance of agriculture in the Ugandan economy. For instance, agriculture contributed to 50% of the GDP, 85% of export earnings and 80% of employment opportunities in Uganda. He then described the policy making process in agriculture. He pointed out that in Uganda the agricultural policy was not formulated by the government alone, but a number of agencies were also involved. The policy process was constituted by the Permanent Secretary of Agriculture and included some other important national agencies. Regarding the formation of the Agriculture Policy Committee (A PC), Gashumba mentioned that it was the most powerful institution in the country and functioned as a sub-committee of the Cabinet. The committee usually sent recommendations to Parliament for final approval and if this was not accepted by the Parliament, it came back to the committee, Gashumba regarded this mechanism very useful. He then informed the workshop that the APC consisted of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Finance, Agriculture, Animal and Fisheries, Trade and Industry, Natural Resources, and Land and Housing.

Gashumba also explained to the meeting some of the initiatives taken by the government to help the farmers. He pointed to a national credit delivery system which was being designed to address gender concerns. He also described various reform measures which were being carried out in Uganda.

The next speaker was Beatilda Bisangwe. In her speech Bisangwe argued that the overall environment in Uganda was conducive to women's development. She informed the workshop that the Vice President of Uganda was a woman and she was also in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture, which was the most important ministry in Uganda. Thus, she argued that there was a political willingness and commitment to address women's concerns. She felt that a large number of dialogues and activities were needed to strengthen the policy making process. She further added that women's participation must be ensured in order to make the macro policies sensitive to gender concerns. Bisangwe also emphasized the need for research work in this regard and thanked various donor agencies that were supporting such initiatives.

Taking part in the discussion, Matthew Lockwood expressed the opinion that it should be clearly identified as to how macro policies were related to gender issues. He argued that to evaluate this relationship, public expenditure policies should be critically examined. He pointed out that macro policies pertaining to reforms, liberalization etc. would have its impact on the micro level, thus, to promote gender equity the outcomes of macro policies must be traced to their interface with the micro-level. At this stage Nasreen Khundker, referring to the Harris-Todaro model of migration, argued that it was also possible to trace macroeconomic outcomes from micro processes.

Ingrid Eide suggested that the Uganda team should find out what sort of strategy women had pursued in order to ensure their food security, as she in one of her own studies, found that households relied on the old-variety of maize for consumption although they were involved in producing modern varieties of maize. The reason behind this unusual behaviour was that the households had less knowledge about how to handle the modern variety of maize. Dag Ehrenpreis also supported Ingrid's point and remarked that there was evidence to suggest that the households might pursue a policy of risk minimization rather than profit minimization despite the fact that considerable incentives were being provided for producing cash crops.

Smita Nagraj observed that the study should focus on the issue as to whether women were only supplying labour to agriculture. She argued that it was necessary to know whether women had the power to decide what to produce, how to produce this and how much to produce. Rahma Bourqua also supported Nagraj's contention and felt that household decision making processes should be highlighted in order to assess women's capability to influence the decision-making mechanism.

Some of the participants at the workshop expressed the opinion that it was not only the policy making process but how these policies were being implemented at the grass-root level, which was important an accurate picture cover to be obtained as to whether the whole environment was gender sensitive. In this regard, Hameeda Hossain suggested that due emphasis should be given to capture the changes, if any, in social relations and how these changes were translated towards affecting the women's position in the household and at the workplace.

Sobhan, enquired about how an effective policy making process in Uganda managed to insulate itself from the influences of the World Bank. In reply, Ghasamba informed the participants that the Agriculture Policy Committee was very powerful and it was free from any pressures from the World Bank and could thus formulate policies independently.

Panel IX: The gender Dimension of Agricultural Diversification in Vietnam

In this round of discussion the chairperson was Hameeda Hossain and the speakers were Ms. Tran Thi Van Anh and Ms. Naila Kabeer.

Initiating the discussion, Naila Kabeer informed the participants that in Viet Nam there was an enormous gap between those who made macro economic policies and those who provided micro economic outcomes. Responding to the question on methodology used in the researchwork on Vietnam, Naila informed the workshop that a questionnaire had been developed to carry out a survey which covered 600 households and four villages, with 150 households taken from each of these villages. For comparison the villages were chosen to include those which had access to markets and those which were more remote. The questionnaire included variables such as income, savings, education, credit etc. She pointed out that researchers were interested in the outcomes related to per capita income, efficiency, returns to enterprises, etc. Amongst social outcomes food shortage, frequency of meals and other welfare related outcomes were included. The explanatory variables

used in the research were different types of male and female activities. Naila also elaborated on the activities which were taken into account in their research. These included trading, handicrafts, rice production, subsidiary crop production, hired-out labour, services etc.

Analyzing the findings, Kabeer concluded that the disadvantages women faced in Vietnam were much more about access to capital, training, and investment in women's productivity rather than in inter-household gender inequality.

Van Anh continued Kabeer's presentation of the research findings stating that in 1995, women represented 32% of the Parliament members whilst at present the comparable number was only 18 percent. She also pointed out that at the micro level a similar type of development had taken place, as in the 1970s, most of the managers in agriculture were women while at present most of the women were labourers. Regarding the well-being of women, Van felt that cooperatives could play a vital role and suggested that it should be identified as to how the new form of cooperatives could be made more beneficial to women. She, however, claimed that unlike the Eastern European countries, women in Vietnam were not the losers in the process of reforms that were currently underway.

Commenting on the survey finding which showed that marginal propensity to save in female managed activities was lower compared to male managed activities, Naila tried to provide an explanation for this. She remarked that women's income might be used in activities where scope for generation of savings was limited. These might include for example, expenditure on household food security, health and childcare. Naila argued that if this was the case then the survey findings are not as surprising as felt by some of the participants. She thought that it might be true that women's expenditure helped generate savings out of men's income. Thus Naila observed that in Vietnam women and men were playing equally important and complementary roles. In the face of this development, she further argued that, since the contributions made by women and men were complementary, the macro-policies should be made gender neutral in order to promote gender equality.

In a query from Sa ad Belghazi, Van Anh told the workshop that following the Beijing Conference a national action plan had been adopted in Vietnam, and its objective had been to promote gender equality, and to develop a national machinery to protect women's interests. In answer to another question Van Anh admitted that in case of access to credit women were often discriminated against and as a result very few women had; obtained agricultural credit. At this point Sobhan argued that the researchers should not only confine themselves to the agricultural sector or agri-related activities, since a lot of women were now participating in export-oriented activities, and particularly in the readymade sector in Vietnam. He suggested that the extent to which women's participation in the export manufacturing sector had affected social relations should be investigated.

Van then described the activities of a workshop that took place in Vietnam as part of the UNRISD programme. Researchers, policy makers, academics and representatives of

various organizations took part in that 3-day long workshop. The central message of the workshop was to introduce gender concerns into the policy making process.

Closing Session: Revisiting 'Policy Dialogues' Lessons from the UNRISD/UNDP Project

The closing session was chaired by Dr. Dharam Ghai and the speakers were Rehman Sobhan and Naila Kabeer.

Initiating the discussion, Rehman Sobhan told the workshop that the project was undertaken not only out of academic interest but to generate a body of knowledge, ideas and policy recommendations which could really impact on the policy making process. He felt that such research work must be useful to the policy makers.

Referring to the human development indicators prepared by the UNDP, Sobhan pointed out that the indicators had unfortunately left us with a rather narrowly defined conception of the position and status of women. He argued that the degree of malnutrition, school enrollment, literacy rates, were all important in determining the status of women and since all these indicators were improving in many of the countries, it gave an impression that women's status and position had also improved. Sobhan suggested some alternative indicators in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of women's position in society. These should include, amongst others, violence against women, issues of rape, free movement of women at night, issues of prostitution, issues of dowry, the representation of women at various agencies of government (particularly in the parliament and local government), etc. Among the economic indicators, the proportion of women in the non-agricultural workforce, the proportion of women students getting secondary and higher education should be valued in identifying a set of checklists, and enumerating a state's progress along these particular indicators, which could be routinely and under Jaw, presented before the political leadership and Parliament as an indicator of the evolving status of women in society. It could only then be established whether a noticeable change in the condition of women had taken place in a country.

Sobhan felt that a theoretical framework had to be developed so that the interplay of macroeconomic variables and its impact on women's circumstances could be better understood. The critical element of policy making should focus on women's employment, skill diversification, and control over household income and active participation in the economy and political process.

Taking the floor, Naila Kabeer told the workshop that her understanding of the present UNDP/UNRISD project was that it was not expected to make a conceptual breakthrough or reform macroeconomic policies, rather it was an attempt at collaboration among feminist economists. Naila Kabeer argued that in order to make the macro policies gender sensitive a relationship had to be established between the feminist economists and macroeconomists. As such she observed that the success of the present project would depend on how it would be able to influence the macro policy making process in particular countries.

Taking part in the discussion, Nasreen Khunqker pointed out that there was a gap in terms of conceptualizing gender within a macroeconomic framework. So her suggestion was to commission a concept paper from a macroeconomist who had successfully

incorporated equity issues into macroeconomics. Rabea Naciri was of the opinion that the UNDP/UNRISD project helped a lot in influencing the policy making process. In this regard she emphasized the value of organizing policy dialogues at various levels. Biswange felt that the project had played a vital role in promoting gender equity, as it had been able to draw the attention of people at various levels. She added further that the project had also created a substantial amount of literature on gender issues which could be used for future research. Shirin Akhtar observed that women's interests should be protected not only by the state but also by the employers. She supported the idea that the process of dialogues should be widened so that public opinion on women's rights could be influenced. Charles Ghasumba held the view that further research would have to be undertaken in order to conceptualize women's concerns arising out of a transition from household activities to other employment opportunities. He suggested that researchers should not only address the issues of macro-economic policy but a whole package of issues which would contribute to achieving gender parity.

THE MAIN ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

The basic question addressed by the conference was whether there was scope for defining a more gender equitable macro-economic agenda, in the changed global context. This new context derived from the structural adjustment policies pursued by many developing countries, as well as the reforms undertaken by countries in transition from socialism to greater market orientation of their economies.

The conclusions and issues discussed were based on the preliminary research findings from five participating countries, viz., Bangladesh, Morocco, Uganda, Jamaica and Vietnam, but also from papers presented by scholars from Canada, Australia, U.K. and Hungary. A further set of papers were presented by donor representatives, from SIDA, UNDP, ADB, as well as a concept paper on policy dialogues by researchers from UNRISD.

The main themes which emerged were: (a) the issue of gendering programme assistance, (b) the development of effective National WID machineries and gender training of government officials, (c) the impact of adjustment policies on countries in transition as well as on developing countries, particularly those who participated in the UNRISD research programme, and (d) the gender dimension of sectoral policies, viz., the impact on women of agricultural policies in Uganda and Vietnam, following adjustment.

Thus it was felt that a key aspect of defining a gender equitable macro economic framework was the administration of WID policies by the government and donor agencies. Of similar importance was the understanding of economic processes and their impact on women, in two sets of countries. These were countries which were in transition from socialism to greater market orientation of their economies, as well as other developing countries which had adopted extensive macro economic reforms. The concept paper on the other hand analysed the role of policy dialogues in achieving a gender equitable macro economic agenda.

On the first issue of gendering programme assistance, what emerged was that donor agencies such as the UNDP and SIDA were faced with the twin tasks of making their own institutions more gender-sensitive, as well as that of influencing government policies in countries which were aid recipients. The SIDA supported action programmes for instance aimed to project a view of women not only as victims but also as potential agents of change, in relation to poverty eradication.

The second problem was that of developing National WID machineries and influencing the development planning process, so that macroeconomic policies were more focussed on gender. Here, besides the country experiences of developing countries, e.g. Jamaica or Morocco, the country experience of developed countries such as Canada and Australia were seen to be valuable from the point of view of learning and emulation. Thus Agendering@ macro-economics was largely seen as a matter of adopting strategies to influence policy makers. An important role in this regard could be played by feminist bureaucrats or femocrats working within government, but who could also form alliances with women=s organizations outside government. It was also felt that early interventions were a key to effective policy making incorporating gender concerns. Gender training was also an essential part of gendering institutions such as the government or donor agencies. A further emphasis was placed on budget programming, where detailed analysis of budgets for their implications on women was considered to be a useful exercise.

In terms of the direct impact on women of the type of macroeconomic policies pursued in the era of globalisation and structural adjustment, these were seen to be varied, depending on the initial conditions which prevailed in countries, and the type of measures adopted after the reforms including changes in the legal framework for ensuring women=s access to assets.

In the case of both Morocco and Bangladesh, there was evidence that globalisation and export-oriented industrialization policies, opened up new opportunities of employment for women. This had significantly changed the context of women=s lives in Bangladesh, making the entry of young women into the organized labour force, and also leading to significant female migration. In both countries however, the condition of work for women in these new export industries, left considerable scope for improvement. In the Moroccan case it was emphasized that while low wage costs may have been the chief rationale for women=s employment in the export sector, future competitiveness in the world market depended on payment of A efficiency wages@ which would lead to productivity increases. A similar concern was expressed in the Bangladesh context that women=s participation in the economy was marked by disadvantages in terms of a gender gap in skills and human capital, which accounted for low wages and productivity, and may limit further expansion in the demand for female labour, in the face of structural diversification and adoption of new technology in the export sector.

For countries in transition, there were both gains and losses, the former due to cuts in state welfare services such as nurseries, or due to an increase in unemployment. The gains were in terms of greater occupational mobility and greater involvement of women in micro enterprises. There were also differences noted between the transition economies of Asia and those of the former Soviet Union and Europe, as well as differences between Asian economies. In China and Vietnam, higher economic growth after the initiation of

the reforms could open up new opportunities for women and compensate for reduced public sector employment and provision of services. In many of the Central Asian Republic however, economic expansion had been slowed or reversed, and women were at a disadvantage in competing for jobs.

This aspect of the development of micro enterprises which accounted for much of Vietnam's growth after the transition was the chief focus of the country study concentrating on the agricultural sector. The conclusions however were that women in Vietnam were disadvantaged in terms of access to credit, training and other inputs, so that the impact of macro policies was not gender neutral. Intra-household gender relations were not perceived to be a major problem in the case of Vietnam.

The reforms in the agricultural sector was also the focus of the Ugandan case, where a significant proportion of farmers were women, but who had differential access to credit. There was also gender-based differences in crop production, with men controlling the greater part of cash crop production. In this context, the initiative of the project was to make agri policies more gender sensitive through research and policy changes.

Thus in effect the UNRISD research programme consists of a somewhat disparate range of themes under the general heading of towards a more gender equitable macro-economic agenda. The programme of research and the workshops makes an important contribution in terms of comparing cross-country experience. One of the lessons drawn from this programme is that women can benefit from greater employment opportunities created by globalisation and the growth of export-based light manufacturing industries, as in Morocco or Bangladesh. However, in both cases, the nature of these industries do not provide for a particularly congenial environment for women workers, thereby suggesting a need for reassessing industrial policies and reviewing areas for state interventions need to improve the conditions for working women.

For socialist countries on the other hand, the gain for women in for example involvement in micro enterprises or greater occupational mobility has to be measured against the losses in terms of state provision of welfare services and higher unemployment.

A similar cross-country experience was derived from the experience of developed and developing countries in setting up national WID machineries and initiating a process of dialogue which could form a basis for strengthening gender constituencies. A similar comparison between countries was provided in terms of the impact on women of sectoral policies.

It should however be mentioned that the research would have benefited from a sharper focus on the objective of macro-economic policies in terms of growth, efficiency and stabilization, and its differential impact on men and women. A set of questions, which could be pursued, includes: (a) whether and how macroeconomic policies in both the era of globalisation and prior to that have ignored women's issues, (b) whether the move away from full employment objectives and equity issues, has made a difference to achieving greater gender equality, and (c) if a gender equitable macro framework necessitates that the macro policy framework should, in general, give importance to

equity issues then macro indicators such as employment, GNP, the rate of inflation or interest rates need to be supplemented by social and gender accounting matrices, to understand the impact of growth on men and women. It should also be clear that Gender equality@ does not ensure social justice where there is inequality between women of different social classes. The same applies to men

Besides these unaddressed conceptual issues, the research agenda still needs to develop a common set of research issues which could be followed by each of the participating countries. This could have provided for a better understanding of the socio-economic processes at work due to reforms, and their impact on women.

ANNEXURE A

Foreign Participants

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