

**Irene Freudenschuss-Reichl**

spoke freely, but agreed to the publication of the prepared

## **SPEAKING NOTES FOR PRESENTATION**

**AT MINISTRY OF FINANCE, FORUM FINANZ**

***“Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women and Coherence in Development Policies”***

27-03-2007, 15:00 – 17:00

---

### **Main argument**

- 1. ADC Policy for *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (2006) recognizes the importance of creating economic opportunities for women, focusing on assets and resources.**
- 2. A special paragraph in the gender policy document refers to coherence, emphasizing two aspects: a) Political dialogue in Austria and b) Cooperation with multilateral organisations**
- 3. Sector and country programmes allow for strengthening economic opportunities of women.**
- 4. Gender Responsive Budgeting is an important instrument to make the allocations of resources for gender equality visible.**

### **Ad 1)**

**ADC Policy for *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (2006) recognizes**

- access to property (land, cattle, housing, money) - *World Bank Gender Action Plan: access to land markets and financial markets*
- access to infrastructure (transport, energy, water) *WB: Infrastructure increase women 's access to all four markets*

- access to resources such as income and work in agriculture, industry and commerce, in particular in SMEs and in microfinance facilities, *WB: access to labour markets*
- fair pay and working conditions *WB: eliminating discrimination in labour markets*
- protection of the environment and natural resources as the basis for sustainable development, in the promotion of environmentally sound production with account taken of indigenous knowledge, particularly that of women *WB: involve women and women's groups in local natural resource management*

### **Conclusion of this comparison: similarities in policy approach**

#### **Ad 2)**

##### **a) Political dialogue in Austria**

“ADC takes an active part in political dialogue in Austria not only to promote the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women in partner countries, but also to attain a coherent position with respect to other ministries, particularly the Ministries of Health and Women’s Affairs, Finance, Economic Affairs, and Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. ADC also promotes these goals in its communication on development policy to the public and to NGOs.” (ADC Gender Policy, p. 13)

#### **Examples:**

##### **Coherence between domestic and foreign policy**

- combating **Violence Against Women (VAW)**: Austria has a model law concerning combating domestic violence (removal of perpetrator from the house, investment in counselling agencies, a country-wide helpline); currently a BBC film is prepared in the series ‘Women on the frontline’ which showcases this law. It has already been copied in other countries (Bulgaria, Montenegro, ...).

- initiatives against trafficking: establishment of **National Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings** with the involvement of several ministries, including MFA, ADC support to programmes against trafficking about 4 MEURO
- VAW is also focus of our foreign and development policy: **National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325** targeting Ministry of Defence plus European and International Relations, strong support of Minister Plassnik for enhancing women's role in peace-building (Near East, Kosovo-Serbia women's leaders conference, Colloquium for Liberia (?))

### **Coherence between development and financial policy**

We pursue the following policy position:

“In accordance with the coherence principle, ADC requests foreign trade companies and the ministries involved in development cooperation to orient their programmes to these gender guidelines.” (ADC Gender Policy, p. 13)

#### **Example:**

Applications for **soft loans**: the questionnaire which decides upon eligibility for a soft loan includes Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment criteria.

#### **b) Cooperation with multilateral organisations**

“Gender equality has always been an explicit aim of the United Nations. ADC will continue to promote this dialogue within the UN and EU. Implementing the coherence requirement of the Development Cooperation Act, ADC will further promote the development aspects of gender equality and empowerment of women in the Austrian position in negotiations on international regulations for trade and investment (e.g. WTO, OECD).” (ADC Gender Policy, p. 13) ...

**Example: Austrian position at the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

We are pleased to see that although the EU negotiations lead to a withdrawal of our position regarding coherence in economic policies, in the final agreed conclusions the following paragraph found entry (again):

*Undertake and disseminate gender analysis of policies and programmes related to macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment, external debt problems, taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy, and support and facilitate research in these areas, with a view to achieving the objectives of the Platform for Action and with respect to their impact on poverty, on inequality and particularly on women, as well as to assess their impact on family well-being and conditions and adjust them, as appropriate, to promote more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services;*

### **Ad 3)**

#### **Sector and country programmes allow for strengthening economic opportunities of women**

**Africa** (especially Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Burkina Faso):

Key economic sectors with focus on **agriculture and private sector** development:

##### **Agriculture sector development:**

- **Equal opportunities** for women concerning the access to and the mandate over land as well as social and agricultural consultancy services.
- Focused actions like technologically adapted cultivation methods (improving the management of biomass and water supply)
- Support of access to credits and markets that are adjusted to their needs and possibilities. **Empowerment** of women through harmonised actions of educational and vocational trainings as well as providing information to increase **opportunities** for a direct participation in social, political and economic decision-finding processes.

##### **Private sector development**

- Increasing **capabilities** of (women) entrepreneurs and salespersons through trainings in business skills and economic literacy for the purpose of increasing their economic, commercial and entrepreneurial know-how. Part of these trainings should also teach women how to get and keep control over their properties, credits and income.
- Possible steps to exercise political influence: **participation** of small entrepreneurs within the planning of infrastructure like streets, transport, markets, electricity and water supply.

**Nicaragua: labour markets**, pensions, reform of labour legislation, property rights, citizenship rights; support to indigenous women

- Access to economic assets and promotion of property rights for women
- Advocacy for fair labour standards, working conditions and equal pay
- Advocacy for non-discrimination in labour intermediation services

**South-East Europe/West Balkans** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova): **Labour markets and Financial Markets**

**Labour markets:** promotion of gender equality principles in Business Incubators, small enterprises, research on gender and economic issues in a Gender Budgeting Initiative,

**Financial Markets:** increase access of women entrepreneurs to commercial credit

#### **Ad 4)**

**Gender Responsive Budgeting is an important instrument to make the allocations of resources for gender equality visible.**

We are aware that policy commitments need to be translated into concrete action – that means investments in women and girls. We are supporting for example a UNIFEM programme in Southeast Europe for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) that has brought already some results. In Macedonia and Bosnia&Hercegovina the costs of domestic violence concerning health, loss of labour days, legal assistance, police protection were calculated. In Albania, women's role in the care economy and the costs of gender stereotypes that impede their access to the labour market were identified.

We consider it as important that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are structurally including a gender equality perspective which is directly reflected in financial allocations – for health, education as core capabilities , and economic opportunities. Also here GRB serves as a useful tool.

GRB requires sex-disaggregated data: our financial support to the African Gender & Development Index, a programme of the UNECA that is in line with NEPAD, helps to collect data on social, economic and political empowerment in three of our partner countries (Senegal, Namibia and Cape Verde).

We further intend to plea for Gender Responsive Budgeting in the new aid modalities at the Accra High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness as well as at the Doha Forum on Financing for Development later this year.

**In sum, focus on coherence** is not only a policy commitment, it is also a source of inspiration to continue the obligations as articulated in the 1995 Beijing Plan for Action that has women's human rights at its core.