

Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action through a gender lens: an international perspective and the case of the Dutch Development Cooperation

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Abstract:

With the aim to promote aid effectiveness that ultimately contributes to development changes in aid policies and instruments have been propagated over the last decade. The Paris Declaration (PD) and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) set out a reform agenda of ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results-orientation and mutual accountability. This article studies the ongoing processes through a gender lens. It highlights the rationale for a gender-sensitive PD and AAA and analyses opportunities and challenges of the different PD/AAA key principles for gender equality and empowerment. It assesses to what extent a gender perspective has been integrated in the PD and its ongoing review processes. Besides an international focus, we take stock and analyse how Dutch Development Cooperation is handling gender concerns in the realm of the ongoing changes in aid policies and instruments.

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the century a shift has taken place in aid modalities advocated for low-income aid dependent countries with the aim to increase aid effectiveness and promote development. Donors are expected to replace their traditional projects for more programme-oriented aid and budget support. The shift in aid instruments involves an evolution from major donor *control* over the content and processes of clearly-delineated projects or programmes towards donor *influence* over broader sector and national policies and systems. The 2005 Paris Declaration (PD) and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) are illustrations of the growing consensus in this respect. They set out a reform agenda for donors and recipients around the five key principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, management for development results and mutual accountability and propose a monitoring framework, composed of twelve indicators, for implementation follow-up (see table 1 in annex).

The gender dimension was largely neglected in the original PD. The rationale for a gender-sensitive PD may be easily built upon equality, effectiveness and efficiency arguments, yet 'gender equality' was mainly squeezed under the umbrella of 'cross-cutting' issues while 'women's empowerment' was not even mentioned at all. Since 2005, other major exercises and events have taken place to monitor, evaluate and accommodate the original PD. In order to avoid another case of 'gender retrofitting' (see Aasen, 2006) it is important to explore how gender concerns have been captured in those review processes. As gender equality and women's empowerment are among the objectives that most donors and recipients have ascribed to, it is crucial to assess opportunities and challenges embedded in the PD/AAA towards results in these areas.

Existing research about the actual degree of gender-sensitivity of the PD implementation on the ground has so far mainly focused on the recipient's side of the reform agenda (see Bell, 2003; Holvoet, 2008; Van Reisen with Ussar, 2005; Whitehead, 2002; Zuckerman, 2001; Zuckerman, 2002; Zuckerman and Garrett, 2003). Reviews of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs) have illustrated that gender issues gradually disappear alongside the different stages of a PRSP. Expectedly, sections dealing with capacities such as education and health are doing much better than those related to opportunities in the area of labour market and political participation. National women's machineries, gender focal points in line ministries or women's and gender organisations within civil society are hardly participating in PRSPs and when they participate they mostly have a low track record in the type of expertise needed. Interestingly, most PRSPs take recourse to a Women in Development (WID) 'poverty

reduction/efficiency' approach (see Bell, 2003; Holvoet, 2008; Whitehead, 2002; Zuckerman and Garrett, 2003).

While a focus on recipients matches the shift in responsibilities, studying how donors are dealing with gender concerns in the era of the PD/AAA is as relevant. The PD/AAA imposes an ambitious reform agenda upon donors which involves changes in aid instruments, staff expertise, organisational structures and operational guidelines. The recent Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration¹ (Wood et al., 2008) has illustrated that progress is fragmentary and strongly diverging among aid agencies. The study is silent on gender issues, which is in line with its absence from the PD. However, if donors are committed to gender equality and women's empowerment, development effectiveness and efficiency, it is of paramount importance to explore how gender concerns are currently dealt with within these ongoing processes, to unravel factors that stimulate or impede gender-sensitivity and to assess the articulation between PD/AAA related changes and donors' two-track gender policies. Our study contributes to this underexploited area of research and documents how gender concerns are captured in the currently ongoing processes taking place in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This focus is deliberate as the Dutch Ministry is one of the agencies that is '*ahead of the crowd*' when it comes to PD/AAA implementation. While it is difficult to extrapolate findings to other agencies, experiences in the Netherlands might be interesting for other agencies which have so far a more modest track record in PD/AAA implementation.

Our study is based upon secondary data and primary data collection. Secondary data consists of academic as well as 'grey' literature related to the PD, its review processes and the broader aid effectiveness agenda. In order to get more insight into underlying processes we have complemented secondary data with semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews with key stakeholders engaged in PD/AAA-related processes. In our sample of interviewees, we have deliberately included actors who have a specific 'gender' mandate and others who have not. One of the limitations of the Dutch case study is its focus on actual experiences and insights registered at headquarters which does not necessarily capture adequately practices, challenges and insights at the level of embassies.

The structure of this article is as follows. Section two briefly sets out the rationale for a gender-sensitive PD/AAA and revives the old distinction between 'efficiency' and 'gender efficiency' which might turn out to be crucial in the current era of 'aid effectiveness' and 'poverty reduction'. Section three summarises challenges and opportunities unfolded by the five PD key-principles while section four documents how gender concerns have actually been captured in the PD and its review processes. Section five explores how the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is dealing with the gender dimension in the era of aid effectiveness and PD/AAA related changes. Section six concludes.

2. The rationale for a gender-sensitive Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

The rationale for a gender-sensitive PD and AAA is straightforward and may be built upon equality, effectiveness and efficiency arguments. First, by signing the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women), the Beijing Platform of Action and the Millennium Declaration, most countries in the world explicitly underscored the importance of gender equality as a fundamental human right and an important policy objective. Additionally, many donors have included the promotion of gender equality and women's

¹ The Evaluation of the Paris Declaration is composed of two phases, mainly consisting of a process ('implementation') and an 'impact' evaluation. The first phase which was finalised mid-2008 takes stock and analyses changes of development partners' behaviour and documents better practices in implementing the PD principles (Wood et al., 2008: iv). The second phase which will assess the contribution of the PD to aid effectiveness and development results on the ground will take off by mid 2009. The Netherlands finances the secretariat of the evaluation and it is co-chair of the Management Group and of the International Reference Group (IRG) (together with Sri Lanka).

empowerment as important objectives in their aid policies. This implies that as a donor it is also expected that every effort will be made, also in a changing aid setting, to promote these goals.

Second, besides equality arguments, the rationale for the integration of a gender dimension into changing aid policies and practices may also be justified under ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ arguments. Chiwara and Karadenizli (2008, 5) highlight in this respect that

“given the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment to development, a ‘gender-blind’ interpretation and subsequent implementation of the Paris Declaration principles jeopardizes the achievements of international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and national development strategies”.

Without dwelling at great length on the important debate within the ‘gender and development’ literature about the pros and cons of an instrumentalist approach (see e.g. Cornwall et al., 2007; Razavi, 1997), it is of paramount importance in the era of aid effectiveness and poverty reduction to revamp the distinction between a WID ‘anti-poverty/efficiency’ and a GAD ‘gender-efficiency’ approach.

Various studies on the gender-sensitivity of PRSPs have illustrated that most PRSPs resort to a Women in Development (WID) ‘anti-poverty/efficiency’ approach (see Bell, 2003; Holvoet, 2008; Whitehead, 2002; Zuckerman and Garrett, 2003). Income poverty is then considered as the underlying cause of inequalities between men and women and poverty reduction through the inclusion of women in the existing development process as the solution. Particularly popular are activities to foster access of women to production factors such as credit, land and education. The ‘anti-poverty/efficiency’ approach is gender-blind in that it neglects that the socio-cultural construct ‘gender’ influences men’s and women’s identity and rights, constraints, opportunities and that it mediates the way in which men and women react to incentives from policy makers. Reversely, a ‘gender-efficiency’ approach assumes that human behaviour is influenced by free human agency but also by norms and structures, including ‘gender’. This diverging conceptualisation of human behaviour also materialises in terms of policy approaches. A ‘gender-efficiency’ approach starts from the idea that any intervention, at the global, macro, meso or microlevel is influenced by existing gender relations and that reversely all interventions might potentially influence gender equality and empowerment. Taking into account this reality necessitates a vertical and horizontal gender mainstreaming approach, i.e. the systematic integration of a gender perspective throughout different stages (diagnosis, planning, implementation and budgeting to monitoring and evaluation) of all types of interventions at any level. Importantly, effective gender mainstreaming involves a combination of an integrationist approach on the one hand and a transformative or agenda setting approach on the other with interventions being specifically targeted toward women and men (see also Mukhopadhyay, 2009: 95-96). The latter angle of the two-track approach is especially important in policy areas which are strongly regulated by gender norms. Refraining from doing this, leads to policy failures² or to unexpected and undeliberate policy impacts. This understanding also puts into perspective the often heard argument among policy makers and practitioners stipulating that gender equality and empowerment is a matter of development effectiveness which does not need to be taken on board in the PD aid effectiveness agenda. It is short-sighted however to believe that development effectiveness let alone gender equal impacts on the ground may be expected if the underlying processes, including those which are aid related, are not gender-sensitive.

² Elson (1991) has for instance documented how gender-blind assumptions such as the homogeneity and exogeneity of the production factor ‘labour’ have contributed to failing structural adjustment policies.

3. PD key-principles through a gender lens: opportunities and challenges

While there is no univocal point of view in literature regarding the weight and importance of the various opportunities and challenges of the PD and the AAA for gender equality and empowerment, most of the sources agree on the fact that the different key principles entail both opportunities and challenges (see e.g. Van Reisen with Ussar, 2005). Tacking stock of opportunities and challenges is interesting in itself while it may obviously also feed into the formulation of suggestions for improvements³. In what follows, we briefly summarise the discussion alongside the five key principles. Table 2 in annex provides an overview of opportunities and challenges.

3.1. Ownership

The emphasis currently placed upon ‘country ownership’ and ‘leadership’ has been instigated by the aid (in)effectiveness literature which has illustrated that externally imposed policy reforms fail to be sustainable no matter the incentive structure attached to it (see e.g. Adam and Gunning, 2002). Support to country-owned and country-led policies and processes increases the probability of effective implementation and results. This also holds when it comes to policies and processes related to gender equality and empowerment which exist in most of the partner countries. However, these national or sector gender policies are more often than not neglected in PRSPs, national development plans and sector policies. Additionally, national gender expertise, be it at ministerial or sector level is hardly involved in national development policy-making, planning, implementation, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In those cases where they have been consulted, they often had a low track record of expertise in the areas of socio-economic policy-making and (public finance) management. Reversely, actors that are anyhow around the table when it comes to national development policies and systems do often not excel in gender expertise or commitment to objectives of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

As most of the partner countries do have country-owned gender equality and empowerment policy objectives as well as an institutional apparatus and actors with a specific mandate towards those objectives, donors obviously do have room of manoeuvre to redress the apparent negligence (UNIFEM, 2006). In practice, they might do this through policy dialogue and capacity building of the national gender apparatus and key actors within ministries of finance and line ministries. Particularly interesting in this respect are gender budgeting initiatives⁴ which aim at bridging the gap among ‘gender experts’ and ‘budget experts’ and, more fundamentally, foster participation of gender actors in policy-making and budgetary processes. In spite of the existing opportunities, gender experts within aid agencies have highlighted that the ‘ownership principle’ is currently rather being misused by aid staff to easily escape their own responsibility in terms of gender equality and women’s empowerment (see OECD/DAC, 2007b; Van Reisen with Ussar, 2005).

3.2. Harmonisation

With the aim to reduce transaction costs and improve aid delivery, the harmonisation principle stimulates coordination among donors through common arrangements for funding, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Information sharing and dialogue among donors might be fruitful in clarifying notions of gender equality and empowerment, which are often being interpreted and used differently leading to confusion and policy evaporation on the ground

³ See amongst others Gaynor (2006, 2007), UNIFEM (2006), Alemany et al (2008), Chiwara and Karadenizli (2008), OECD/DAC (2008b), AWID, DAWN, WIDE and FEMNET (2008) for concrete suggestions to grasp opportunities and counterbalance risks.

⁴ The Council of Europe (2005: 10) defines gender budgeting as “an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of targets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality”.

(see e.g. Whitehead and Lockwood, 1999). It might stimulate exchange of experiences among donors about how to improve gender-sensitivity of aid policies and practices and strengthen investment in joint analytical and assessment work. At international level, coordination and harmonisation among donors primarily takes place within the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), with the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GENDERNET) spearheading initiatives in the area of gender equality and empowerment. On the ground in recipient countries, donor and government coordination groups on gender equality are useful to harmonise programming and funding for gender equality, its tracking, monitoring and evaluation (Chiwara and Karadenizli, 2008). In cases where individual donor agencies do not have their own gender expertise on the ground, harmonisation and coordination might ensure the presence of gender expertise among a group of donors.

Yet, on the ground opportunities do not seem to materialize, to the contrary. Harmonisation seems to have induced a reduction of funds for gender equality work and a marginalisation of gender-related objectives. As emphasized in UNIFEM (2006: 6), "donor harmonisation already demands an unprecedented level of consensus between a large variety of stakeholders, which often leads to sidelining gender concerns as to reach consensus on other issues". Harmonisation and coordination often follows the principle of the largest common denominator, which entails the adoption of the policies and practices of the least gender-sensitive donor. Another risk is that the dominant 'vertical' sector focus crowds out 'horizontal' gender equality and empowerment objectives⁵ (see also Gaynor, 2006) which is for instance evident from the absence of a gender cluster in joint sector working groups or in 'sector' Division of Labour Initiatives⁶.

3.3. Alignment

From donors it is expected that they align to partner countries' policies and systems as it is mainly through the use of existing policies and systems that weaknesses and strengths may be diagnosed and improved over time. This also holds when it comes to national gender equality and women's empowerment plans and systems in place to stimulate gender equality and empowerment. However, as long as gender equality and empowerment objectives are not integrated in national development policies and systems, or where they are hardly existing, alignment risks reinforcing the already existing male bias. Donor alignment will in these cases particularly circumvent those projects that fall within a donor's agenda-setting track of targeted support to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Notwithstanding the pressing challenges and risks in this area, donors and gender actors in the country do have room of manoeuvre to counterbalance the risks at hand. First, this may be done through the inclusion of a gender perspective in aid modalities such as sector and general budget support which are considered first-best in terms of 'alignment'. Budget support involves a transfer of resources to state budgets in order to support national (sector) policies and existing procedures and mechanisms to plan, budget, implement, monitor and evaluate. Budget support typically involves the use of 'entry points' through which donors exert 'influence'. These entry points include diagnosis of country policies and country systems, policy dialogue, capacity building, 'consensual' conditionalities⁷ included in Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs) and monitoring exercises such as joint (sector)

⁵ The inherent problem of dealing with objectives which necessitate a horizontal approach in structures that are predominantly organized along vertical lines has been identified before by Bangura (1997).

⁶ See e.g. the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy (Commission of the European Communities, 2007).

⁷ Consensual conditionality can be defined as, "a conditionality for which there exists a genuine measure of ownership on the recipient side" (Molenaers and Renard, 2008: 12). This type of conditionality is more likely to be effective than the 'hard' conditionalities which were applied by the IMF and World Bank in the context of Structural Adjustment Programmes which were often not based on a country-owned policy or plan (see Molenaers and Renard, 2008).

reviews. While so far no tailor-made handbooks exist on how to integrate a gender perspective in these entry points, there are interesting experiments ongoing, using amongst others insights and approaches of gender budgeting (see www.gender-budgets.org; UNIFEM, 2002; Budlender et al, 2002; Holvoet, 2006; Holvoet and Inberg, 2008; Chiwara and Karadenizli, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2008b, 2008c).

Second, donors also increasingly move towards a mixture of different aid modalities, using general budget support, sector budget support, technical assistance, targeted ‘pilot’ projects, in a coherent fashion (Molenaers and Renard, 2008). One set of projects in such a portfolio approach could include interventions which are specifically targeted towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

3.4. Results-orientation

‘Results-orientation’ involves broadening the focus from ‘implementation’ (inputs, activities and outputs) to results (outcomes and impact). In practice, results-orientation necessitates the selection of outcomes, elaboration of causal chains, translation into indicators, data collection, target setting, monitoring, evaluation and feedback (see Kusek and Rist, 2004; Prennushi et al., 2001). When results-orientation is taken seriously, it requires the integration of a gender perspective at all levels of the causal chain and for all policy outcomes as disregarding this leads to failures in implementation and results (see section 2).

The emphasis on results and related budgetary reforms from input and line-item budgeting to results/performance-based budgeting is strongly driven by donors who in a context of new aid modalities mainly rely on information regarding inputs (budgets) on the one hand and results on the other hand for their own accountability towards their home constituency. This focus on the two extremes is amongst others obvious from the type of indicators included in Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs), from capacity building efforts in the areas of public finance management (PFM) and MDG data collection. A move towards results and performance-based budgeting might in principle also open opportunities for gender budgeting as it also involves a confrontation of inputs with results. The systematic integration of a gender perspective throughout the budget cycle could help to attenuate the fundamental ‘mainstreaming’ problem of ‘horizontality’ as the budget itself cuts across all line ministries (see Holvoet, 2007). The integration of a gender perspective in a country’s Budget Call Circular or in the context of a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) are e.g. interesting experiments to explore (Holvoet, 2008). While some donors (e.g. Netherlands, Ireland and Germany) have already started to include gender budgeting initiatives in capacity building efforts related to PFM, the existing opportunities have so far been underexploited.

‘Results-orientation’ might also help to lower the problem of ‘policy evaporation’, at least when gender equality and women’s empowerment are among the outcomes and targets selected. However, the inclusion of gender equality targets is not straightforward as ‘gender equality’ and ‘women’s empowerment’ often do not figure high on a country’s priority list and they are neither easily captured in simple indicators. This tendency may be further aggravated by the fact that results-orientation is often misconceived as ‘management by results’ instead of ‘management for results’ (White, 2002). This often leads to a selection of ‘quick wins’ excluding objectives as gender equality and empowerment which often entail long-term changes. It also explains the bias towards gender equality in primary and secondary education when making the construct of gender equality and women’s empowerment operational, which is e.g. obvious in the case of the MDGs. Finally, in the context of budget support there is a move towards the inclusion of aggregate targets and indicators in PRSPs and PAFs. This focus on the ‘aggregate’, combined with donors’ growing distance from realities on the ground, may conceal exclusionary policies and practices and deserves special attention from a gender perspective. The integration of a gender perspective in monitoring and evaluative exercises, such as public expenditure tracking surveys, benefit incidence analysis

and poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) is of utmost importance to disclose a potential strengthening of the male bias in results on the ground.

3.5. Mutual Accountability

The principle of ‘mutual accountability’ is currently mainly being interpreted as the extent to which government and donors have addressed national spending priorities, and improved transparency and predictability regarding donor’s disbursement of funds and their allocation at country level (Chiwara and Karadenizli). In principle, this also includes accountability of governments and donors for spending on gender equality and empowerment objectives. If gender equality and empowerment objectives have, however, not been included in national policies, systems, targets and indicators, it is unlikely that this focus will be taken on board in accountability mechanisms. If the focus of mutual ‘accountability’ exercises is broadened from ‘aid effectiveness’ to ‘development results’, there might be renewed opportunities for the inclusion of a gender dimension.

Non-state actors are often pointed at as an important mechanism of ‘downward’ accountability. However, it is naïve to assume that the gender dimension or gender actors will be automatically taken on board in the accountability exercises of non-state actors (see e.g. Guijt and Shah, 1997; Mosse, 1994). It necessitates the presence of a strong ‘gender demand’ side among non-state actors. Donors could obviously play an important role in fostering women’s and gender actors’ voice and agency through financial and technical support as well as through the creation of a more enabling political environment⁸. Particularly interesting in this regard are non-state gender budget initiatives which track whether planned initiatives in the area of gender equality and empowerment have also been adequately budgeted for, which assess (potential) gender-bias in results on the ground and, more fundamentally, increase leverage of non-state actors over policy-making and budgeting processes. At the international level, the most obvious gender equality donor accountability mechanism is the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker⁹ which is currently being revised and refined to better accommodate changes in aid modalities. Other existing donor accountability mechanisms which could include a gender dimension are the DAC peer reviews, the Monitoring Surveys of the PD as well as the more in-depth evaluations of the implementation and effect of the PD.

4. From principles to reality...how gender-sensitive is the Paris Declaration and its review processes? An international perspective

The original Paris Declaration groups gender equality with other cross-cutting issues in paragraph 42 which essentially bores down gender equality to the area of harmonization (OECD/DAC, 2005: 7). None of the twelve PD/AAA indicators captures gender equality or empowerment and the gender blindness of the PD even risks to go unnoticed as none of the monitoring surveys has given due attention to gender concerns. The 2006 survey (OECD/DAC, 2007a) does not mention the words ‘gender’ and ‘women’. The 2008 update (OECD/DAC, 2008a) only includes ‘gender’ in the glossary of key terms where gender

⁸ See amongst others Mukhopadhyay and Meer (2004) for in-depth analysis and suggestions to promote the accountability of governance institutions towards women through an increase of women’s voice and agency.

⁹ The gender equality policy marker is developed by the OECD/DAC to facilitate monitoring and co-ordination of Member’s activities in support of DAC policy objectives for gender equality. The marking system uses three values: ‘principal objective’; ‘significant objective’ or ‘not targeted to the policy objective’. Principal policy objectives are those which can be identified as being fundamental in the design and impact of the activity and which are an explicit objective of the activity. Significant policy objectives are those which, although important, are not one of the principal reasons for undertaking the activity. Not targeted to the policy objective means that the activity has been screened against, but was found not be targeted to, the policy objective (OECD/DAC 2008f: 2).

assessment is showcased as an example of Country Analytical Work while the word ‘women’ remains absent.

A highly similar picture of blunt gender blindness emerges when we browse the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support, one of the largest evaluative efforts ever undertaken. While the more recent 2008 Evaluation of the Implementation of the PD neither spends a specific paragraph on gender equality, some references to gender issues in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the synthesis report deserve to be mentioned. The ToR subscribe a gender balance for the team members of the country evaluations and it is for instance emphasized that ‘ownership’ is complex and that some questions need to be clarified when implementing the ‘ownership’ principle, including ‘whose ownership is to be strengthened’ and ‘the extent to which ownership is inclusive, with respect to human rights, gender equality and the environment’ (Wood et al., 2008, annex 3: 25). The synthesis report explicitly acknowledges that gender is largely absent from the evaluation and points out that several of the country evaluation reports considered one of the limitations of the PD the fact that it is not necessarily designed or able to offer any tailored solution to some of their other most pressing development preoccupations, such as: ...; gender concerns; ... (Wood et al., 2008: 30).

One of the most interesting PD review documents is the aid effectiveness report prepared by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) and conceptualised as evidence-based material for the AAA. It draws upon the 2006 and 2008 monitoring surveys, the 2008 evaluation synthesis report and inputs from DAC networks, including the GENDERNET. In order to turn the tide, the latter DAC Working Party has taken up its function of ‘mobilising network’ and has put, somewhat late in the day, gender-sensitivity of the PD on its agenda¹⁰. It organised a number of meetings and workshops¹¹, commissioned studies and produced a series of documents and brief reports with key messages and synthesis of particularly relevant case studies for the organizers of each of the nine 3rd High Level Forum (HLF-3) roundtables. Some of its meetings were organised jointly, amongst others with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE) or with other DAC networks. The workshops and the documents produced have clearly been influential and are also referred to in the final WP-EFF review document. The first chapter on ‘ownership’ for instance includes a paragraph on gender equality and women’s empowerment and urges donors to “align their strategies with existing gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments, ...and to translate these strategies into budgeted and results-oriented operational programmes” (WP-EFF, 2008: 39).

Finally, in the 2008 AAA there is clearly more attention to gender equality and the position of women than in the original PD. The most important reference to gender equality is in the third paragraph: “Gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are cornerstones for achieving enduring impact on the lives and potential of poor women, men, and children. It is vital that all our policies address these issues in a more systematic and coherent way” (HLF-3, 2008: 1). The importance of gender equality plans and policies, as well as the participation of women is also highlighted in the chapter on strengthening country ownership and development (HLF-3, 2008: 2). In paragraph 23 developing countries commit themselves to include disaggregation of data by sex, while improving their information systems (HLF-3, 2008: 5). There are also a number of more recent post-Accra evolutions: the DAC Senior Level Meeting of December 2008 has endorsed the ‘DAC Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’ (OECD/DAC, 2008e),

¹⁰ Until the end of 2008 the work of the DAC Gendernet was organized in different Task Teams, one of which was on aid effectiveness.

¹¹ The most important ones took place in Nairobi (January, 2006, organised jointly with the IANGWE), Dublin (April 2007, organized jointly with xxx) and London (March, 2008). Summary reports are available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/collaboration/2006/summary_report.pdf and Oxford Policy Management et al. (2008).

drafted by the DAC GENDERNET and complementing the existing 1999 Guidelines (OECD/DAC, 1999). Additionally, a set of more concrete issues briefs¹² has been elaborated to complement the guiding principles and make them more operational. While these are positive evolutions that foster an enabling environment for aid agencies to move ahead, gender concerns, however, remain at the same time absent from the 12 monitoring indicators. This inevitably implies that changes in donor and recipient behaviour in this area, if any, will remain invisible.

While it is impossible to attribute the observed changes to any specific actors or interventions, interviews with various actors on the underlying processes that shaped the PD and AAA identify a number of potentially influential factors. The ‘internal’ mobilizing force of the DAC GENDERNET was already emphasized above. Additionally, there are a number of other ‘mobilising networks’ and alliances among them which have invested considerably in making the PD and its review processes more gender sensitive. The EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace, for instance, has identified approaches to integrate gender equality and women’s human rights in new aid modalities. It also invested in a multi-country study to illustrate how gender budgeting can promote gender equality and aid effectiveness. There were also a number of joint efforts including the organization of one of the 10 Accra side events on ‘Ownership, partnership and results – gender equality and women’s empowerment make the Accra Agenda for Action a reality’ (organized by UNIFEM, the DAC GENDERNET, the Government of Ghana and Denmark).

Last but not the least are the lobbying efforts toward governments, the WP-EFF and general development CSOs of the specialized ‘gender and women’ CSOs including WIDE, AWID, DAWN and FEMNET. For their lobbying efforts, the gender organisations used recommendations that were formulated during different international and regional consultation meetings¹³ in the period leading to Accra, hereby providing the language for different drafts of the AAA (Craviotto, 2008). Interestingly, none of these or other women’s organizations were represented in the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS), a multi-stakeholder group set up by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, which had a mandate to look into CSO’s functions as actors of development and downward accountability (www.accrahlf.net). Notwithstanding their absence from the AG-CS, they prepared brief issue papers as input for the preparation of the different HLF-3 roundtables¹⁴ as well as primers to share critical information and analysis about the PD from a gender perspective¹⁵. Their analysis has fed into the overall CSO assessments of the PD as well as into the documents of the other mobilizing gender networks. Prior to the CSO Forum and the 3rd High Level Forum, they¹⁶ organized the Accra Women’s Forum which was attended by

¹² Issues Briefs were produced on ‘Making Linkages’, ‘Finding the entry points’ and ‘Innovative funding for women’s organisations’ (OECD/DAC, 2008b; 2008c; 2008d).

¹³ See amongst others the International Consultation of Women’s Organisations and Networks on Aid Effectiveness, January 2008, Ottawa, Canada (organised by AWID and WIDE); Consultation on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: challenges and opportunities ahead in the new European aid environment, May 2008, Brussels, Belgium (organised by WIDE and UNIFEM); African Women’s Regional Consultation on Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality: road to Accra, May 2008, Nairobi, Kenya (organised by FEMNET).

¹⁴ Roundtable 1 on ownership, roundtable 3 on harmonisation, roundtable 4 on managing for development results and roundtable 4 on mutual accountability.

¹⁵ AWID prepared five primers, i.e. Primer 1: *An Overview of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness & the New Aid Modalities*; Primer 2: *Official Mechanisms related to the Implementation of the Paris Declaration*; Primer 3: *CSOs Engagement in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda: The Parallel Process, CSOs concerns and recommendations*; Primer 4: *Monitoring and Evaluation of the Paris Declaration Implementation*; Primer 5: *The Aid Effectiveness Agenda from a Women’s Rights Perspective*.

¹⁶ The Women’s Forum was hosted by the Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) and co-convened by: WIDE, DAWN, FEMNET, IGTN and AWID, with the co-sponsorship of African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), UNIFEM and Action Aid International amongst others.

more than 200 women's rights and empowerment organizations, gender advocates and experts from all regions of the world. Emanating from the forum is a statement which calls for actions and recommendations targeted at the HLF-3.

5. A focus on one of the Paris and Accra champions: the Netherlands

The PD and AAA key principles set out a reform agenda for aid agencies which demands changes in policies and guidelines. Progress in the reform agenda is monitored through a set of twelve indicators (see annex 1), of which eight are particularly applicable to donors (indicators 3, 4, 5a/5b, 6, 7, 8 are related to 'alignment', indicators 9 and 10a/10b to 'harmonisation'). One of the agencies that is considered '*ahead of the crowd*' is the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a member of the 'Nordic Plus' donor group¹⁷. The Netherlands scores relatively well in the 2006 and 2008 monitoring surveys, but it will not necessarily attain the targets for all indicators¹⁸. The Netherlands case study report of the 2008 Evaluation of the Implementation of the PD concludes that the Ministry is highly *committed* to the PD, that *capacity* to implement the PD is adequately available at headquarters and embassies and that no specific *incentives* for staff are needed (IOB, 2008). In fact, the Netherlands is one of the agencies which spearheaded the changes promoted in the PD. As principles of ownership, harmonisation and alignment were already anchored in Dutch Development Cooperation since the 1990s, no revolutionary changes were needed in terms of policies and procedures. The Netherlands, for instance, already complemented projects with (sector) budget support and devolved substantial responsibilities to the embassies in partner countries. The most visible investment at organisational level since 2005 has been the instalment of the Effectiveness and Quality Department (DEK) which stimulates the implementation of the PD through support and advice to other departments. In practice, a number of existing instruments and tools (i.e. Track Record, Sector Track Record, Multi-Annual Strategic Plan), guidelines (i.e. Procedural Guidelines for Development Cooperation) and procedures (Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures) have been adapted or some instruments (e.g. Strategic Governance and Anti-Corruption Assessment) have been added. Initiatives to increase staff's capacity include two special support programmes in the areas of Public Finance Management (PFM) and Institutional and Capacity Development as well as periodic embassy visits by a mix of HQ staff to discuss PD's opportunities and challenges (IOB, 2008).

Not entirely to our surprise, the evaluative study on the Netherlands remains silent on gender issues, except for two instances. It is highlighted that the gender unit (DSI/ER) "is keen to ensure that the attention to gender issues does not get lost in the new aid architecture" (IOB, 2008: 21) while also the more general concern about the technical nature of the PD and the loss of the thematic focus is raised. This section contributes to this under-exploited area of research and documents and explores how gender concerns are being dealt with in the context of the PD implementation. We distinguish among commitments, capacity and incentives and draw upon insights from the political process approach¹⁹.

5.1. Commitment

A quick review of policy papers of the past two Ministers for Development Cooperation²⁰ shows that the declining high-level interest in gender equality discernible in the previous

¹⁷ Other members are Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the UK.

¹⁸ It will probably not attain the targets for indicator 1 (alignment of aid flows on national priorities), indicator 5a (use of country PFM systems) and indicator 7 (predictability of aid).

¹⁹ See Roggeband and Verloo (2006) for an application of the political process approach to the analysis of the elaboration and use of the gender impact assessment in the Netherlands.

²⁰ Whereas 'Mutual Interests, Mutual Responsibilities: Dutch development cooperation en route to 2015' (2003; Minister A.M.A. Van Ardenne) does not refer at all to gender equality and women's empowerment (even though sexual and reproductive health and rights are identified as one of the five priorities), in 'Our Common Concern, Investing in development in a changing world' (2007; Minister B. Koenders) the commitment to gender equality and women empowerment is more pronounced.

legacy (OECD/DAC, 2006) has been reversed. The commitment towards gender equality at the highest political level is again on the rise and this also holds for the importance attached to gender concerns in the PD and AAA. In his reaction to the Dutch parliament on the evaluation of the implementation of the PD (July 2008) and the HLF-3 in Accra (July and September 2008), the Minister for Development Cooperation, for instance, explicitly highlights the importance of integrating a gender perspective and gender actors in 'results-orientation', in sector approaches and in support for domestic accountability functions.

Bureaucratic commitment towards a more gender-sensitive PD is clearly more uneven: there are differences among departments and embassies, among staff members within departments and embassies while there is also a more general evolution discernible over time. As highlighted in the IOB evaluation, commitment is notably high in the ministry's gender unit (DSI/ER). This is also visible from the forceful engagement of previous and current DSI/ER staff members in the DAC GENDERNET's Task Force on Aid Effectiveness²¹ (see also OECD/DAC, 2006). Similar to commitment in the area of gender equality and empowerment in general, commitment towards a gender-sensitive PD/AAA in other units is more uneven. Some staff members vigorously defend that the PD has a purely technocratic 'aid' effectiveness focus and should not be watered down by considering thematic issues such as gender equality. This position is also obvious from the fact that gender experts or gender concerns were not really taken on board in the PD/AAA positioning of the Netherlands. However, there seems to be a growing awareness within the ministry and more particularly within DEK of the importance of gender equality for the aid effectiveness agenda on the one hand and of the need to exploit PD/AAA's opportunities for gender equality and counterbalance potential risks on the other hand.

This relatively quick change in positions at ministerial level and within the ministry is typical for the Netherlands. As highlighted by Roggeband and Verloo (2006: 631), the assumption of stability in the 'opportunity-network-framing' constellation does not match the reality of Dutch policy-making which is highly dynamic and characterized by a strong 'process' character. Changes in frames and values are common; opportunities that previously existed may disappear overnight, while new ones are easily created. Interviewees pointed in this respect also at the importance of the 'strategic' framing that has been adopted by gender experts in the context of the PD and AAA²². The fact that the gender policy discourse and the arguments spelled out to put gender more prominently on the agenda are often highly context-specific has also been observed previously in other development institutions²³. In this specific case, rights-based arguments remain predominant but gender efficiency arguments have been added. As highlighted by interviewees, many policy-makers and aid administration staff indeed accept that a gendered approach might enrich the human rights and good governance approach, yet it is much harder to convince them of the fact that the economy as such is essentially a gendered structure and that aid and development 'interventions', will not be effective, let alone efficient, when 'gender concerns' are not taken on board throughout. While some of the 'hardliners' within the ministry seem to have given a lurch, it remains of utmost importance to closely monitor and evaluate whether the use of more 'instrumentalist' strategic framing also leads to effective changes.

Turning to non-state actors, a first observation is that Dutch Parliament has shown so far relatively little interest and commitment to the PD and its review processes, let alone to its gender-sensitivity. Second, while there are substantial differences within the Dutch NGO

²¹ The Netherlands e.g. assisted with the publication of the 2002 OECD/DAC reference guide on gender equality and SWAPs and at the 2006 DAC/IANGWE Nairobi workshop Dutch embassy staff from Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia showcased how they engaged with PRS processes from a gender perspective (OECD/DAC, 2006).

²² The importance of 'strategic framing' has also been emphasized by Roggeband and Verloo (2006).

²³ See Razavi (1997) for a discussion.

community, Dutch NGOs generally take a more critical stance towards the PD. They consider it at best interesting for the ministry, but not necessarily applicable to their own organization²⁴. Mid 2008, Dutch NGOs (Cordaid, Hivos, ICCOS, Oxfam/Novib, SNV in cooperation with Partos), organized a national dialogue, i.e. 'the Missing Link', on the role of NGOs in the PD and more generally on the quality of aid in the context of PD. One of the topics addressed during the meeting was pro-poor and gender budgeting. The recommendations formulated during this conference were sent to the development cooperation spokesmen in the parliament. The most important concern of the NGOs is the technical nature of the PD, which does not take into account the effectiveness of the poverty reduction policies of the recipient countries. They emphasize that aid should be based on country policies that respects human rights, environment protection and gender equality (Wildeman, 2008). Some NGOs have also included evidence on gender and PRSPs in their individual gender policy documents²⁵ and some of them have a substantial track record in supporting (women's) organizations which could engage in advocacy and research in order to make their countries' policies more gender-sensitive (Zuidberg et al., 2004). Yet, there is so far relatively little in-depth debate or thinking about gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of PD/AAA. There is also remarkably little feedback from activities and outputs of international gender and women networks as WIDE to the Dutch NGO scene. This apparent negligence of the topic may to a certain extent be linked to the overall critical position towards the PD, to the specific location and the 'portfolio of activities' of gender experts within NGOs as well as to the fact that those few NGO staff members who are involved in the PD/AAA related discussions have little gender expertise or commitment themselves.

5.2. Capacity

Studies of other development institutions have highlighted that commitment to gender equality and a gender-sensitive policy discourse does not automatically lead to gender-sensitive practice (see CIDA, 1994; Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002). In order to avoid 'policy evaporation', commitments and general policies need to be translated into adequate human and organisational capacities and clear-cut incentives (see 5.3).

The gender policy of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is generally in line with the two-track integrationist and agenda-setting approach set out in the 1999 DAC guidelines (OECD/DAC, 1999). The ministry's policy is coordinated by a special gender unit (DSI/ER), which consists of six persons. DSI/ER is currently located within the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) but will shortly be shifted to the department of human rights. This department is at the same time attached to DGIS as well as Foreign Affairs, which will broaden the mandate of DSI/ER to the entire Foreign Affairs portfolio. Since the turn of the century, expertise within the gender unit has gradually evolved from the more micro (project) level to the macro (policy) and (public finance) management level. DSI/ER focuses on human and women's rights while there is also considerable attention for issues of 'accountability', 'aid effectiveness', PD and AAA. However, when it comes to the integration of the gender dimension in the PD/AAA, mandates and division of responsibilities between DSI/ER and DEK are not entirely clear. At first sight DEK's objectives include policy analyses on cross-cutting issues, support and advise to the embassies on cross-cutting themes (IOB, 2008), yet staff emphasized that 'cross-cutting' involves mainly macro-economic issues and not gender equality and environmental issues. In fact, DEK's mandate is to check whether the integration of gender equality and environmental issues takes place but it is not responsible for realizing it.

²⁴ The CIDSE umbrella, of which Cordaid is a member, has, for instance, elaborated its own six principles of effective aid (CIDSE, 2008).

²⁵ See for instance HIVOS 'gender & women and development' policy document, i.e. 'Women Unlimited'.

This unclear division and confusion about responsibilities is not unique to the Dutch case and not to the specific topic at hand, but related to the implementation of ‘gender mainstreaming’ within organisations in general (see Mukhopadhyay, 2009). When an organization adopts a gender mainstreaming policy, the assumption is that diffusion of responsibilities takes place across the organization while specialist gender resources focus on the catalytic, advisory, supportive, the horizontal (across sectors and aid modalities) and vertical (across different phases of the ‘intervention’ cycle) oversight functions. However, prototypes of such fully mainstreamed organizations are hard to find. In reality, the integration of the gender dimension mainly remains within the portfolio of the specialized gender unit without however assigning the necessary resources to fulfil this broad mandate. This scenario also seems to materialize within the ministry: when it comes to ‘engendering PD and AAA’, both DEK as well as DSI/ER have oversight functions but none is really responsible for the actual realization. So far, DSI/ER has taken the issue on board, instigated by its long-standing engagement within the DAC GENDERNET on the same topic, but without however being able to fully invest in it. In practice, DEK consults DSI/ER whenever the integration of gender issues is on the agenda and DSI/ER tries to influence DEK, amongst others, through the dissemination of publications which are related to the topic, such as the recent OECD/DAC Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, case-study material from the GENDERNET workshops and the issues briefs. This dialogue and communication among both units is rather intensive and fruitful at the overall policy level. Gender concerns have, for instance, been included at several instances in the Accra action plan of the Ministry and efforts will be done to integrate a gender perspective in those areas where the Netherlands wants to focus on, i.e. alignment, accountability and statistical capacity. The use of gender budgeting will e.g. be considered positively in the decision to align to country PFM and results-oriented systems. Further, in their support of the national statistical capacity special attention will be given to sex-disaggregated data and analysis and when strengthening local accountability mechanisms participation of women and gender actors will be stimulated.

However, when moving from the more general policy level to the more operational tools, instruments, guidelines, directives and trainings related to the PD, or to aid modalities such as budget support, the gender dimension is much less visible. This is not entirely surprising as the Netherlands has elaborated many of its tools and guidelines prior to Paris, at a time when only a few staff members were convinced of the importance to integrate a gender perspective and when guidelines and issues briefs on how to integrate a gender dimension did not exist yet. In some exceptional cases, the gender dimension has been taken on board when instruments or programmes were revised: the topic of gender budgeting has for instance been added to the special support programme on PFM and gender issues are included in the ‘Track Record’ Guide. While the majority of the staff agree to the need for a better integration of gender issues at the more operational level, nobody is responsible for realizing it. It is neither a straightforward undertaking; whereas nowadays more guidelines are available and approaches such as gender budgeting have become better known and documented, the application to the own organization remains a matter of experimentation which needs the necessary human and financial resources as well as authority.

An issue that deserves specific attention is the way in which gender issues are dealt with in the devolution of responsibilities to the field. A first critical observation is that the number of gender experts has been significantly reduced at embassy level. Whether gender issues are effectively captured has mainly become dependent upon the commitment and capacity of the Heads of Development Cooperation (HOS) and the Chefs de Postes (CdP). While DSI/ER has tried to foster the gender dimension at the embassy level through e.g. the dissemination of a document (*‘Good Intentions Won’t Do’*) which includes case studies on better practices (Stegge, aan de et al., 2007) and a session on gender equality, empowerment and PD in the 2007 gender training of HOS and gender focal points, the integration of a gender perspective at the embassy level is very uneven and at best fragmentary. Interestingly a similar

observation has been made by a local representative from a Dutch NGO who highlighted that gender issues have become totally invisible when specific gender expertise was reduced. In order to redress the situation at embassy level, there are currently proposals to share gender experts amongst the Nordic+ donors in order to ensure that within all Dutch partner countries donor gender expertise is present.

Besides a change in the number of gender experts present at embassies, also the substance of their work has changed. While they used to be mainly responsible for women's empowerment projects financed through Dutch embassies, their work nowadays entails more internal and external lobbying, networking and analytical work (Stegge, aan de et al. 2007). This mainly involves convincing other experts, within and outside the embassy, to pay more structural attention to the position of girls and women in the analyses and diagnosis, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Stegge, aan de et al. 2007). While this is obviously not straightforward, there are some examples of successful initiatives, such as the Donor Gender Platform in Burkina Faso, initiated by the Dutch Embassy. This platform created in 2005 a joint Gender Fund which aims at increasing access of women's organisations to financial resources in an attempt to foster accountability in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment (Stegge, aan de et al. 2007).

The decrease in specific gender expertise on the ground as well as the shift in their responsibilities confirms the concern raised by gender experts in aid agencies that it has become less obvious to finance interventions which are specifically targeted towards the objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment. Interestingly, the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation set-up at the end of 2008 an MDG-3 Fund 'Investing in Equality' (see www.MDG3.nl) in response to an AWID study which reported a forty percent fall in the number of projects targeted at women and women's empowerment over a period of six years (2006 to 2000). The Fund of about 70 million euro finances 45 projects which aim to improve rights and opportunities for women as stipulated in MDG-3²⁶. Whereas such projects could in principle be part of a portfolio approach whereby different aid instruments are combined, this approach does not seem to be applied much on the ground.

5.3. Incentives

There is currently no incentive structure of 'sticks' and 'carrots' to stimulate HQ, embassies or individual staff members to integrate a gender perspective in the PD/AAA implementation. There exists a system whereby DSI/ER assesses the yearly action plans of departments and embassies on gender-sensitivity and assigns a score on a three-point scale (satisfactory, limited attention, absence of gender issues). Yet, the most important incentive is the visible commitment of the Minister of Development Cooperation. As discussed in section three, PD key principles of 'results orientation' and 'mutual accountability' could easily add to the existing incentive structure, at least when they are interpreted in a gender-sensitive manner. When narrowly interpreted they will, however, rather act as 'disincentives'. While it is too early to judge its functioning and effect, embassies will need to report in the near future on their results in the area of the four policy priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which 'rights and opportunities for women and girls' is one²⁷. The danger is however that in the translation from policy priorities to results indicators, there will be a reductionist focus on gender disparity in education (see also OECD/DAC, 2006).

²⁶ The fund contributes to the priorities of MDG3, with an emphasis on: property and inheritance rights for women; gender equality in employment and equal opportunities on the labour market; participation and representation of women in national parliaments and political bodies; combating violence against women (see www.MDG3.nl).

²⁷ The other three priorities are: security and development; growth and equity; sustainability, climate and energy.

Besides the absence of clear incentives within the ministry, there exist so far few external incentives. As highlighted in section 5.1., there is currently little external pressure from Dutch non-state actors such as the Parliament, NGOs and the IOB. This could change in the near future if the parliament's attention for PD and AAA increases and if gender equality would be more prominently included in the second phase of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration in which the IOB takes a lead role. While the Visitation Commission on gender equality (VCE) is important in reviewing the overall gender policy of the ministry, it is probably not familiar enough with the PD and AAA to assess and foster this specific dimension. At the international level, incentives are mainly provided through the DAC system of peer reviews and the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker, the main gender donor accountability mechanism. As the DAC Senior Management Level has recently adopted the 'DAC Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' (OECD/DAC, 2008e), it is expected that the issue will figure more prominently on the agenda of the DAC Peer Review Mechanism and upcoming evaluative exercises such as the second phase of the Evaluation of the PD. Similarly, it is expected that the application of the Gender Equality Policy Marker in the context of aid modalities as budget support will be more vigorously stimulated, monitored and its findings analysed.

6. Conclusion

With the aim to promote aid and development effectiveness changes in aid policies and instruments have been propagated over the last decade. The Paris Declaration (PD) and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) set out a reform agenda for donor and partner countries with a focus on five key-principles, i.e. ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results-orientation and mutual accountability. Progress in the implementation of the reform agenda is monitored through a set of twelve indicators (see table 1 in annex). This paper analyses the PD and its review processes through a gender lens.

To start with, the rationale for a gender-sensitive reform agenda is clear-cut. First, gender equality and women's empowerment are among the objectives that most partner and donor governments have endorsed. It is thus straightforward to scrutinize changes in aid modalities on their value added towards policies and results in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. Different studies agree to the fact that all five key-principles open interesting opportunities to move forward while they at the same time bring along a number of serious risks or at least pressing challenges. If donors and governments are serious about results-orientation and accountability for the equality and empowerment objectives they have endorsed, it necessarily implies serious efforts to grasp opportunities and mitigate risks. Second, there is ample evidence of the fact that gender-blind policies and practices, be it at the micro, meso or macrolevel, are not effective, let alone efficient. Policies and practices which flatly ignore that men and women are facing different constraints, opportunities, incentives and rights just do not work. A gender mainstreaming approach which rallies an integrative and agenda-setting track is the answer. In the context of new aid modalities, insights of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) might be particularly useful. Technically, GRB surmounts some of the difficulties encountered in gender mainstreaming and, even more fundamentally, it puts into perspective the 'exclusiveness' of policy-making and budgetary processes. In hands of non-state actors, GRB may function as a powerful mechanism of 'downward' accountability.

While the rationale for a gender-sensitive PD may be argued on equality, effectiveness and efficiency grounds, the original PD only made a passing reference to gender equality in the paragraph on harmonisation efforts. Further, the initial gender-blindness will remain unveiled as also PD monitoring surveys and evaluations are silent on gender equality and women's empowerment. Being confronted with this sorry state of affairs and in order to avoid further 'gender-retrofitting', different gender and women's mobilising networks started, somewhat late in the day, with advocacy, research and lobbying towards the 2008 Accra III High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Efforts of the DAC GENDERNET and CSO networks such as

WIDE, AWID, FEMNET have been partially successful. Gender equality and women's empowerment figure more prominently in the AAA, and more opportunities are opened for the integration of a gender perspective. However, none of these opportunities will be automatically realised and particularly agenda-setting initiatives risk to be curtailed when principles of 'country ownership', 'alignment' and 'results-orientation' are interpreted in a 'reductionist' manner. Moreover, changes (or the lack of) in policies and practices of governments and donors risk to go unnoticed as the twelve existing indicators remain gender-blind while no new indicators have been added.

Research on the way gender issues are dealt with on the ground in the context of the PD/AAA reform processes has so far mainly focused on partner countries. While this is in line with the propagated shift in responsibilities, it is as important to document and analyse ongoing reform processes within donor agencies through a gender lens. The Netherlands are an interesting case, being one of the donors which are generally applauded for being '*ahead of the crowd*' when it comes to the implementation of PD/AAA reform processes. As regards commitment, there is outspoken support for a gender-sensitive PD/AAA at the highest political level, while bureaucratic commitment is more uneven. There are important differences among departments, within departments and over time. This is to a certain extent typical for Dutch policy-making where relatively quick changes in frames and values are common. Similar to other cases, 'strategic' framing has proved to be important to get gender and empowerment concerns on the PD/AAA agenda. In this specific context of poverty reduction and aid effectiveness, it is of utmost importance to revive the old distinction among a WID 'poverty reduction/efficiency' approach and a GAD 'gender efficiency' approach and to monitor and evaluate the usefulness of a more instrumentalist framing.

Whereas commitment in terms of general policy-making is relatively high and on the rise, the division of mandates and division of responsibilities is much more ambiguous with different departments having oversight functions and none really responsible for the realisation. In a setting of relatively few stick and carrots, policy evaporation is obviously on the lookout. This may be particularly valid within embassies where increasing levels of devolved responsibilities are combined with a reduction of specific gender expertise. In practice, it particularly circumvents a donor's agenda-setting track of specific targeting towards objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment. In an effort to reverse this tendency, a specific MDG-3 Fund 'Investing in Equality' has been installed and cooperation is sought with Nordic+ donors as to ensure in all Dutch partner countries donor gender expertise. This is obviously an area which needs close monitoring and in-depth case studies, particularly in the absence of a clear incentive structure within the ministry to stimulate gender-sensitivity. Besides few internal stick and carrots, there also exists little external pressure from Dutch non-state actors such as the Parliament and NGOs. Dutch Parliament has shown so far relatively little interest in the PD and its review processes, let alone to its gender-sensitivity. The apparent negligence of the topic within Dutch NGOs is mainly related to their overall critical position towards the PD and the confined involvement of NGO gender expertise in discussions on PD/AAA. In the absence of advocacy and lobbying from the traditional mobilising networks in the Netherlands, international gender accountability mechanisms, such as OECD/DAC peer reviews, the Gender Equality Policy Marker become all the more important to grasp opportunities of PD/AAA for gender equality and empowerment and mitigate risks of sidelining gender and empowerment concerns.

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Annexes

Table 1: The twelve indicators of the Paris Declaration sub-divided over the five key-principles

Principle	Indicator
<i>Ownership</i>	1. Number of countries with national development strategies (including PRSs) that have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets.
<i>Alignment</i>	2. Number of partner countries that have procurement and public financial management systems that are either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. 3. Percent of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on partners' national budgets. 4. Percent of donor capacity-development support provided through coordinated programmes consistent with partners' national development strategies. 5a. Percent of donors and of aid flows that use public financial management systems in partner countries, which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. 5b. Percent of donors and of aid flows that use partner country procurement systems with either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. 6. Number of parallel project implementation units (PIUs) per country. 7. Percent of aid disbursements released according to agreed schedules in annual or multiyear frameworks. 8. Percent of bilateral aid that is untied.
<i>Harmonisation</i>	9. Percent of aid provided as programme-based approaches. 10. Percent of (a) field missions and/or (b) country analytic work, including diagnostic reviews that are joint.
<i>Managing for results</i>	11. Number of countries with transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against (a) the national development strategies and (b) sector programmes.
<i>Mutual accountability</i>	12. Number of partner countries that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness including those in the Declaration.

Source: OECD/DAC (2005)

Table 2: Opportunities and Challenges/Risks for gender equality and women's empowerment unfolded by the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action

Key-principles	Opportunities	Challenges/Risks
<i>Ownership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher probability of effective implementation of country-owned gender and empowerment policies - room for donors to support existing national gender equality objectives, plans, processes and actors through amongst others policy dialogue, capacity building, support to gender budget initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - principle is misused by aid practitioners as an excuse to abandon their responsibility for gender equality - national gender equality and empowerment policies and actors are neglected in general national policy-making - lack of capacity of gender equality advocates to analyse macroeconomic policy and development planning - lack of capacity of policy-makers to apply a gender analysis to planning, budgeting, implementation, M&E
<i>Harmonisation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarification of notions of 'gender equality' and 'women's empowerment' - joint track of gender equality in programme approaches - joint analytical work and joint gender assessment work - use of donor and government coordination groups on gender equality to harmonise programming and funding for gender equality and women's empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -gender concerns sidelined as to reach consensus on other issues - harmonisation towards the lower end -a dominant sectoral focus might preclude cross-cutting gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives
<i>Alignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - influence and dialogue at the level of overall macro and sector level policies, plans and processes (as compared to the project level) might stimulate gender mainstreaming -integration of a gender perspective in the context of budget support entry points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .integration of gender perspective in policy dialogue integration of a gender scan in the appraisal and monitoring of quality of national plans and underlying processes and systems .integration of gender concerns in capacity building .integration of gender concerns in consensual conditionalities in PAFs .integration of gender concerns in (sector) reviews -increased use of portfolio approaches which could include projects specifically targeted towards objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if gender is (not sufficiently) integrated in national development plans and budget, alignment by donors will not adequately support gender equality and women's empowerment priorities - curtailing of the donors' agenda-setting track

<i>Managing for results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -collection of evidence about outcomes and impacts -analysis of failing development outcomes and impact could reveal gender-blindness as an important causal factor -focus on targets in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment diminishes policy evaporation -similarities among results-oriented budgeting and gender budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -‘management for results’ often misinterpreted as ‘management by results’ -indicatorism and a lack of analysis of failing outcomes and impact - ‘gender equality’ and women’s empowerment objectives often not captured in the targets - reductionist focus on equality in education when gender equality and women’s empowerment are made operational in indicators and targets - lack of (use of) sex disaggregated data and analysis
<i>Mutual accountability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -accountability broadened from ‘aid effectiveness’ to ‘development results’ -assessment of gender-sensitivity of donor practices - participation of non-state gender actors in accountability and review processes -use of gender budgeting in accountability exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -accountability reduced to a narrow interpretation van aid effectiveness -absence of a strong gender demand side among non-state actors

Source: based on input from Gaynor (2006, 2007), Holvoet (2008), Chiwara and Karadenizli (2008), Van Reisen with Ussar (2005), UNIFEM (2006)