

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PROMOTING

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



PAPER FOR THE PARTNERSHIP EVENT ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2008: MDG3 — GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN — A PREREQUISITE FOR ACHIEVING ALL MDGs BY 2015





GOAL 2:
ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

GOAL 5:IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

GOAL 7:
ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL 8: A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT





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The analysis and recommendations in this Publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The publication is the product of collaborative effort led by the UNDP, and involving a number of United Nations entities and other partners.



Denmark's MDG3 Global Call to Action promotes gender equality as a basic human right. But it is also smart economics. To empower women is one of the most important driving forces behind economic growth and

the fight against poverty. Political commitment to gender equality and empowerment takes more than words: It takes concrete actions and priority of resources. To take targeted action, we need knowledge on the best approaches to promote women's economic empowerment. The present UNDP study—funded by Denmark—highlights best practices and provides knowledge on lessons learned. Ideas can be drawn from the study to scale up future work. The goal is clear: Establishing new innovative partnerships that secure equal opportunities for women as leaders, entrepreneurs and as human beings.

UQ Tones

Ulla TørnæsMinister for Development Cooperation
Government of Denmark



Gender equality is not only a goal in its own right, but also an important means for realizing all the other Millennium Development Goals. Just past the halfway mark to 2015, it is clear that we must do more to

empower women. Building on UNDP's intensive ongoing work on gender equality and women's empowerment, the report Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment illustrates various ways in which governments, businesses, communities, the United Nations system, civil society and financial partners can play an even greater role in empowering women. As we continue to step up our efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, we hope that this joint publication of the Government of Denmark and UNDP provides critical insights in helping us move closer towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Kemal Derviş

Adminstrator

United Nations Development Programme

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Winnie Byanyima

Director, UNDP Gender Team Bureau for Development Policy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become a universal framework for development and a means for developing countries and their partners to work together in pursuit of a shared future. The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3), "promote gender equality and empower women," is not only a key development goal in its own right, but also an important means to achieving all MDGs. Though impressive advances have been made in many countries towards achieving the MDGs, in 2008—halfway to the MDG attainment benchmark of 2015—progress on individual Goals in a number of countries is off-track. It is imperative that we speed up our efforts and take additional action to ensure that the millions of women and men affected by the lack of progress benefit from the basic promises of the MDGs. Action needs to address the underlying causes that restrict women's economic opportunities: it is not only a denial of human rights but also bad economics when women do not have an equal chance as men to contribute to growth and development.

To address the lack of progress on MDG3, the Government of Denmark launched the MDG3 Global Call to Action campaign in 2008, culminating at the September 2008 High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign aims to raise the priority of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment on the international agenda, and to accelerate the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals.

'Innovative Approaches to Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment', written for the High-level Event Partnership Meeting on the MDG3 Global Call to Action, addresses the lack of progress on women's economic empowerment. It highlights promising and innovative approaches from all regions of the world, illustrating the range and combination of activities and ways in which these activities address and contribute to women's economic empowerment, and, more broadly, to the achievement of the MDGs. Useful to development planners and practitioners in governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector, 'Innovative Approaches' serves as a vehicle to generate ideas for scaling up and guiding future work.

The publication focuses on three core dimensions of women's economic empowerment, namely: **economic opportunity** (e.g., expanding employment and entrepreneurship, promoting decent and productive work, improving access to finance);

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