

# Financing the unfinished business of gender equality and women's rights: priorities for the post-2015 framework

March 2014

**T**his brief analyses investments by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors in six policy areas that are priorities for the post-2015 agenda because of their catalytic impact on achieving gender equality and women's rights: girls' education; sexual and reproductive health and rights; women's economic empowerment; women, peace and security; women's participation and leadership; and, violence against women and girls.<sup>1</sup>

## KEY MESSAGES

- **MDG 3 has proved catalytic in galvanising new resources for gender equality and women's rights.** Retaining a **strong standalone goal on gender equality** in the post-2015 framework alongside gender-specific targets and indicators across all goals will be critical for mobilising the political will and investment needed to address the “unfinished business” of the MDGs.
- Despite the upward trend in aid focused on gender equality since the MDGs, significant funding gaps remain in priority areas for the post-2015 framework - women's economic empowerment, family planning, women, peace and security, and women's participation and leadership. It is time to **close these gaps**.
- DAC members' aid flows in support of gender equality and women's empowerment have tripled since the MDGs from **USD 8 billion** in 2002 to **USD 24 billion** in 2012. This represented an annual average growth rate of **12%** for the years 2002-12, while all sector specific aid grew at **6%** over the same period. Most of this aid went to **education and health**.
- There has been an overall **upward trend** in the amounts of aid focused on gender equality in **education** which increased from **USD 1.2 billion** in 2002 to **USD 4.4 billion** in 2012. This aid has had a **consistent focus on gender equality** since the MDGs.
- While overall DAC members' aid to population policies/programmes and reproductive health reached **USD 7 billion** in 2012, **donor funding to family planning** remained quite low at **USD 700 million** on average per year in 2011 and 2012. This is a **significant gap** given that 222 million women around the world were left without modern contraception in 2012.

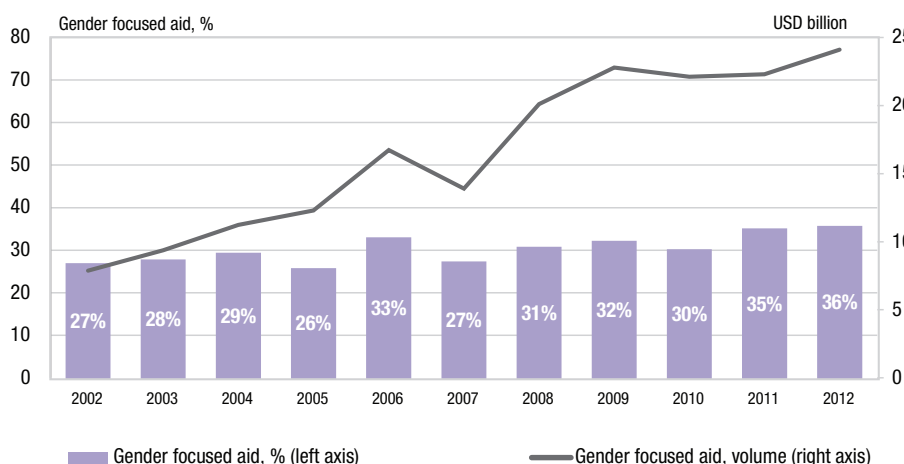
1. This paper is based on a technical briefing produced by the Secretariat of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) and the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP STAT) on *Financing the unfinished business of gender equality and women's rights: priorities for the post-2015 framework*, 2014. The statistics contained in this paper are based on Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members' reporting to the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and data collected through the *gender equality policy marker* - a statistical tool to measure aid that is *principally* or *significantly* focused on achieving gender equality. More information about the gender equality policy marker's methodology and dataset can be accessed at [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/gender](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/gender). For technical reasons, all charts and figures in this study exclude the United States. The United States has implemented an improved data collection methodology for the gender equality marker; data will be available in the coming months.

- Similarly, while **USD 1.3 billion** went to **reproductive health** in 2011 and 2012, these financial commitments have been insufficient to arrest the unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality. Accelerating progress beyond 2015 will require **renewed commitment to investing in women's sexual and reproductive health and rights**, with a focus on universal access to quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services throughout the life cycle.
- Despite political statements about the importance of women's economic empowerment, donor **investments in women's economic empowerment** have remained **flat and unchanged** since 2007. Out of a total of USD 5.5 billion on average per year to women's economic empowerment in 2011 and 2012, **only USD 469 million** targeted gender equality as a **principal** objective. This represented a low **2%** of the bilateral aid going to women's economic empowerment. There is a **gap** between what donors say they do and what they are actually doing.
- Despite numerous UN Security Council Resolutions calling for a strengthened focus on women in fragile and conflict situations, the amounts of aid targeting gender equality in **peace and security** were **low – USD 459 million** on average per year since 2002.
- DAC members' aid to participation and leadership has had a strong focus on gender equality in 2011 and 2012 (67%). However, the overall **amounts of aid in support of women's participation and leadership remained low** – just over **USD 1.2 billion** on average per year for the years 2002-12.
- Violence against women and girls is a global threat to development progress and one of the most widespread abuses of human rights worldwide. DAC members described an element focused on addressing violence against women in 776 of their aid activities on average per year in 2011 and 2012. Further efforts are needed to **develop a specific purpose code to track DAC members' aid flows for tackling violence against women and girls**.
- **Germany, the EU institutions, Japan, France and Australia** reported just over a half of the total gender equality focused aid in 2011 and 2012.

## Funding for gender equality and women's empowerment has been on the rise since the MDGs

The total amount of bilateral aid targeting gender equality and women's empowerment tripled from USD 8 billion in 2002 to **USD 24 billion** in 2012 (Chart 1, right axis). This represented an annual average growth rate of **12%** for the years 2002-12, compared with a **6%** rise in all sector specific aid over the same period. Funding for gender equality has also increased annually as a percentage of total bilateral aid – from 27% in 2002 to 36% in 2012 (Chart 1, left axis). Most of this went to **education** and **health**. The increase in aid to gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the **most tangible outcomes of MDG 3 – to promote gender equality and empower women**.

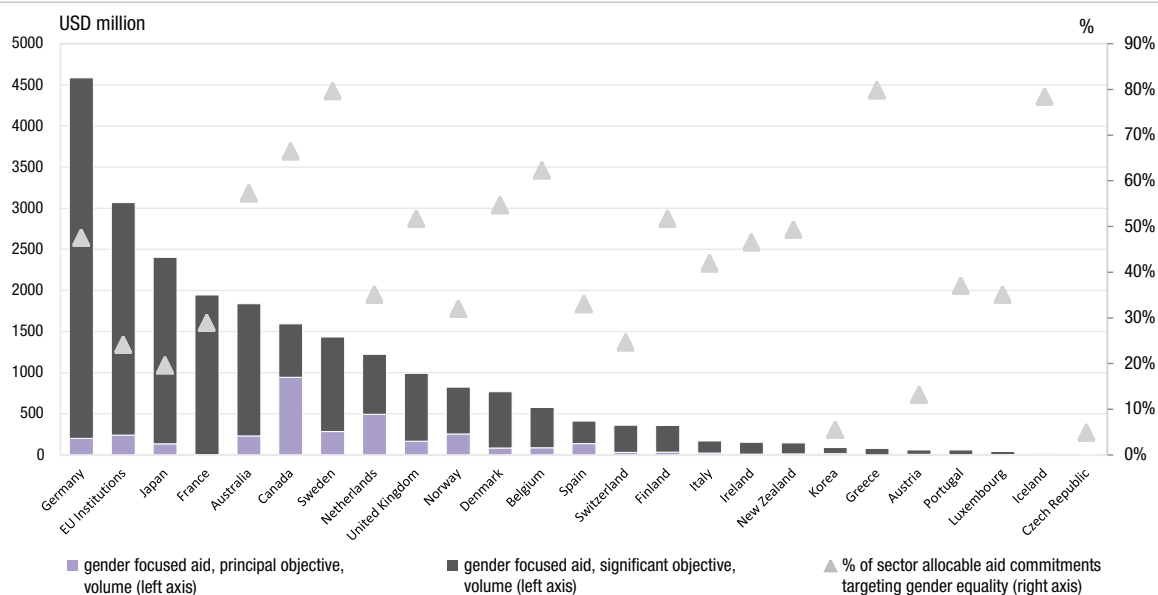
**Chart 1. Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment**  
2002-12, annual commitments, USD billion, constant 2011 prices



## Gender equality focused aid by DAC member

DAC members' aid flows in support of gender equality and women's empowerment reached a total of USD 23.2 billion on average per year in 2011 and 2012. Germany, the EU institutions, Japan, France and Australia together reported just over a half of this aid (Chart 2). However, most of this aid targeted gender equality as a significant rather than a principal objective and the proportion of total bilateral aid allocated by sector that focused on gender equality was quite low in the case of the EU institutions and Japan. Several smaller donors such as Sweden and Canada allocated large shares of their aid to gender equality in 2002-12.

**Chart 2. Gender equality focused aid by DAC member, 2002-12**  
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices

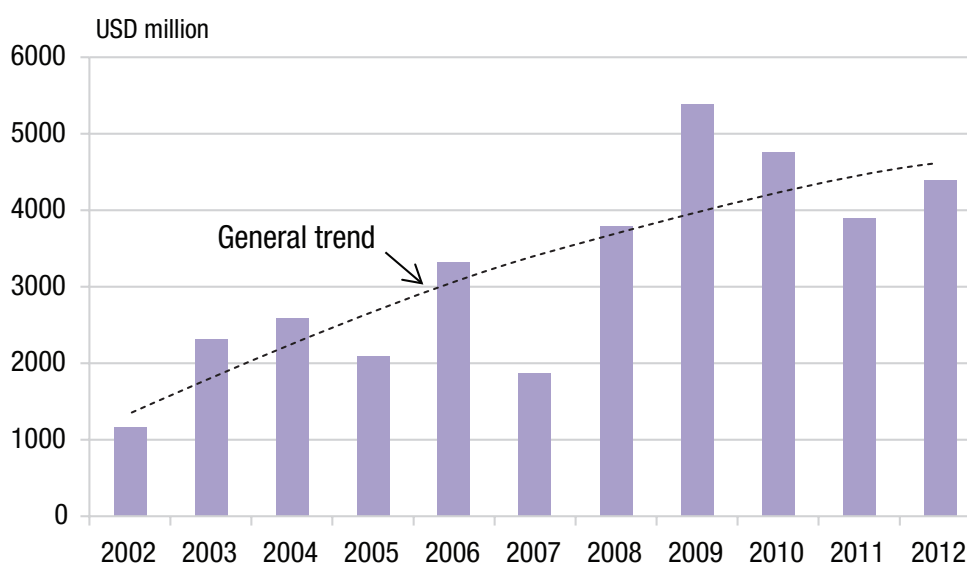


## Gender equality focused aid by sector

### Aid to education

There is no doubt that MDG 3 more sharply focused donor attention on girls' education. Bilateral aid targeting gender equality in education increased from **USD 1.2 billion in 2002** to **USD 4.4 billion in 2012** (Chart 3). The share of aid to education focused on gender equality has also **grown** at an impressive rate of **14%** for the period 2002-12. In 2011 and 2012, **59%** of bilateral aid committed to the education sector and screened against the policy marker targeted gender equality.

**Chart 3. Trend of aid to gender equality in the education sector, 2002-12**  
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



The upward trend in aid to girls' education has contributed to significant progress in girls' enrolment in primary school. However, there are wide disparities across regions and countries with a much slower rate of change in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>2</sup> Gender gaps also remain more marked in secondary and tertiary education where the gender equality focus of DAC members' aid has been weaker: in 2011 and 2012, 70% of aid to primary education was gender equality focused, compared to 51% of aid to secondary education and 58% of aid to post secondary education.

Parity in *access* to schooling is only the first step towards gender equality in education. **Girls' completion of a quality education at all levels should be a priority for the post-2015 framework, with a focus on learning outcomes**, as recommended by the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.<sup>3</sup>

2. United Nations (2013). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*.

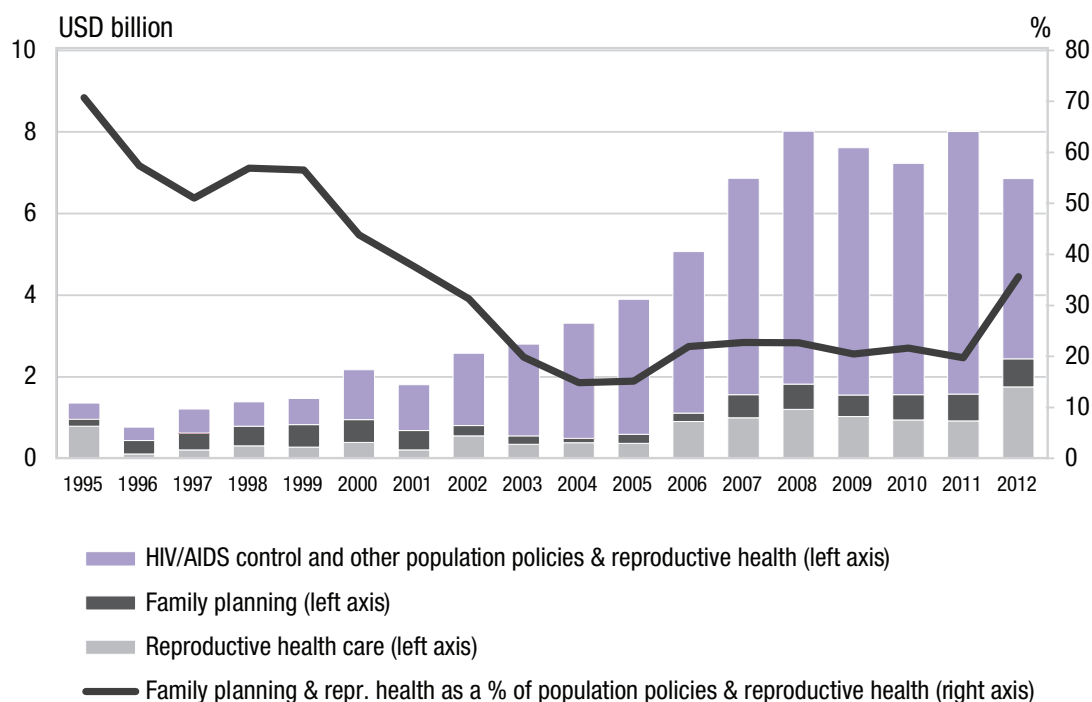
3. United Nations (2013). *A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development: the report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.

## Aid to sexual and reproductive health and rights

DAC members' funding to **family planning** has **declined** as a share of total aid to population policies and programmes from **71%** in 1995 to plateau at around **20%** between 2007 and 2011 (Chart 4, right axis). It is interesting to note the sharp rise in percentage to **36%** in 2012 but it is too early to tell whether this is the start of a newly upward trend. Overall bilateral aid flows to family planning remained quite low at **USD 678 million** on average per year in 2011 and 2012, particularly in light of the global unmet need for family planning services. In 2012, 222 million women of reproductive age were left without modern contraception in developing countries.<sup>4</sup> By 2015, total demand for family planning amongst married women is expected to grow to more than 900 million women, mostly as a result of population growth.<sup>5</sup>

**MDG 5 – improving maternal health** – recognised women's reproductive and maternal health as critical to development. This contributed to an increase in bilateral aid flows to **reproductive health care**, reaching **USD 1.3 billion** in 2011 and 2012. Yet, these financial commitments have been insufficient to arrest the unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality. About 800 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and MDG 5 remained the most off-track MDG in 2013. Accelerating progress beyond 2015 will require **renewed commitment to investing in women's sexual and reproductive health and rights**, with a focus on universal access to quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services throughout the life cycle.

**Chart 4. Bilateral ODA outflows to population policies/programmes and reproductive health, 1995-2012**  
Commitments, USD billion, constant 2011 prices



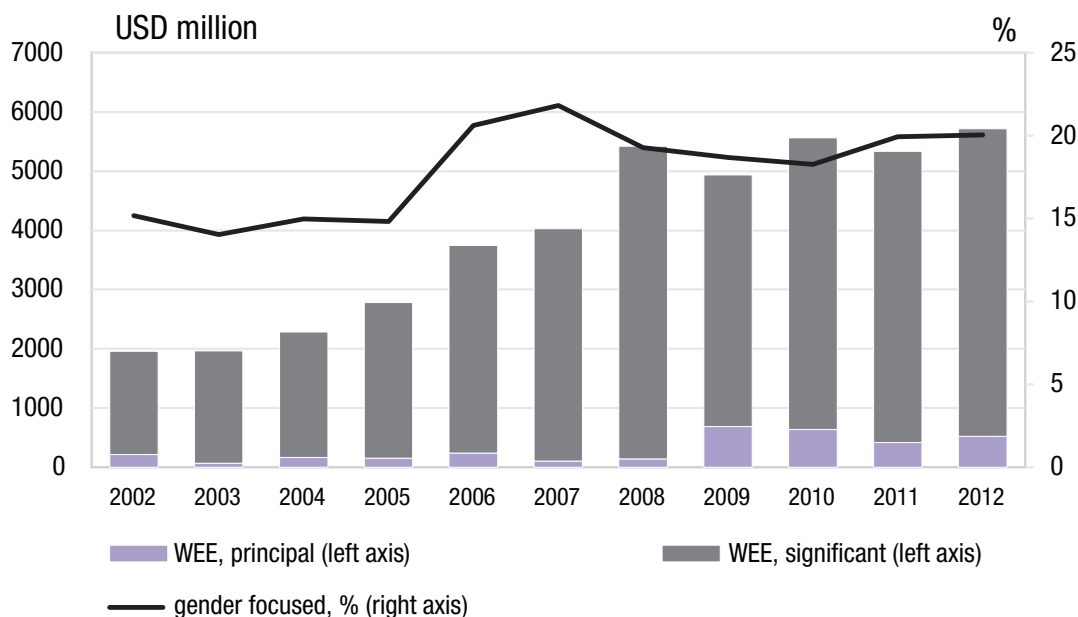
4. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA (2012). *Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services - Estimates for 2012*.

5. United Nations (2013). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*.

## Aid to women's economic empowerment

Despite high level political commitments to women's economic empowerment, only **2%** of the bilateral aid going to women's economic empowerment in 2011 and 2012 targeted gender equality as a principal objective. Commitments to women's economic empowerment as a share of total bilateral aid to the economic and productive sectors have remained **flat and unchanged** since 2007-08 (Chart 5).

Chart 5. Gender equality focused aid to women's economic empowerment, 2002-12  
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



Given the significant **underinvestment in gender equality in the economic and productive sectors**, it is unsurprising that progress in this area is falling short. Between 1990 and 2011, the share of women in non-agricultural wage employment in developing regions increased by just 5 percentage points to 40%.<sup>6</sup> In every developing region, women continue to hold less secure and lower paid jobs than men with fewer social benefits, and face more severe constraints in accessing productive resources. The post-2015 agenda will need to direct more attention to achieving gender equality in the **economic sectors**, with a focus on creating quality employment and equal access to economic opportunities and productive assets.

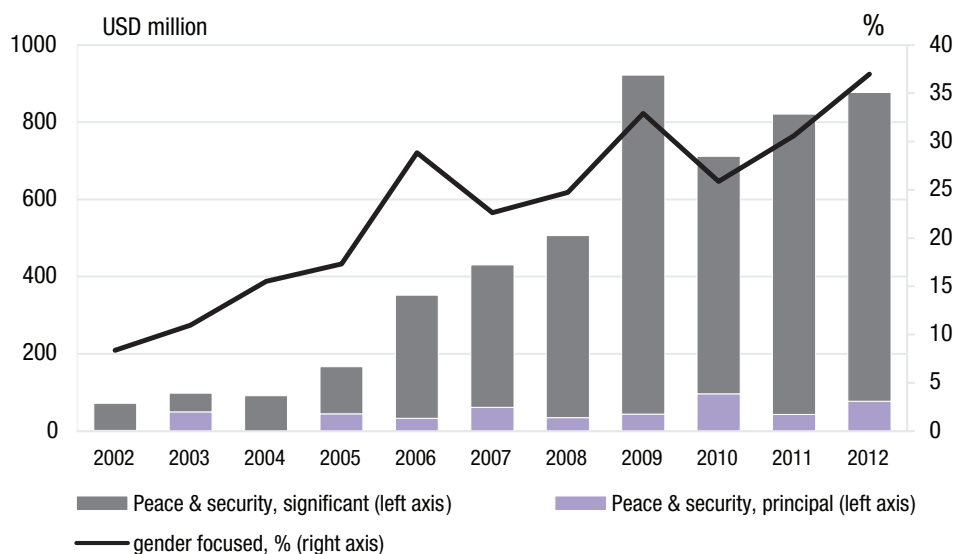
## Aid to women, peace and security

Conflict and violence have been critical obstacles to achieving the MDGs for women and girls. For example, the average maternal mortality ratio is 50% higher in conflict affected contexts compared with the global average.<sup>7</sup> Yet, despite numerous UN Security Council Resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 and 2106) on Women, Peace and Security, aid targeting gender equality in the peace and security sector has remained low - **USD 459 million** dollars on average per year since 2002. In 2011 and 2012, a third (34%) of total bilateral aid to peace and security had a focus on gender equality but only **USD 60 million** (3%) targeted gender equality as a principal objective (Chart 6). The post-2015 framework will need to **place a priority on increasing women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts at all levels**.

6. United Nations (2013). *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls*: Report of the Secretary-General.

7. Ibid.

**Chart 6. Gender equality focused aid to peace and security, 2002-12**  
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices

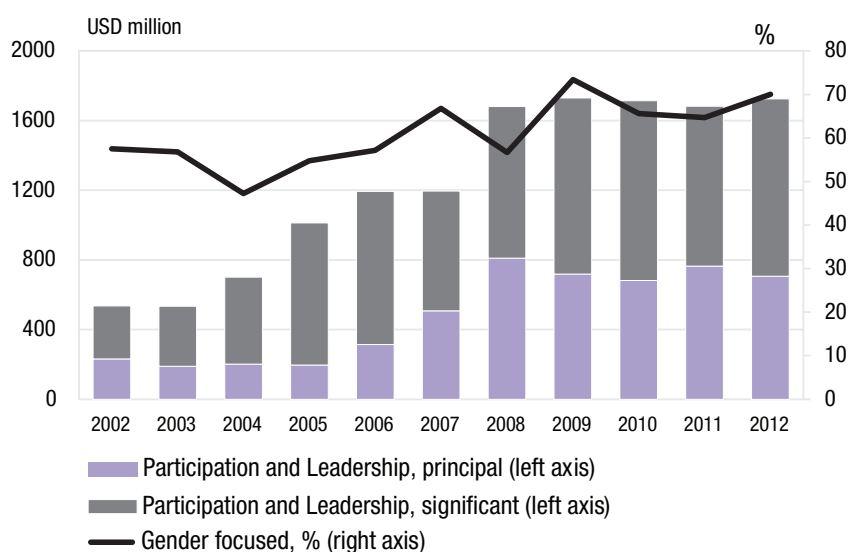


### ***Aid to women's participation and leadership***

While women's representation in national parliaments has risen over the course of the MDGs, the pace of change remains slow in developed and developing countries alike. As of January 2013, the average share of women in parliament stood at just 20.4%.<sup>8</sup> Women also continue to be underrepresented in decision making and leadership roles in areas missing from the MDGs; for example in local parliaments, judiciaries, and within households and communities. **Increasing women's participation and leadership at every level of society will need to be an explicit global priority beyond 2015.**

A proxy measure was used to assess DAC members' aid in support of women's participation and leadership which combined democratic participation and civil society, elections, and funding for women's equality organisations and institutions. Even though donors have a strong gender equality *focus* in their aid to these sectors, the **amounts of aid have remained low - just over USD 1.2 billion on average** for the years 2002-12 (Chart 7).

**Chart 7. Gender equality focused aid to women's participation and leadership, 2002-12**  
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



8. Ibid.

## ***Aid to end violence against women and girls***

Ending violence against women and girls is widely recognised as a crucial **missing element of the MDGs**. Globally, 35% of all women experience intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.<sup>9</sup> Violence against women remains a global concern which has not been effectively addressed by *any* country or region.

At present the DAC Creditor Reporting System does not have a code or category to assess aid in support of tackling violence against women and girls. Yet, bilateral donors are attaching increasing importance to their work in this area. DAC members described an element focused on addressing violence against women in 776 of their aid activities on average per year in 2011 and 2012. A stronger effort to improve tracking of aid in support of tackling violence against women and girls is urgently needed.

Ending violence against women is essential to advancing global development, peace, and human rights for all. The post-2015 framework is a crucial opportunity to learn from the shortcomings of the MDGs and ensure that eliminating violence against women and girls is recognised as an explicit priority in the post-2015 framework.

### **KEY MESSAGES**

**MDG 3 has proved catalytic in galvanising new resources for gender equality and women's rights**, contributing to a threefold increase in DAC members' aid in support of gender equality since the MDGs. Retaining a **strong standalone goal on gender equality** in the post-2015 framework alongside **gender-specific targets and indicators across all goals** will be critical for mobilising the political will and investment needed to address the “unfinished business” of the MDGs.

Despite the upward trend in aid focused on gender equality since the MDGs, significant **funding gaps remain** in priority areas for the post-2015 framework – women's economic empowerment, family planning, women, peace and security, and women's participation and leadership. It is time to **close these gaps**.

9. World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council (2013) *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence*