

(Derived from "The Lutheran World Federation, Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development," June 2000, sections 86-93.)

THE GENDER DIMENSION

The protection and promotion of the human rights of women are fundamental to the sustainability of development

(86) In the development process unequal power relations between men and women result in unequal distribution of and exclusion from the benefits of development. Because women are disadvantaged by most standards of comparison, the protection of the human rights of women and the equal participation of women are critical elements in the development process. The centrality of women's role not only in the family and community but also in the process of development necessitates the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(87) Sustainable development processes require that the root causes of inequality between men and women are addressed and acted upon

The root causes of gender inequality for women include lack of powersharing, restricted participation in society, devaluation of experience and work, and violence against women. Sustainable development can only occur in a context where these broader issues are assessed and responded to by men and women together. Specific advocacy will need to be undertaken to change public attitudes and practices as well as to institutionalize gender equality through the change of public and organizational policy.

(88) Sustainable development requires gender equality and the full leadership of women in all development processes

Sustainable development can only take place when there is active involvement of all members of the community. It requires a gender analysis of the roles of both men and women within the family community and their relations to each other. In order to raise the status of women, which is necessary for sustainable development, the active participation of both men and women is imperative. As well, in order to be sustainable, development must benefit women and men alike and hold a vision for a better future for children.

(89) Improving the status of women requires the participation of both men and women; addressing gender issues must be the concern of all people, not only women

Advancing the status of women is not the business of women alone, but that of men and women in the community. Active participation of all members of the community is the core of sustainable development including the gender aspects. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in a community as well as their relations to each other are critical. The relations between women and men are the focus of improving the status of women.

(90) Sustainable development cannot be gender-neutral

All development work has a gender impact and does not benefit women and men equally. Gender equality recognizes the differences between men and women that are socially and culturally defined, particularly in relationship to the roles, responsibilities, access to and control over the resources of men and women, and their spheres of authority. If development programs are not intentionally addressing gender equality they have the result of reinforcing patterns of injustice and exclusion for women. For this reason it is essential to recognize and analyze the effects of all development processes on gender.

(91) The participation and empowerment of women in present as well as future programs is a means as well as a goal in the process of sustainable development

The very process of inclusion of women in decision-making processes changes relationships between women and men, as well as changing decisions which are taken in the community and the way in which those decisions are carried out. It is not sufficient to solely undertake programs for the benefit of women. Full community participation initiates the gender equality which it also seeks to achieve.

(92) All assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation in development work require a gender perspective and analysis which values the work and experience of women

Gender sensitive development demands gender analysis which includes sex desegregated data for all development indicators, including: the improvement of women's access to education and health care; the gender division of labour; access to and control over resources and the distribution of benefits, and social, economic and environmental factors which influence a particular gender arrangement.

(93) Specific programs and projects for women will continue to need investment in order to ensure that women are fully involved in the development process.

Sustainable development requires gender sensitive planning which has the objective of promoting gender equality through meeting the practical needs of women. These on the ground practical needs include those that women have for survival and economic advancement, as well as strategic gender interests which are concerned with improving women's position and empowering them to have more access to resources and more equal participation in decision-making.