



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact*

Preamble

We, the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination are committed to accelerating our efforts to advance the agenda for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women through the practical implementation of the globally agreed commitments contained in the outcomes of global United Nations conferences and summits and their follow-up, in particular the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, the outcome of the 2005 World Summit and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

We reaffirm that the full and complete realization of the human rights of women and girls as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential for the advancement of development, peace and security. It is consistent with principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and is essential for the advancement of development, peace and security.

Policy statement

We state our intention and commitment to continue to pursue the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, both collectively within the United Nations system and individually within our specific organizations, through coherent and coordinated implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1997/2.

We commit ourselves to providing strong leadership within our organizations to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all our organizational practices, policies and programmes.

* This statement is extracted from the report of the CEB from the Second regular session of 2006.

We remain determined to advance the agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women through the utilization of knowledge, expertise and experience available throughout the United Nations.

We shall use the complementary and comparative advantages of each United Nations entity to address gender equality in the concrete areas of development, peace and security and as a cross-cutting issue.

We also undertake to accelerate our efforts to achieve the goal of gender balance among all categories of United Nations employees, in particular at decision-making levels.

We shall employ the diversity of our experiences, expertise and cultures within the United Nations system as a source of inspiration and creativity to achieve a strong partnership among our organizations in a collective endeavour to advance our common objective of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Strategy

Gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is intended to work in conjunction with women-specific actions. It should not be seen as replacing them, but rather as supplementing and enhancing their effectiveness.

A United Nations system-wide action plan that includes indicators and timetables, allocation of responsibilities and accountability mechanisms and resources is essential to make the strategy of gender mainstreaming operational.

The main elements of the strategy include:

(a) *Accountability.* Accountability processes and mechanisms will be strengthened or developed within the United Nations system in a coherent, coordinated and consistent manner. Such a system-wide approach to accountability will make it possible to assess progress and gaps at all levels of the Organization's work on gender mainstreaming, both in policy areas and in the field. The accountability mechanisms will incorporate and build on those that have been proved most effective in their use by United Nations entities and/or partner organizations. While coherent system-wide accountability is the desired goal, individual United Nations entities will retain their ability to add or enhance their internal approaches to accountability and to take into account their specific mandates and roles. However, such efforts should not circumvent, diminish or otherwise compromise the system-wide efforts.

(b) *Results-based management for gender equality.* Results-based management will be further strengthened throughout the United Nations system. By utilizing common-system indicators and measurement protocols, where applicable, United Nations system-wide results-based management for gender equality will provide timely information to senior managers to enable them to make strategic decisions. This would enhance their entity's work on gender equality and serve as an invaluable approach for working with Member States at the country level to ensure that the focus is on results and impact as opposed to processes alone.

(c) *Oversight through monitoring, evaluation, audit and reporting.* Enhancing oversight through improved monitoring, evaluation, audit and reporting procedures is critical to ensuring accountability of all United Nations staff,

including senior and mid-level management, for their performance in gender mainstreaming. The establishment of common indicators and benchmarks in the context of monitoring, evaluation and reporting will be a determining factor in making the achieved progress measurable and visible. Reviews of tangible results in gender mainstreaming through external and internal programme evaluations, gender audits and peer reviews are some of the important tools for assessing the impact of the work of the United Nations system, especially at the country-level. This approach will help to close the gap in the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data within the United Nations system at the programme level as well as with partner countries. The lack of sex-disaggregated data is one of the major barriers to the accurate assessment of how policies and programmes to promote gender equality and to empower women should be refined, designed and implemented.

(d) *Human and financial resources.* To achieve desired outcomes, adequate human and financial resources will be allocated to the implementation of gender mainstreaming. This will entail better utilization of current resources, the assignment of additional resources where required and the alignment of resources with expected outcomes. The development of common-system approaches whereby the entire United Nations system will apply agreed-upon norms and standards, indicators and targets, and evaluation frameworks will considerably reduce duplication of efforts, especially at the country level. At the same time, opportunities for joint programming, including with Member States through the United Nations country teams, will be created. Applying these strategies will contribute to the optimal use of both human and financial resources, since competing system-wide organizational priorities will be significantly reduced.

(e) *Capacity development.* Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender analysis is essential to the successful mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies and programmes. A significant proportion of staff throughout the United Nations system, including senior management, have serious gaps in expertise in that area. This contributes to an inadequate and often negligible effort within the United Nations system to identify and address gender issues in many sectors. Staff members who are responsible for programme design and implementation, as well as those responsible for technical advisory services, require capacity development in order to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in their work at all times. These capacity gaps need to be addressed comprehensively and systematically, including through awareness-raising campaigns and training, at the individual, entity and system-wide levels so that the United Nations system becomes fully capable of delivering gender equality results. Both common-system and individual organizations' approaches to capacity development for gender equality will be used.

(f) *Coherence, coordination and knowledge and information management.* Coherence and coordination of efforts in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy are essential if there are to be meaningful results towards the achievement of the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Notwithstanding the specific mandates of United Nations entities, the overall system must reinforce common goals and consistent working methods in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. This is especially important at the country level in order to allow Member States to interact with a harmonious United Nations team. The knowledge management system that will include experiences,

expertise and practices of various United Nations entities on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment will be established for use by United Nations entities themselves, the country teams and Member States and other partners. Such a coordinated effort, when managed well and made easily accessible, will form a powerful asset for technical and advisory services, including in-country training, designed to achieve gender equality results.