

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE UNITED NATIONS: A HISTORY,
RESOURCE GUIDE, AND AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

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This thesis is dedicated to my mom,
who showed me that what being a feminist really means
is finding the strength to just be yourself,
and to my dad,
the wisest man I know
because he has never been anything but pleased
to always be surrounded by opinionated women.

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Introduction

On March 6, 2008, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stood before an impressive crowd of diplomats and government officials who had gathered together at the UN headquarters in New York. The day was International Women's day, and in his speech to commemorate the occasion, the Secretary-General asserted that:

"I am deeply convinced that, in women, the world has at its disposal the most significant and yet largely untapped potential for development and peace."

This statement reflects the reality that, today, women's rights and gender equality have come to be viewed as vital prerequisites to socio-economic development, stability, and human rights. Increasingly, international institutions, national governments, and civil society groups have begun to work together to advance gender equality as a common means of achieving diverse goals like reducing maternal mortality, increasing literacy, and slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 1997, this new awareness led to the adoption by the UN of gender mainstreaming as the official strategy for achieving gender equality.

Mainstreaming involves ensuring that attention to the goal of gender equality is central to all activities, from policy development and program design to budgeting, resource allocation, and research. The fact that such an approach has been embraced by the development community demonstrates unequivocally that promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights have moved from being marginal to central concerns on the international agenda. The strategy has yielded a number of tangible results. Most visibly, the use of a gender perspective in all areas of work has dramatically increased understanding on the nature of gender relations and the way discrimination impacts on different groups of men and women. However, gender mainstreaming

is still a new strategy which calls for significant changes to the status quo. Such far reaching changes require time, training, and significant resource allocations to achieve. As such, gender mainstreaming continues to be the subject of extensive monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment, and has come under heavy criticism at times when anticipated results have not materialized.

The operating assumption of this paper is that, regardless of the range of opinions on its relative successes or shortcomings, the gender mainstreaming strategy is here to stay. Substantial financial and human resources have been devoted to fine tuning the strategy and standardizing its implementation throughout the UN system as well. To switch to a completely new paradigm at this juncture would be costly, chaotic, and could delay further advances in attaining equality between men and women. In addition, this paper will progress from the notion that gender mainstreaming is the most promising framework available at this time. It may be true that few alternative paradigms are available for comparison. However, as the following sections will show, gender mainstreaming is the product of decades of testing and rejecting or revising other paradigms for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. It is not that other strategies have never existed and been tried, but rather that through trial and error, gender mainstreaming emerged as the synthesis of the best of older frameworks.

The goals of this paper are threefold - to raise awareness regarding why gender mainstreaming emerged in its current form, what it has accomplished, and what factors may be hindering its progress. The three main sections of this paper correspond with these goals. The historical overview provided in Part I attempts to draw out how gender mainstreaming is a product of specific events and various strains of thought in the global women's rights movement, and as such is grounded in the accumulated knowledge of many decades and multiple disciplines.

Part II speaks to the ongoing need to publicize the strategy and educate practitioners, by giving a detailed explanation of what gender mainstreaming is, providing a comprehensive list of the resources available to support its implementation in all areas of work, and highlighting its successes and shortcomings to date. The visible progress which has been made in establishing mechanisms for systematic evaluation and improvement, increasing inter-agency collaboration, and improve training modules and capacity-building programs for staff should all be viewed as crucial successes, because these developments will all serve to bolster the long-term sustainability of the gender mainstreaming strategy. However, various sources attribute lack of progress in other areas to such issues as lack of high-level commitment, clarity of goals, and lack of consistency among UN entities. In bringing together in one place the current issues facing gender mainstreaming and the resources and strengths available which could address them, Part II aims to complement efforts to help practitioners and academics better carry out their work on behalf of gender equality.

Part III compares gender mainstreaming as it has been implemented in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Development Programme. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight certain differences in the way key principles of gender mainstreaming are understood and articulated by each, as well as in the programmatic activities, tools, and even the vocabulary used to pursue gender equality in the work of each fund.

The conclusions made in this section are not based on extensive qualitative or quantitative data, but are simply observations made through reviewing the documents made publicly available by the two agencies. However, the goal is not to prove or disprove a definitive point, but rather to draw attention to issues which are not prominently featured in contemporary discourse on gender mainstreaming. The section suggests that future research should investigate

the true extent and potential ramifications of these perceived differences. Parts I and II demonstrate how new ideas, continuous monitoring and evaluation, and adjustments in the face of new challenges or stagnating progress has been crucial to the successes in gender mainstreaming thus far. In keeping with this reality, Part III aims to bring to light new ideas and possible challenges which may now need to be addressed in order to ensure ongoing progress in gender mainstreaming and towards gender equality.

PART I: THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

In just over half a century, the discourse on women's rights and gender equality has changed profoundly. Today, the empowerment of women is generally viewed not only as an issue of human rights, but as a development imperative as well. However, this realization has been slow to take hold. For much of our history, women's rights were not considered at all, or were discussed only as they pertained to a small number of "women's issues," such as reproductive health.

Even the smallest successes have been hard won, as significant obstacles have needed to be overcome every step of the way. One of these obstacles has been traditional socio-cultural norms dictating the appropriate gender roles for men and women, which influence the division of labor not only in the household and immediate community, but at the national and international levels of decision-making as well. These traditional values often marginalize women, yet are so deeply ingrained that attempts to alter the status quo have often been met with powerful resistance. A second issue has been the sheer complexity of the task at hand. The concepts of equality and gender themselves are surrounded by so many layers of meaning that a wide range

of strategies have been proposed for dealing with inequality between the sexes. Thus, the global women's rights movement has traditionally been far from homogenous, and the diversity of goals and strategies advocated by various women's groups have at time proved hard to mobilize in pursuit of a common agenda.

In spite of numerous set backs, the tireless work of pioneering activists has brought increased attention and greater depth of understanding to the intersection of gender equality, human rights, and sustainable development. This section will explore how the ideologies and strategies of the global women's rights movement have developed and changed over time, in order to trace how this evolution led to gender mainstreaming, and to show how the ideas and principles which emerged through this process have shaped the strategy itself.

Early Attention to Women's Rights

One of the major catalysts for activity in pursuit of international women's rights was the signing of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) on October 24, 1945. The Charter was a formative document for the international community - it pledged those who signed to the pursuit of international peace and human rights, and in doing so, it simultaneously signaled a shift away from the state-centered, realist conceptualization of peace and security. Most importantly for the purposes of this paper, it explicitly called for equal rights for men and women in a way no previous legal document had, asserting in the preamble the goal "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" (United Nations 1945). The progressive nature of the UN's mandate reflects the social context of that period in history. In the wake of World War II, the world was struggling to come to grips with the horrors of its recent war experiences,

including the knowledge of horrendous war crimes revealed at Nuremberg. Thus, the international community began the slow but determined process of defining human rights for both men and women, emphasizing human dignity, and codifying these universal standards and norms into international law.

The Welfare Approach

The Charter's declaration of equal rights for men and women bore little resemblance to the reality of the 1950's and 60's. Women were far from being treated as equals. Deeply engrained social norms of the time framed women as weaker, more vulnerable, and less capable than men in most respects, with the home and family as their only spheres of dominance. This mentality carried through to the development work and humanitarian aid that had begun in earnest following WWII. In providing relief to war-torn communities, aid workers almost invariably viewed women as victims who were unable to help themselves. As development assistance became more pervasive, these stereotypes shaped what would become known as the "welfare approach," the first formal strategy adopted by the international community for dealing with women in developing countries.

The welfare approach was based on three key assumptions. First, women were passive recipients of aid, rather than active participants in the development process. Second, motherhood was the most important role for women. Finally, childcare was the most crucial, and indeed one of the only, contributions women could make to economic development (Moser 1993). Informed by these presuppositions, development assistance tended to involve two separate but parallel approaches: economic growth initiatives focused on capital-intensive agricultural and industrial production for the male population, and relief and welfare for "vulnerable" groups, with women lumped into this category along with children and the disabled.

The few programs targeted to women that did exist were based on, and reinforced, traditional gender roles and stereotypes. In keeping with the notion that a woman's most valuable role is as a mother, nutrition and hygiene programs for women and children were especially popular. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) both favored mother-child initiatives that aimed to combat malnutrition by providing extra food to children along with nutrition education for their mothers, on the assumption that this would improve dietary choices (Moser 1993, 59). As development agencies began to consider the problems associated with rapid population growth in many developing countries, family planning became another area in which programs focused primarily on women, due to the perception that educating women on contraceptive use was the best way to limit family size.

The problem with initiatives like mother-child health programs, traditional family planning education, and other programs for women is that they were all based on the erroneous assumption that women had autonomy over their own lives. The failure of these programs to produce desired results led to a growing awareness that a confluence of factors, such the unequal distribution of resources within the home and lack of access to education, were limiting women's ability to make seemingly fundamental choices such as how to feed the family or how many children to have. As a result, the international community became more receptive to the idea that programming which considered women only in terms of traditional gender roles was insufficient for development purposes.

The Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was instrumental in capitalizing on this window of opportunity to push for concrete advances in women's rights and a new

conceptualization of women's roles in society. Initially established as a Sub-Committee under the UN Committee on Human Rights, the female members successfully petitioned the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for full commission status, and the CSW came into being on June 21, 1946 (UN Department of Public Information 2000). Its mandate was to advise ECOSOC on promoting women's rights in all areas, and to identify new and urgent problems related to women's rights.

The CSW worked to fulfill its mandate most visibly by codifying equal rights for women in legislation at both the national and international levels. Immediately after its creation, the CSW initiated a campaign for full political suffrage for women worldwide, and called on ECOSOC to exert pressure on the governments of member states who had not yet accorded women this right. After years of advocacy, the General Assembly adopted the CSW-drafted Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952. This was the first international law document to explicitly state that women worldwide had the right to vote, run for election, and hold any public office on equal terms with men (UN General Assembly 1952). The CSW had similar success in addressing discrimination in marriage, drafting the first international agreements giving women specific rights in relation to marriage, standardizing a minimum age for marriage, and outlining women's legal rights in the event of divorce.

The CSW's contributions to the sustainability of the global women's rights movement are less publicized than its early influences on international law, but are of at least equal importance. The CSW helped lay the foundation for future advances in women's rights in two main ways. First, the Commission recognized early on the importance of communicating and cooperating with other human rights and development entities within the UN whose missions had connections with its own, and worked to forge strong relationships with agencies such as the

International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, and the World Health Organization (WHO). These relationships helped the CSW generate attention for women's rights in new arenas. The CSW made concerted efforts to work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well, and these groups were often invited to participate in meetings and policy-planning. As a result, NGO contributions began to be incorporated into a number of UN resolutions (UN Department of Public Information 2000). This early collaboration helped to form the connections which would later grow into a massive network of NGOs and civil society organizations which participated directly in UN policy making, and is largely responsible for many of the gains made in achieving gender equality.

Second, the CSW embarked on a massive research campaign, gathering unprecedented levels of data regarding women's knowledge of their rights, access to education, work opportunities, and countless other variables. For example, in the early 1950's the CSW collaborated with the ILO and other agencies to collect data regarding women's employment and how to improve work opportunities for women. The data and ideas generated by this project prompted the ILO to pass the Convention on Equal Remuneration in 1951, and began to raise awareness of the differences between men's and women's participation in the economy (Jain 2005). The success of that project led to others, which combined to form a comprehensive body of statistics on the legal and political status of women. This would form the basis for the drafting of future human rights instruments, and was the precursor to the data collection and analysis now seen as a vital component of gender equality strategies.

Despite the progress made by the CSW in promoting women's rights and increasing understanding of women's needs and experiences, it soon became clear that laws alone would not be enough to ensure equal rights. The issue was that many of these laws were based on the

concept of equal treatment, calling for women to not be treated less favorably than men in similar circumstances. However, gauging the likeness of two individuals' situations or assessing the degree to which a woman was treated differently than a man proved to be challenging, and formal equality of this kind often proved inadequate for bringing about real changes in the quality of life for women (Beveridge, Nott, and Stephen 2000). This realization catalyzed the first calls for a shift in focus, from formal equality and nondiscrimination in law, to substantive equality, meaning equality of outcome. However, it would take some time before the idea of substantive equality could be incorporated into concrete policies and programs.

The New World Order

The opportunity structure for promoting tangible gender equality began to change in the 1970's, due to a confluence of factors. The women's rights movements in the U.S. and Europe were gaining momentum and had begun to spread to countries around the world. At the same time, the mid-1970's marked the beginning of what Samuel Huntington called the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington 1991). From 1956-1963, almost all the new member states admitted to the UN were developing countries. As a growing mass of countries began to make the transition from colonial or authoritarian governance to independent entities with democratic aspirations, the international community assumed an unprecedented role in stimulating economic growth and promoting good governance in these fledgling nations.

The emergence of the development industry necessitated a reevaluation of UN policies and programs in an effort to adjust to changing circumstances. Many of the new member states sent women delegates to UN forums, as women were often predominant in the population following violent conflict, and had been crucial to struggles against colonial rule (Jain 2005). Their presence began to change the concept of women's equality, expanding it beyond mere

legal equality and political rights, and bringing it into discussions of nation-building and socio-economic economic development.

The UN Decade for Women

Growing awareness of the scope and severity of discrimination against women made the 1970's a time of unprecedented attention to women's roles in the development process. Efforts to gather previously nonexistent data on women's roles in the labor force revealed startling evidence that women's work was vastly undercounted. Specifically, women's work in subsistence agriculture, domestic work, informal cottage industries, and caregiving activities, while undeniable central to the health and wellbeing of local communities, was conspicuously absent from national budgetary accounts or planning for development projects. Studies showed that in many places, women averaged 13-16 hours each week on reproductive activities, in comparison with five for men (Schaefer 1998, 92).

To address these issues, women's rights activists began to focus on states and international development agencies as the prime targets of their advocacy efforts. Their efforts prompted the UN to designate the period from 1976-1985 the International Decade for Women, marked by two World Conferences on Women in Mexico City and Copenhagen. These meetings helped to change the political opportunity structure and mobilize resources in support of women's rights, by identifying pressing issues, providing forums for information sharing, and facilitating the formation of a global women's movement.

The Women in Development Movement

The social upheavals of the 1970s provided a window of opportunity for women's rights activists to challenge traditional gender norms in the context of development policies and programming. Historically, economic growth had been viewed by practitioners as a panacea for

successful development. Informed by the notion that everyone would benefit equally from this economic growth, development policies tended to be viewed as gender neutral. As a result, policy-makers in the field rarely looked specifically at women's issues, and if they did, such attention tended to focus on limited initiatives such as improved maternal health or reducing fertility (Henderson and Jeydel 2007). However, as increasing numbers of new and fragile states came into existence, the development industry was forced to reassess traditional strategies, and to develop new policies as required to fulfill its expanded mandate. This opening helped many of the diverse groups coexisting uneasily within the global women's rights movement to rally around a common agenda, forming what is today referred to as the Women in Development (WID) movement.

Ester Boserup is generally credited as the first to formally challenge traditional assumptions regarding women's role in development, and to provide a rationale for restructuring aid. Her work provided the WID movement with a guiding philosophy, namely that women are highly productive members of society, and that to ignore their central role was to squander a valuable resource. In her book *The Role of Women in International Development*, Boserup points out the central role African women play in agricultural development, and highlights how many development projects actually deprive women of this traditional productive role, thus hindering the overall process of growth (Boserup 1970). This critique opened the floodgates for waves of testimony from practitioners and experts in the field expounding the flaws in traditional development policies. For example, the common practice of treating households as one economic unit made the mistaken assumption that men and women in a family have equal access to resources and make the same economic decisions. In reality, male heads of households often retain the majority of any income received for use in buying property or productive equipment.

As a result, less money is available for things like education, medical expenses, and children's needs, which women tend to prioritize in making a budget (USAID 2008).

Boserup's work provided a fresh perspective on women's roles in society, opening up the discussion on gender equality to new and compelling rationales for promoting women's rights. Whereas previously women's rights had been advocated as a worthy goal based on the ideals of international human rights, the Women in Development movement was able to demonstrate that women's equality was central to development as well. This momentum also helped to lay the foundation for future progress by prompting the development of new methods of data gathering, such as the Gender-Related Development Index to compare countries based on quality of life indicators, and the Gender Empowerment Measure to gauge women's power in terms of their share of national income and labor force participation (West 1993).

The important result of these efforts on the part of the WID was to force development agencies to acknowledge that women and men differ in the way they participate in and benefit from the development process. International development organizations and UN entities quickly developed a methodology to identify how women had been left out of development, and many began to establish WID advisors or units within its organizational structure to conduct research and develop guidelines on how to integrate women into the development process (Moser 1993). Advocacy by the Women in Development movement led to the initiation of policies and programs designed specifically to improve the status of women. From the early 1970's through the late 1990's, the strategies of the WID movement fell into three general categories: equity, anti-poverty, and efficiency.

The equity approach and the anti-poverty approach were both a direct response to early documentation that development projects were not acknowledging women's productive roles,

and reinforced stereotypes that kept women confined to household and reproductive roles. The goal of each was to include women in the development process in equal numbers as men, although the anti-poverty approach represents a somewhat toned down version focused more narrowly on income inequality, meant to avoid resistance from governments and development agencies uncomfortable with significant changes to the distribution of power (Tinker 1976). The efficiency approach was the third and predominant WID strategy, popularized during the 1980's debt crisis, in which women's economic participation was reframed as a way of making development more efficient and effective. Major development agencies were encouraged to include women based on the instrumentalist argument that to fail to do so would be a waste of 50% of the human resources available for development (Maguire 1984).

The latter approach did create some new outlets for women's participation, such as the revolving loan funds and micro-lending which became popular means of incorporating women into economic development. Also prevalent were programs seeking to empower women through educational initiatives and skills workshops targeted to women at the local level (Hijab and Lewis 2003). Thus, an important contribution of the WID movement was to put women firmly at the heart of development processes. In addition, it began to differentiate between policies that aimed to meet women's needs within traditional gender roles from those that empowered them to take on new roles, and to firmly establish the latter as the only appropriate course of action for the development industry.

The World Conferences on Women

While the WID movement played an active role in setting the agenda during this time, the development of the movement itself was shaped and assisted by a number of global conferences sponsored by the UN during this period. The initiation of the UN sponsored World

Conferences on Women was especially formative for the global women's movement. In addition to providing a forum for calling attention to women's issues in previously "gender-neutral" areas of economics and development, the conferences afforded NGOs and individual activists with invaluable exposure to the agenda-setting process. Most importantly, they facilitated communication and information sharing between previously separate groups with divergent interests, allowing for the formation of previously unthinkable alliances and partnerships, and prompting the emergence of a truly global women's rights movement. While channels of participation remained blocked for women in many parts of the world, domestic advocates found that they could make their views heard in the international arena.

The World Conferences on Women in Mexico City (1975) and Copenhagen (1980) should be noted as crucial instances of self-assessment for advocates of women's rights themselves. In Mexico City, it became clear that despite a shared desire for women's empowerment, there was an internal division within the women's movement between groups from the North and South. At both conferences, delegates from the developing world voiced their concern that the strategies being employed by the WID movement to create gender parity did not adequately address their needs, because women in developing countries faced additional discrimination as a result of their inferior position in the international system. Instead of seeking gender balance alone and equal participation, women's groups from the South called for a total transformation of traditional social structures and development paradigms (Jahan 1995).

Initially, the equity approach advocated by WID advocates from the North set the agenda for the Women's Decade. However, in the process of negotiation and exchange that continued following the Mexico City Conference, women's groups began to find common ground. By the time the 2nd World Conference for Women was held in Copenhagen in 1980, the concept of

“discrimination” had begun to be replaced with “equality,” helping to unite the movement on an unprecedented level. This conceptual shift allowed for greater cooperation by raising awareness that inequality existed on the basis of ethnicity, class, geographic location, and a plethora of other factors, in addition to gender.

This new understanding more fully encompassed the concerns of women in the developing world, and drew attention to previously neglected issues such as the role of traditions and customary practices in contributing to women’s subordination. One of the greatest breakthroughs that resulted from the equality framework was the adoption on December 18, 1979, of the Convention to End Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The treaty was the first instrument to encompass the lessons learned by the women’s rights movement and the diverse experiences of its participants, to comprehensively address women’s rights within political, cultural, economic, social, and family life. CEDAW also laid the foundation for the development of a human rights language for women, through its inclusion of private acts in the definition of discrimination, and pointing to specific prejudices, customary practices, and stereotyped roles of men and women as things to be eliminated by state parties (UN General Assembly 1979).

From Women to Gender in Development

By the mid-1980’s, the WID movement was losing its monopoly within the development community as the best and only strategy for including women. The movement had undeniably put women’s issues on the agenda of development agencies, and was the impetus for the establishment of national women’s machineries worldwide. However, while programs for women may have increased, resistance to gender equality had not been decreased in a meaningful way. In fact, there was beginning to be some backlash against targeted programs for

women, not only from men in local communities resentful of changes to the status quo, but from within the development community as well.

Even more problematic was the fact that, because attitudes and social structures had not changed significantly, women completing the programs often lacked outlets for their new skills and knowledge within the traditional cultural norms of their communities. Decades before, the Commission on the Status of Women had learned that simply attaching women's rights to existing international and national laws did little to change the customs, beliefs, and power structures that contributed to women's subordination in the first place. Similarly, at the end of the Decade for Women, many activists within the global women's movement felt that inserting women into development processes and increasing their access to paid work was not enough to ensure that women could actually enjoy their newfound resources.

The Gender and Development Approach

From this disenchantment, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged as an alternative model for bringing women's rights into the development debate. This new line of thinking began to take shape in the late 1980's and early 1990's, as groups of women's rights activists rediscovered the earlier writings of feminist scholars whose work had focused on the concept of gender. At the height of the WID movement, scholars like Ann Oakley had expressed concern that the problems of women were being considered in terms of the biological differences between men and women, when in reality many of the problems stemmed from gender, the socially constructed roles of men and women and the relationships between them (Oakley 1972). This body of literature also emphasized the idea that gender is not a rigid concept, but rather is a malleable construct, determined through a variety of social, historical, religious, and economic determinants. The concept of gender as something which was socially constructed and dynamic

provided inspiration for new strategies and ideas which focused on gender relations and the diverse experiences of women as well as men to a greater extent than in the past.

Carolyn Moser is widely cited as the founder of the official GAD approach. Her article “Gender Planning in the 3rd World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs” was the first to point out the shortcomings of WID strategies, and to outline a new strategy that focused more holistically on gender, as opposed to just women. In it, Moser credited the WID movement with bringing about a progressive shift, by forcing the development community to see women as more than just mothers or helpless victims. However, she argued that agencies using WID strategies continued to neglect women’s rights, by treating them as untapped resources for increasing profits and economic growth, while ignoring women’s triple burden of reproductive, productive, and community work. In contrast to the exclusive focus on women favored by WID advocates, she proposed a deeper understanding of gender, and strategies that focused on gender roles and relations as the root causes of inequality (Moser 1989).

The GAD approach fundamentally altered the discourse on women’s rights and gender equality, and is responsible for many of the concepts and strategies which would later become central components of the gender mainstreaming strategy. These include calls for a transformative approach that entailed altering traditional power structures and gender relations, as opposed to merely integrating women into existing structures. Mainstream policy agendas were to be transformed through a “gender perspective,” the consideration of the impact on men and women and the relations between them, at every stage of the development process (Chant and Gutmann 2000). GAD advocates were also the first to make the distinction between practical gender needs, identified to help women in their existing subordinate position, and strategic gender needs, identified to transform the relations between men and women which

create this subordination (International Labour Organization 1998). These terms continue to be useful for identifying realistic parameters for development planning, and for better understanding the constraints facing various policy interventions.

Faced with diminishing returns on their current projects and suffering from “WID fatigue,” the development community soon embraced the new paradigm. Documentation from agencies during the period from the mid 1980’s through the 1990’s suggests that GAD’s attention to both men and women in terms of their gender roles and responsibility for change had the important impact of “bringing men back in,” a significant transformative shift (Jacquette and Staudt 2006, 31). However, it is important to note that the GAD approach did not diverge from the WID movement entirely. While initially rejecting women-only projects as too limiting, advocates of GAD soon found that such programs were necessary, because of cultural norms dictating that women could not attend meetings where men were present, or simply because the women themselves felt more comfortable learning new skills and cultivating their leadership potential in the presence of other women. In light of this reality, the GAD informally adopted a twin-track strategy of mainstreaming a gender perspective while launching targeted programs for women where necessary (Chant and Gutmann 2000).

Nairobi and the Forward Looking Strategies

In 1985 the third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi to review and appraise the achievements of the Decade for Women. That conference helped to translate the theoretical underpinnings of the GAD approach into a concrete plan of action. Reinvigorated by new ideas, and with nearly two decades of experience participating in UN sponsored forums, women’s rights groups arrived in Nairobi better prepared and with a more comprehensive agenda than had been the case for either of the previous conferences. In preparation for the NGO forum

that always met in parallel with the official UN meeting, women's groups had established a special planning committee for NGO activities almost two years in advance. The turnout in Nairobi more than doubled that of the NGO forums in Mexico City and Copenhagen, with over 14,000 women from more than 150 countries in attendance (Pietilä and Vickers 1994, 3).

The presence of such a multitude and diversity of women's groups allowed for communication and information sharing on an unprecedented level, helping to carve out a more holistic and unified understanding of poverty and discrimination. One especially notable development was the greater harmony in evidence between women's groups from the global north and south. In both of the previous conferences, the assertion by Southern women's groups that women's equality hinged on a complete restructuring of traditional development processes was viewed as a threat by WID advocates. However, in Nairobi the popularity of the GAD approach, with its emphasis on altering gender relations between men and women, created an environment which was much more receptive to discussion of this kind of transformative approach.

The outcome document of the Nairobi conference outlines the Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which served to formalize a more holistic focus on gender. For example, they recognize that the gendered division of labor had in the past resulted in greater responsibility on the part of women for unpaid reproductive work, and echo the GAD approach's calls for greater involvement from men in childcare and the provision of services to relieve women of their triple burden. The fact that the Forward Looking Strategies were adopted unanimously speaks to the popularity of the new approach, and made implementation of the document a much stronger obligation on the countries present.

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies also represent the first usage of the word “mainstream” in an official UN document, marking another step towards the gender mainstreaming strategy in use today. The word is used only six times, and as a noun, to describe the vast body of activities into which women are to be incorporated. Gender experts such as Lorraine Corner of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) point to this limited usage, as well as the fact that the word “gender” is used a mere 16 times, as evidence that the 1970’s focus on targeted activities for women still lingered in Nairobi (1999, 3). Still, that it was included at all helped the term gain meaning, and after the 3rd World Conference on Women, “mainstreaming” as a verb began to appear regularly in development literature in relation to gender and women (Council of Europe 1998).

The more lasting impact of the Nairobi conference was to set the stage for future progress in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Forward Looking Strategies established specific benchmarks to be reached by 2000, such as a life expectancy for women of at least 65 years. In addition, measures for implementation within the UN system were established (Jahan 1995). Shortly after the conference, a System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for Women and Development was adopted by ECOSOC. The first plan to truly attempt to cover the entire UN system and give all agencies tasks to be implemented towards a particular goal, the Plan involved initiatives such as developing statistics and indicators, improving public information and networks, and improving the participation of women in science and technology for development (United Nations 1987). In essence, the Plan marked the first effort by the UN to mainstream women’s rights into its programs and policies.

The Human Rights Frame

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment resulting from the new relationships and increased cooperation between women's groups was the reframing of discrimination against women as a human rights issue. One of the main vehicles for this was the issue of violence against women as an example of how socialized gender roles led to women's subordination. This issue proved to be one of the focus points which women's groups could rally around in spite of their differences, and unsolicited violence against unprotected individuals, especially women and children, proved to resonate across cultural and regional boundaries as something which was offensive to deeply ingrained codes of conduct. Social movement experts Keck and Sikkink explain that "The frame of violence against women resonated with this trans-cultural consensus and innovated within it. It helped women's groups attract new allies by situating them within the larger 'master frames' or 'metanarratives' of violence and rights" (1998, 196).

Women's rights activists built on this newfound sympathy for their cause by deliberately aligning themselves with the international human rights movement. Feminist scholars and activists produced a series of powerful and influential arguments which made the theoretical and practical linkages between violence against women and international human rights norms difficult to refute or ignore. For example, Charlotte Bunch's article "Women's Rights as Human Rights" demonstrated that gender violence kills women daily, and as such is a highly public and political issue (Bunch 1990). Shortly after, Roxanna Carillo's "Violence Against Women: An Obstacle to Development" successfully portrayed violence against women as one of the primary impediments to development (Carillo 1993).

Global events created additional opportunities for considering the issue of violence against women in a new light. Occurrences such as mass rape in Yugoslavia had made policy-makers aware of the political nature of gender violence, its pervasiveness, and its devastating

impact. In addition, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna prompted major organizing efforts on the part of women's networks to ensure that women's issues were represented in preparatory documents, and strengthened connections between the international human rights network and women's networks.

The Vienna conference led the General Assembly to adopt the Declaration against Violence against Women by unanimous vote, explicitly recognizing gender-based violence, including rape, sexual slavery, and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation as human rights issues. In addition, the Declaration marked the first formal human rights treaty to deal specifically with women's rights and gender equality, asserting that "The World Conference on Human Rights underlines the importance of the integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process. The equal status of women and the human rights of women "should be integrated into the mainstream of UN system-wide activity" (UN General Assembly 1993).

The importance of the formal inclusion of women's rights within the broader human rights framework cannot be understated. By the mid-1990's, the issue had become the common advocacy position of both the women's movement and the international human rights movement. As such, the global women's movement was able to learn and adopt the strategies which had proven highly successful for the human rights movement, specifically "promoting change by reporting the facts" by carefully documenting abuses, demonstrating state accountability, and developing mechanisms to expose these abuses to a wide public. In addition, women's groups benefited from being able to tap into the extensive preexisting communications networks of the human rights movement, providing access to a much wider constituency than at any time in the past.

Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective

Once violence against women was firmly enmeshed within the human rights framework, international women's networks found that they could effectively place women's rights on the agenda at global and national conferences for a wide variety of issues. For example, the effectiveness of the women's caucus at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo helped the women's health movement come into its own, and made women's rights a central issue in population policy (Higer 1999, 136). Increasingly, UN documents on a range of topics began to focus on gender relations as opposed to women as a falsely homogenous group. In addition, UN funds and agencies began to stress the double strategy favored by GAD advocates of pairing women-specific policies with the integration of a gender perspective in all plans and decision-making. This set the stage for the official UN endorsement of gender mainstreaming at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, which subsequently was codified as UN policy through a series of official directives (Pietilä and Vickers 1994).

A significant and highly publicized outcome of the conference was to increase commitment to women's rights and gender equality by involving all stakeholders in the highly participatory process of documenting lessons learned, highlighting best practices, and reiterating responsibilities for protecting and empowering women. In essence, the process of drafting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action facilitated ownership of the document and its calls for gender equality on the part of national governments and representatives. However, of at least equal importance was the monumental accomplishment of the thousands of participating NGOs, government officials, and individual activists in laying the foundation for future progress. It is their work in collecting sex-disaggregated data, elaborating key principles, implementing a

system for the constant review of progress, and maintaining momentum overall which has proved vital to the sustainability of gender mainstreaming as an official UN policy.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The early 1990's marked a period of reassessment, self-evaluation, and the development of new strategies on the part of the global women's rights movement. This self-evaluation was heralded by the emergence of evidence that, in spite of significant progress in furthering the women's rights agenda, the income disparity between North and South had grown, and women had come to comprise a growing percentage of the poor in both locations. Similarly, while women's participation in the workforce had grown, the workplace had not kept pace with this demographic shift by enacting policies to respond to women's needs. These factors combined to increase the economic burden on women, contributing to new phenomena such as unprecedented levels of female migration and trafficking of women and children at the start of the decade (Jahan 1995).

The pending World Conference on Women, scheduled to take place in Beijing in 1995, was generally viewed as a window of opportunity to overcome these lingering obstacles. In contrast to the previous three conferences, where much of the agenda had been devoted to review and assessment of progress made to date, the goal of the Beijing conference would be to plan and implement a detailed path for the future. To expedite this process, unprecedented effort was devoted to advance preparation, information sharing, and the dissemination of data.

The highly participatory nature of the drafting process helped to maximize the quantity and diversity of information and perspectives on which comprehensive, effective policies would be based. In addition, encouraging national delegations to contribute the experiences of their countries and incorporating their suggestions into the agreement had the effect of cultivating a

sense of ownership of and commitment to the agenda for women's empowerment. At the same time, soliciting input from all sides on a subject as controversial as gender had the effect of generating more heated debate and contestation than at any previous international conference. In particular, Catholic and Islamic countries objected to many of the references made to family planning, and to the word 'gender' itself. Their argument was that the concept of gender roles as socially constructed and changeable posed a fundamental threat to institution of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and denied the centrality of women's role as mothers in the traditional conceptualization of the family (Tagliabue 1995).

Ultimately, the CSW was able to break this impasse by producing research demonstrating that the use of the word "gender" in the documents being drafted at Beijing was consistent with the way the term was used in other UN conference reports and treaties. As many of the objecting countries had signed on to these earlier agreements, this strategy had the effect of glossing over the disagreement, allowing the discussion to move forward. That this controversy over terminology and its implications was not dealt with at Beijing is frequently cited as a shortcoming of the conference which could create problems in the future, however necessary the strategy may have been at the time. The strategy was in fact highly successful – not only were the delegates able to move past that fundamental disagreement, but the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted unanimously on September 15, 1995.

The Beijing Declaration and The Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive and compelling agenda for women's empowerment ever drafted by the international community. Its stated goal is to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and remove the remaining obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of life. However, in Beijing the challenges of promotion women's

rights and gender equality were approached in a more organized and coherent manner than had been the case at previous world conferences. The Platform begins with an assessment of the situation of women world wide in 12 critical areas of concern, dealing primarily with issues identified as priorities by the international women's rights movement, including economic advancement, equal rights and access to health care and education, and violence against women and girls. These form the basis for a global agenda for achieving women's empowerment, outlined in 54 strategic objectives and 535 actions to be taken to address each critical area of concern.

One of the greatest achievements of the conference was to reaffirm the lessons learned in previous decades, and to codify concepts that had not yet been formally defined. The use of the term 'women's empowerment,' a first for a UN Conference on Women, can be seen as an acknowledgement of the work of the international women's rights movement in raising awareness of women not as passive recipients of aid and welfare, but as active agents of development and progress in all spheres of life. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also draws on and emphasizes the central tenet of the Vienna Declaration, that the human rights of women and girls are indivisible from universal human rights, by calling on national governments and UN entities to integrate a gender perspective into the UN human rights framework. The influence of the GAD approach is evident throughout as well, specifically in the Platform's frequent assertion that gender equality requires the participation of both men and women, and that deeply entrenched attitudes and customs perpetuate inequality and discrimination worldwide. In addition, the Beijing Declaration endorses the idea of transforming gender relations which was first introduced by GAD advocates, by calling for a fundamental shift in values, attitudes, and practices at all levels that contribute to women's subordination.

Most notable for the purposes of this paper is that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action formally established gender mainstreaming as the preferred strategy of the UN for achieving gender equality. The terminology popularized by GAD advocates is evident in that the word “gender” appears 233 times in the text, most frequently in the Platform’s calls for national governments to integrate a gender perspective in the functioning of their institutions and policies, and in the requirement that gender analysis be undertaken on the status and contributions of both men and women in all areas (Corner 1999, 2). Specifically, the document asserts that “Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programs, so that, before decisions are taken, analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively” (United Nations 1995). The importance of gender mainstreaming is specifically mentioned in relation to each of the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Platform, underscoring the importance of considering gender issues in each and every aspect of the UN’s work.

Development of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Despite common usage of the term “gender mainstreaming” during the conference and afterwards, many felt the phrase lacked clear definition. Furthermore, little direction was provided as to how this was to be accomplished, making it difficult for governments and agencies to implement the commitments they had made at Beijing. Most formative for the current strategy were the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system. Consequently, a number of subsequent resolutions were necessary to add structure to the mandate. Adopted on July 18, 1997, the agreed conclusions mark the first effort to translate the commitment made in Beijing

into practice, by providing a more clear definition of gender mainstreaming itself and how it should be implemented. The ECOSOC definition asserts that:

“Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, and as a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (UN Economic and Social Council 1997).

The remainder of the document attempts to provide clarity on how to implement gender mainstreaming at all levels, by outlining a number of key points. First, it does not do away with the need for targeted interventions for women. Rather, the two-pronged strategy favored by GAD advocates, entailing the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas while at the same time undertaking women-specific projects where necessary, is sanctioned as the approach to be used in the UN. Second, responsibility for gender mainstreaming is system-wide, resting at the highest levels within all UN funds and agencies, but never written off as the sole responsibility of one unit. Third, the definition of problems and issues prior to program design and implementation should always be done in such a way that gender differences can be seen. The assumption of gender neutrality should never be made. Finally, clear political will and the allocation of adequate resources, and additional financial and human resources if necessary, are crucial to the success of the gender mainstreaming strategy. In keeping with this principle, the agreed conclusions outline a number of specific steps UN entities are required to undertake. These include using institutional directives rather than discretionary guidelines for gender

mainstreaming; developing improved tools for gender analysis; establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation; and creating a strong system of accountability for gender mainstreaming among both management and staff (UN Economic and Social Council 1997).

Shortly after the policy was unveiled, the Secretary-General bolstered the definitions and strategies laid out in the agreed conclusions in a communication on gender mainstreaming to the heads of all UN departments, programs funds, and regional commissions establishing more concrete directives. The letter served to underscore the point that responsibility for gender mainstreaming rests at the highest levels. Specifically, the Secretary-General's communication required that senior management develop specific strategies, priorities, and steps for implementing gender mainstreaming within their organization ensuring the systematic use of gender analysis and sex-disaggregation of data, and developing medium-term plans and budgets in such a way that gender perspectives and gender equality issues are explicit (UN Secretariat 1997).

At the turn of the century, a 23rd special session of the General Assembly was held to review the progress made since adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The summit was entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century," but is commonly referred to as "Beijing +5." The governments in attendance reaffirmed their commitment to the women's empowerment agenda of the Beijing Platform for Action, and a common development agenda that held gender equality as a fundamental underlying principle. On June 10, 2000, the General Assembly adopted Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which affirmed that gender mainstreaming was still considered crucial to the achievement of gender equality, and which was complementary to special activities for women (UN General Assembly 2000).

The outcome document of the 23rd special session vastly strengthened the gender mainstreaming mandate in a number of ways. First, it added focus to the women's empowerment objective of the Platform by pointing out that women are not a homogeneous group, and that gender is not the only reason for discrimination. Rather, women face barriers to full equality due to race, socio-economic status, age, disability, and countless other factors. Second, it emphasized that while women's empowerment was the immediate objective, the end goal was gender equality, the realization of which required the active involvement of men. This expanded the range of programs available, by raising awareness that targeted interventions to reduce the gaps between men and women could include training for men to reduce discrimination and stereotypical attitudes. Finally, the document laid out specific actions to be taken by national governments and UN agencies, demonstrating how the expanded understanding of gender mainstreaming could be implemented in the everyday activities of these entities.

With the official UN policy on gender mainstreaming laid out and explained, recent initiatives have focused on how best to improve and implement that strategy. The 49th session of the CSW (Beijing +10) convened in New York from February 28 until March 11, 2005, in order to review and appraise the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The report produced at that meeting focused on identifying shortcomings in the approach to gender mainstreaming laid out in the founding UN directives. Responses to a questionnaire to national governments as well as information gathered in dialogue sessions of intergovernmental entities revealed uneven progress in implementing the strategy. Encouragingly, the majority of countries indicated that specific policies and action plans for gender mainstreaming had been developed at the national or

regional levels. In addition, countries from all regions mentioned implementing capacity-building and training programs on gender. However, the data also indicated that the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms envisioned in the Beijing Declaration had not materialized, and that gender equality continued to be seen as a peripheral issue in many cases (ECOSOC 2005).

Since 2000, a number of important mandates for gender mainstreaming in specific areas of the work of the UN have been developed. One of the most important examples is the passage of Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, a major breakthrough on gender mainstreaming in peace and security. The momentum behind the advocacy efforts for Resolution 1325 and the debate they generated regarding issues facing women in conflict situations played a tremendous role in demonstrating the concept of gender mainstreaming firsthand, and truly opened the door to further progress by focusing attention and interest on the subject. As the first resolution ever passed to specifically address the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to peace and security, it embodies the transformation of traditionally male-dominated field that is the goal of gender mainstreaming. For example, national action plans emerged largely as a result of Resolution 1325 and the realization that women experienced and participated in conflict in a different way than men. Mandates for gender mainstreaming in other issue areas, including sustainable development, science and technology, and narcotic drugs, were the result of similar advocacy efforts in the years following the milestone of integrating a gender perspective into UN peacekeeping operations.

PART II: THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK

The gender mainstreaming strategy conceived in Beijing is the product of the failures, successes, and cumulative lessons learned regarding gender equality and women's empowerment over the course of half a century. This section will outline the conceptual underpinnings and overarching framework for gender mainstreaming as it exists in the UN today. The success of any strategy, for any purpose, hinges on how well it is understood and accepted by those implementing it. This is especially true for one as holistic and all-encompassing as gender mainstreaming is intended to be. As such, this section is intended to serve as a guidebook, synthesizing much of the information currently available to practitioners, but also providing a frame of reference for students and professionals whose future work may benefit from a working knowledge of this increasingly prevalent and popular strategy. This portion seeks to facilitate the development of this conceptual knowledge by explaining what gender mainstreaming is and what it is not, describing the resources available to practitioners for implementation, and discussing the progress made and problems identified thus far.

A Comprehensive Overview of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

The gender mainstreaming strategy conceived in Beijing is the product of the cumulative lessons learned regarding gender equality and women's empowerment over the course of half a century. In some cases, these lessons were learned due to the failure of previous strategies. As shown in Part I, the shortcomings of special projects for women in the 1970's and 1980's led to a shift from women in development to gender and development, and from initiatives focused exclusively on women to a more holistic approach aimed at addressing discrimination in gender relations between men and women.

At the same time, recent developments can be attributed in part to a gradual process of building upon victories both large and small, consolidating women's rights and expanding them

into new areas. As such, the gender mainstreaming strategy is reflective of both the major upheavals within the international women's rights movement, such as the shift from women in development to gender and development, as well as its monumental achievements in raising awareness that women's rights are human rights. The totality of these experiences has deepened knowledge and awareness of gender issues, leading to the development of the terms and principles which inform the gender mainstreaming strategy in use today.

Where does Gender Mainstreaming Stand Today?

At its core, gender mainstreaming in its current form continues to reflect the principles and definitions elaborated through the historical development of women's rights and gender relations outlined in the previous chapter. To summarize the various strains of thought brought to light in Part I, gender mainstreaming is a strategy, not an end in and of itself. The ultimate goal of the mainstreaming strategy is the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender with regards to life opportunities, the allocation of resources, and access to services.

The mainstream is comprised of the dominant ideas and practices in society that influences decisions and actions of all actors, and in which women's issues have traditionally been considered of marginal importance, as evidenced by stereotypes such as the common view in development work that women's most important role was as mother and caregiver. As discussed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming involves bringing gender equality issues, or a gender perspective, into this dominant arena of policy-making, planning, and decision making at all stages, to ensure that resources are distributed equitably, and to eliminate discriminatory practices or behaviors in the economic, social, cultural, and political realms. It aims to improve on previous approaches by emphasizing non-discrimination rather than just increased participation, taking into account previously overlooked

diversity among men and women, and empowering women to actually claim the rights and opportunities which accrue to them by law.

Gender mainstreaming is a **people-centered approach**, reflecting the work of women's rights activists in putting the well-being of human beings at the heart of development by raising awareness of the specific needs and interests of different groups of men and women in society. Article 4 of the Beijing Declaration specifically calls for recognition of "the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances," while Article 32 points out that barriers to empowerment and advancement exist because of factors like age, ethnicity, language, and religion, in addition to gender (United Nations 1995). As such, mainstreaming gender equality issues inherently involves basing and evaluating any program or policy according to its impact on the concrete situation of men and women in different contexts.

It is also a **rights-based approach**, and gender mainstreaming provides a framework for enshrining the international human rights standards of gender equality and orienting development towards meeting those rights. In contrast to earlier needs-based approaches focused on identifying the resource requirements of a certain group, a rights-based approach strives to make men and women aware of their entitlement to universal human rights, provide them with the resources and capacity to actually claim these rights, and ensure that national governments can respond to these demands and be held accountable as duty bearers in securing and protecting the equal rights of men and women (Jones and Gaventa 2002). Gender mainstreaming conceives of more than just rights *to* development in terms of access to resources and increased participation. In addition to these traditional demands, it also calls for rights *within* development, including gender aware development processes and environments, as well

as the wider outcomes such as reduced poverty for women that constitute rights *through* development (Wilson 2003).

Above all else, the gender mainstreaming strategy as established in Beijing and defined in the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 is intended to be **agenda-setting**, and calls for the transformation of the existing development paradigm through the use of a gender perspective. The WID approach of the 1970's and 80's can be considered mainly "integrationist," meaning it attempted to promote women's rights by increasing their numbers within existing sectors and programs, but without changing the priorities in those areas (Jahan 1995, 13). In contrast, gender mainstreaming as an agenda-setting approach implies a restructuring of both formal and informal gender relations and power structures to create an environment conducive to promoting gender equality, including women's and men's individual consciousness, access to rights and resources, informal norms and cultural practices, and formal institutions such as laws and government policies (Rao and Kelleher 2005, 60). Women are incorporated into the mainstream, but they also change the mainstream itself in a fundamental way

Achieving these objectives requires a **twin-track strategy**, in which gender mainstreaming is paired with targeted initiatives to address instances of discrimination against women. Gender mainstreaming is about more than just increasing women's participation in order to achieve gender equity. Rather, it works to promote gender equality by bringing the experiences, knowledge, and interests of both men and women to bear in all aspects of the development process. However, the fact remains that gender equality is not yet a reality, and women are often severely disadvantaged on a broad range of quality of life indicators.

Because such inequities exist, women and men have different positions, interests, and needs, making some level of differential treatment necessary for reaching equality. These twin

strategies are not competing, but rather are complementary. Targeted initiatives for women can contribute to the goal of women's empowerment by creating a safe space for increasing self-confidence and awareness, while projects designed for men can help to promote gender equality and facilitate changing the mainstream by addressing discriminatory attitudes and behaviors (UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues 2001).

How Does an Organization “Do” Gender Mainstreaming?

The UN mandate calls for taking a gender perspective in data collection, research, training, programs, and all aspects of an organization's operation. The Beijing Platform for Action specifically states that this use of gender analysis in all areas, and at every stage of the policy and decision-making process, is central to the success of gender mainstreaming. This is because gender analysis allows practitioners to distinguish the ways in which the distribution of resources, activities, power, and representation vary among men and women of different socio-economic groups at various points in time. By asking questions about who does what, who has what, and how decisions are made, gender analysis helps to identify inequalities that arise from unequal power relationships, and assess the potential of a given policy or program to bring about positive changes.

In order for a gender mainstreaming strategy to work, organizations and agencies must first put in place the mechanisms to implement and sustain that strategy. These prerequisites can be divided into four stages. The first involves conducting careful analysis before any policy or programmatic decisions are made, in order to assess the linkages between gender equality and the issues or sectors relevant to the organization. This helps to clarify options and appropriate strategies, as well as to raise awareness of the relevance of gender equality to achievement of the organization's goals. The second step is identifying entry points for introducing gender

perspectives into everyday tasks and responsibilities. Third, a concrete methodology must be developed for incorporating gender perspectives into identified activities. Finally, the organization must undertake institutional development initiatives to support gender mainstreaming, including developing guidelines, utilizing gender specialists and focal points, and capacity building for staff (Hannan 2003, 3).

These requirements apply at both the internal/institutional level as well as the external/programmatic level. Internally, this would involve making sure that organizational policies and culture are conducive to equality of opportunities, as well as of access to and distribution of resources. Externally, the goal would be to ensure that a gender perspective is adopted at all levels of project design and implementation, and making sure all of the organization's programs, projects, actions and initiatives contribute to bringing about gender equality between men and women. The following specific initiatives reflect standard guidelines adapted from commonly used gender mainstreaming reference kits (Murison 2004; Habib 2008):

- **A clear gender mainstreaming policy** – A written guiding statement indicating the organization's commitment to gender equality, supported by senior and mid-level management. The document should state the organization's core principles as they relate to gender equality, link these to internal culture and external programs and interventions, and formally dedicate all forms of resources to gender mainstreaming.
- **A specific gender mainstreaming strategy** – The policy document should be accompanied by a more detailed strategy which calls for identifying baseline indicators, explicit steps, benchmarks, timelines, actions, and assigns responsibilities for completing specific work tasks.

- **Gender awareness initiatives** – These include internal and external initiatives such as: gender-sensitive recruitment policies; availability of family friendly leave policies; enforcement of policies to combat sexual harassment. It also means continuous and ongoing training and capacity building relevant to the work of the organization should be a requirement for all staff, and all organizations should maintain gender units and focal points which can support gender equality initiatives and coordinate activities within the organization.
- **Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** – Specific mechanisms should be developed which are capable of showing the extent to which the project is contributing to increased gender equality. There must be ways to measure impact through collection of baseline information as well as identification of appropriate milestones and indicators derived from gender analysis. Monitoring and evaluation should also include ongoing consultation with men and women on the staff and within targeted communities to identify priorities, document best practices, and share lessons learned.
- **A system of accountability** – Senior and mid-level management both at headquarters and in the field for specific projects should be aware of their responsibility for gender mainstreaming, and should have the capacity to oversee gender analysis and establish positive incentives and appropriate sanctions for staff accountability. Line management responsibility and clear accountability means that each manager or person in charge is responsible for and can effectively mainstream gender within his or her allocated tasks and responsibilities, with gender mainstreaming an integral part of the performance review process.

- **Human and financial resources** – Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all aspects of an organization’s internal and external programs and policies necessarily requires attention to gender issues in each budgetary cycle. Adequate investments for gender mainstreaming must be factored into program budgets.

What Institutional Resources Support Gender Mainstreaming in the UN?

The UN has worked to develop a strong internal network to promote gender mainstreaming on a number of levels. This consists of an organizational arrangement for overall policymaking, supported by a variety of internal and external resources which provide technical assistance, information, and tools to facilitate implementation of these policies.

At the upper-most level, a three-tier intergovernmental mechanism comprised of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the CSW is charged with issuing and coordinating the overarching policy directives on gender equality and the follow-up to the Beijing Platform, including gender mainstreaming. These three entities form a powerful partnership. Although it is a functional commission of ECOSOC, for years the CSW was the only intergovernmental body responsible for advocating and monitoring gender equality, and it remains the leading UN entity on gender issues. ECOSOC coordinates the work of the UN specialized agencies, functional commissions (including the CSW), regional commissions, funds and programs. Among other duties, it has the ability to make recommendations on promoting respect for human rights, as well as to convene international conferences, making it highly influential in raising the profile of any given issue (UN Charter 1945, Ch. X). The General Assembly is comprised of all UN member nations, and is the principle policy-making and appraisal organ of the UN. It takes the lead in enforcing follow-up on the Beijing Platform and other directives, and can make recommendations to individual countries and the UN Security Council on any matter brought

before it. While these recommendations are technically not legally binding, they carry tremendous weight in that they represent world public opinion.

Given their varying structures and mandates, each entity in this trio plays a slightly different role in crafting and coordinating the system-wide policy on gender mainstreaming. As the highest authority on gender issues within the UN, the CSW is the principle policy-making body on gender mainstreaming within this trio. In this role, the CSW provides the Secretary-General with annual reports detailing efforts on gender mainstreaming within the UN system and solicits regular statements from national governments on efforts being made at the country level. ECOSOC provided a critical definition and explanation of the new gender mainstreaming policy in its Agreed Conclusions 1997/2, and continues to focus on clarifying and streamlining what the policy means for the internal operations of the UN. Recently, ECOSOC adopted Resolution 2001/41, which works to promote gender mainstreaming by integrating a gender perspective in the work of all of its functional commissions, including a regular agenda item for gender mainstreaming on its annual agenda, and conducting follow-up reviews of the implementation of the agreed conclusions (UN Economic and Social Council 2001). The General Assembly has begun to integrate gender issues into its six main committees, which together serve to harmonize the various approaches of member states. To this end, the 2nd Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) addresses issues concerning women in development on a biannual basis, while the 3rd committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee) has two agenda items specifically devoted to gender equality and the advancement of women.

At the intermediate level, many institutional arrangements have been created to help translate high level policy directives on gender mainstreaming into actionable plans and programs within the UN system. There are currently five main UN entities which specialize in

gender issues, and work to support member states and other UN agencies in incorporating gender perspectives into their work (WomenWatch, Directory of UN Resources on Gender and Women's Issues):

- **Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)** – Created on March 1, 1997, OSAGI is headed by the Special Adviser, and is the principal social affairs office in charge of gender mainstreaming in the Secretariat. OSAGI has overarching responsibility for coordination of issues related to women and gender equality within the UN system, advising the Secretary-General on these issues, and monitoring actions on gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the UN system. The office is part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the Secretariat.
- **Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)** – Located in DESA, DAW receives policy guidance from OSAGI in order to provide substantive services and support to other UN entities. Specifically, DAW works closely with the CSW, ECOSOC, and the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly in support of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** – UNIFEM acts as a catalytic entity supporting innovative activities that benefit women at the country and regional levels. As an autonomous body within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNIFEM plays a central role in promoting women's involvement in mainstream development, and projects in this arena constitute a large part of its agenda.
- **International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)** – The only entity devoted entirely to research, training, and information on

gender equality, INSTRAW uses information technology and networking to disseminate information from all countries, produce research and new methodologies, and assist the advancement of women through training on how to use the gender perspective in analysis and program implementation (UN-INSTRAW n/d). By the recommendation of ECOSOC, the Institute gives special attention to the needs of developing countries, and its headquarters are located in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic.

- **Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)** – A network of gender focal points in UN offices, specialized agencies, funds and programs, which supports and monitors the implementation of the Beijing Platform, the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and other gender-related recommendations coming out of recent sessions and conferences. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women serves as Chair of the Network, as part of OSAGI's function of ensuring that the gender perspective is effectively integrated into policies and programs in all areas of the work of the UN system. DAW serves as the network's Secretariat. Composed of approximately 60 members representing 25 organizations of the UN, IANWGE carries out its activities through ad hoc task forces on critical areas of concern, such as trade, peace and security, water resources management, and many more. In addition, it provides regular opportunities for innovation and the development of new methodologies, in part through workshops on the implementation of gender mainstreaming (UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination 2006, Box 2.12).

In addition to these main entities responsible for overall knowledge management and coordination on gender issues, a number of smaller and more narrowly focused resources exist to support specific initiatives:

- **Inter-Agency Mechanisms** – In addition to IANWGE as the leading inter-agency body, a number of mechanisms play a role in coordinating policies and programs on the international, national, and regional levels. For example, in recent years the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its High-Level Committees on Programme, Management, and the UN Development Group have played an increasingly important role in coordinating gender-related policies through its directives on system-wide coherence to heads of all UN entities. At the national level, the UN Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality is made up of representatives from 17 UN agencies and chaired by UNIFEM. It works to develop and test indicators to assess project performance in improving gender equality, tracks changes and monitors progress in the activities supported by country teams, and facilitates information sharing between countries (UN Development Fund for Women n.d.).
- **Gender Units and Focal Points** – Most UN entities have entire gender units or at a minimum an individual acting as a focal point for gender issues. Their responsibilities include: supporting agencies in the use of the gender perspective within their respective mandates and daily work activities; advising staff on appropriate procedures and best practices; and advocating for and monitoring gender mainstreaming initiatives within a given entity. The gender focal point is usually not a full-time position, and individuals appointed to this position often have other areas of responsibility. Expertise in gender issues is not necessarily a requirement for the position, although large and well-established gender units tend to include gender experts (UN Commission on the Status of Women 1997).

- **Country Teams and Gender Theme Groups** – Country teams are made up of the representatives of UN funds and specialized agencies working in a given country. Theme groups are used to mobilize the activity of the country team and other relevant actors around a specific issue. Together, these work to coordinate strategies and programs for gender mainstreaming in operational activities. Country teams and gender theme groups provide support to host country governments and national machineries for women in integrating gender perspectives into their policies, programs, legislation, and budgets through instruments such as the UN Development Assistance Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Gender theme groups also work to promote gender equality through advocacy and capacity building for gender mainstreaming, technical support, and community interventions.
- **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** – Composed of 23 experts on women’s issues from around the world, the mandate of the Committee is very specific – to watch over the progress on women’s rights made in those countries that are party to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Countries that ratify or accede to the Convention accept a legal obligation to counteract discrimination against women. The Committee receives national reports from State parties and monitors efforts to fulfill this obligation. However, the Committee also helps to identify trends in women’s status, and makes recommendations on any issue affecting women to which it believes State parties should devote more attention (UN Division for the Advancement of Women n/d).

Largely through the work of the entities just described, the UN has amassed an impressive compilation of tools and guidelines to facilitate implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. This body of statistics, training modules, websites, methodologies, and other resources developed by these and other departments and agencies is one of the greatest accomplishments achieved with regards to gender mainstreaming and furthering the goal of gender equality. These successes and others will be described in more detail in the following sections.

Progress and Major Accomplishments

Since adopting the gender mainstreaming strategy, the UN has made significant progress in advancing women's empowerment and gender equality in a number of areas. Women are running for public office in increasing numbers, and now hold approximately 18.4 percent of the seats in national assemblies. In education, the gap between boys' and girls' primary school completion rates in low-income countries dropped from 18% in 1990 to 13% in 2000 (UNIFEM 2008, 37). There is a general consensus that these gains are the result of the increased use of a gender perspective called for in the gender mainstreaming strategy, which has enabled a deeper understanding of the root causes of inequalities between men and women. Because this approach has yielded tangible results in some areas, and has at least increased awareness of women's issues in others, it is important to identify what efforts by the UN have been particularly helpful in implementing and consolidating gender mainstreaming. This section will discuss institutional learning, coordination and consultation, and capacity-building as areas where there has been notable progress or improvements from which gender mainstreaming stands to benefit.

Institutional Learning

The UN's emphasis on institutional learning and self-evaluation has played a major role in ensuring the ongoing review and improvement of the gender mainstreaming strategy. The formal reporting requirements, high-level meetings, and more informal inter-agency networking processes which are common within the UN enhance its ability to identify problem areas and recommend changes for improvement in gender mainstreaming. These same processes have also helped bring to light and disseminate best practices and new ideas, expediting progress by streamlining policies and programs among UN entities, and prompting the development of new tools and resources.

The practice of regularly and systematically monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been particularly valuable in furthering progress on gender mainstreaming. The 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000 (Beijing+5) and the 2005 "Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly" (Beijing+10) constitute major efforts to assess progress and consider new initiatives at regular five year intervals. Preparation for these forums involved extensive intergovernmental collaboration through meetings, working groups, and panel discussions organized by the CSW to decide on important issues and the structure of the outcome documents (UN Division for the Advancement of Women n.d.)

The outcome document of the 23rd special session included information gleaned from these extensive preparatory meetings and discussions, as well as the responses from 157 member states and two observers to a questionnaire prepared by the Secretariat on implementation of the Beijing Platform (UN Division for the Advancement of Women n.d.) Both Beijing+5 and Beijing+10 considered input from hundreds of papers and statements submitted by NGOs and

civil society actors. Because they solicited and evaluated extensive substantive input from a variety of stakeholders, those high-level meetings helped to identify areas in need of improvement, including capacity for gender analysis, the development of accountability mechanisms, and allocation of sufficient resources.

This continuous monitoring and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses has necessarily led to some reassessment of the appropriate organizational arrangements and processes for implementing gender mainstreaming. As a result, efforts have been made to revise and clarify the strategy at various points, in response to identified problems and needs (Corner 1999). Most notable in this regard was the initiation of the United Nations System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. At the 2nd regular session of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2006, the heads of every department and agency dedicated themselves to pursuing this more coherent and coordinated implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy adopted by ECOSOC in its agreed conclusions 1997/2 (UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination 2006). The six major components of this revitalization included:

- 1. Accountability** – Develop or strengthen processes and mechanisms for ensuring accountability within the UN system in a coordinated and consistent way.

Organizations can still develop internal approaches to meet specific needs, but these may not circumvent or replace system-wide strategies.

- 2. Results-Based Management for Gender Equality** – Develop common-system indicators and measurements wherever possible to provide senior management with better and more timely information with which to make strategic decisions.

3. **Oversight** – Ensure accountability of all UN staff for performance on gender mainstreaming through monitoring, evaluation, audit, and reporting,.
4. **Human and Financial Resources** – Make better use of current resources, assign additional resources where required, and align resources with expected outcomes to increase efficiency.
5. **Capacity Development** – Boost expertise of staff, including management, to successfully mainstream a gender perspective in policies and programs through awareness raising campaigns and training at the level of the individual entity and nation wide.

An additional benefit of these conscious efforts to accumulate knowledge has been the development of new and improved tools and techniques for both policy development and policy implementation. Resources for policy development mainly include statistics and research. Since 1995, when the Beijing Platform emphasized the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender specific indicators, UN entities have greatly increased the quantity and quality of such information, and have made it more accessible. Some agencies have developed regular flagship publications which have become seminal references for organizations and national governments around the world. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) statistical sourcebook *The World's Women*, UNIFEM's *Progress of the World's Women*, the annual *State of the World's Population* by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report* rank among the best of these publications.

In addition to these quantitative measurements and indicators, inter-agency discussion of best practices has raised awareness regarding the value of qualitative research, and UN entities

now have access to fact sheets and guidelines on how to integrate this into their work through contextual analysis, interviews, and assessment of legislation and protocols. Appendix A of this paper is a reproduction of a standard handout on gender analysis, developed by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights network for use by UN entities and other international development agencies (2008, 25).

Two types of tools have become particularly abundant for use in the policy implementation process. The first are guidelines on how to conduct monitoring and evaluation. Resources like UNESCO's "Planning and Execution of Programme Evaluations" provide extensive examples of appropriate input and output indicators for practitioners to draw on as they attempt to gauge the feasibility of a program, monitor its progress, and evaluate its impact (UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 2003). The questions to be asked at various stages should aim to identify practical versus strategic gender interested, and to develop a more nuanced understanding of discrimination as it impacts on various subgroups within the broader categories of male or female. Such questions could include:

- How were women involved at the planning/formulation stage of the program? How were men involved?
- Did gender-disaggregated data exist on this situation before the program started?
- How did the program respond to the priorities of specific target groups among the female and male populations concerned?
- In the case of gender specific objectives, to what extent and how were they achieved?

What is the impact of the program on women? What is its impact on men?

The second common category of resources are manuals and guides on how to integrate a gender perspective in virtually every area of practical work covered by the UN. In this category,

the development of briefing notes has been a highly beneficial development. These are meant to widely disseminate basic information on gender perspectives in an easy to digest manner. The standard format for these briefing notes consists of three sections: an introduction of the linkages between gender perspectives and the issue being discussed; ideas on what changes might need to be made given an understanding of these linkages; and a list of resources for further information (Hannan 2003, 7).

These tools and techniques are even more useful because they have been made highly accessible. The websites of each of the five main gender entities contains some combination of publications, statements, practical tools, or links to other resources. For example, UNIFEM focuses much of its efforts on producing publications and tools for work in different areas, all available in free electronic format, while OSAGI leans towards training materials specifically for gender mainstreaming. Another major achievement of these entities was the joint creation in 1997 of WomenWatch, a website created as a central gateway to information and resources on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the UN system. The site consolidates and provides a directory of resources with access to specific information on selected topics, such as gender mainstreaming or how gender perspectives relate to the Critical Areas of Concern identified in the Beijing Platform (www.un.org/womenwatch/ n.d.).

Coordination and Consultation

Most UN entities have embraced a collaborative approach as the best way to successfully implement the gender mainstreaming strategy. Some of this cooperation takes place at the system-wide level, through interagency meetings organized primarily by the UN entities that focus on gender. For example, in 2001 IANGWE began organizing workshops on gender mainstreaming at its annual meetings. Similarly, OSAGI has worked in collaboration with all

departments in the Secretariat to develop a standard format for documenting best practices in gender mainstreaming, which it publicizes on its website (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/goodpraexamples.htm> n.d). This format is also included as Appendix B of this paper. These initiatives help increase the chances that gender mainstreaming will succeed, by providing opportunities to share knowledge, pool resources, and develop more consistent policies.

In addition to these overarching coordination efforts, individual agencies have begun to develop partnerships on their own initiative to work towards narrower goals. For example, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) joined forces with the UN Statistics Division to produce Gender Info 2007, a global data base of gender statistics covering a range of policy areas. Within the Secretariat, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs have held a number of consultations on mainstreaming gender perspectives into program budgets.

Already there is evidence that these forums have enhanced uniformity among UN entities, at least in terms of the initial stages of implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy. For example, a study by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality showed that, a year after the agreed conclusions outlined the gender mainstreaming strategy, nearly three-fourths of UN entities had developed specific gender policies and strategies (1998). A later study provided evidence that almost all UN entities had developed and endorsed a gender policy which shared six components, including: a twin-track strategy of gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions for gender equality; gender analysis; a combined approach to responsibilities, where all staff share responsibility, but are supported by gender specialists;

gender training; support to women's decision-making and empowerment; and monitoring and evaluation (Moser and Moser 2005, 12).

Numerous recent initiatives are notable for their creative approaches to bringing practitioners together, and these innovative initiatives bode well for the long-term sustainability of gender mainstreaming. One example is INSTRAW's ongoing work to develop a "Gender Training Wiki." Once completed, the tool is intended to serve as a centralized resource center for gender trainers, academics, gender mainstreaming, and knowledge management and development experts and practitioners, as well as individuals and organizations in general looking for gender training opportunities and resources. INSTRAW's staff regularly update the information in the Gender Training Wiki, but the Wiki is intended to be an empowering and participatory resource center which will allow a community of registered users to upload and comment on content, and benefit from content uploaded by others (http://www.un-instraw.org/wiki/training/index.php/Main_Page).

Promoting coordination and streamlining the interactions of diverse agencies is an extremely challenging task in a bureaucracy as large and multi-faceted as the UN. Given this reality, there are undoubtedly areas where more work needs to be done to ensure that UN entities are communicating and working with each other and national partners in the most efficient way possible. In particular, greater consistency is needed in the approaches to gender mainstreaming being utilized by various UN agencies and funds, and this issue will be discussed further in later sections of this paper. However, the initiatives discussed in this section show that a multitude of forums for increasing communication and joint problem solving have emerged in recent years, and there is a growing willingness among UN entities to work with each other and to partner

with external civil society organizations. These developments are undeniably a positive step towards increasing coordination and facilitating the flow of information within the UN.

Training and Capacity-Building

Training UN employees to understand and use a gender perspective in their work is simultaneously one of the greatest challenges and the area that has seen the most improvement in the overall implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. The challenge stems from the fact that gender mainstreaming calls for the transformation and fundamental reorientation of deeply engrained work habits, ways of thinking, and basic workplace culture and philosophy. Changes on this scale often meet with resistance. At the same time, because the default attitudes and norms of the international development community that are to be changed seldom required specific attention to gender issues, the baseline knowledge of gender issues among staff tends to be low despite progress made since the 1970's. The UN has made significant investments in terms of time and resources in order to close these knowledge gaps, making training more effective and ensuring ongoing capacity-building for all employees.

The most significant and visible accomplishment in this area is the development of participatory and interactive methods of training. Early on, experts and focal points in charge of training encountered a number of problems with traditional models. A survey at the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) identified a broader trend with its finding that most employees reported being "ready, willing, but unable" to deal with gender issues in their daily activities, because gender training was viewed as too generic (Howard 2002, 169). The main problem was that the framework being used in training was not participatory enough to engage staff in a meaningful way. Following this revelation, UN officials began to experiment with new training methods, including more role playing and interactive exercises in their programs. This

trial and error produced unexpected but highly positive outcomes. Trainers reportedly found that role playing helped to break down barriers to the discussion of gender power relations. An additional revelation was that male employees in fields traditionally dominated by men were far more open to discussing issues of gender equality and power than was assumed in the traditional training package.

The outcome of this pilot initiative was a standardized competence development program for all departments in the Secretariat. As part of its mandate to promote and monitor the gender mainstreaming efforts of the entire UN system, OSAGI spearheaded this initiative, and launched the program in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and DAW. After pilot projects in three UN entities yielded favorable results, the model was formalized in a publication titled “Facilitator’s Manual: Competence Development Programme on Gender Mainstreaming” (UN 2002). The manual provides detailed instructions on how to organize each stage of the process, and includes examples of materials to be used during the trainings themselves.

The model is unique in a number of ways. First, it is more practical and work-related than the overarching theoretical frameworks used in the past. Second, it is specifically tailored to the needs and issues important to each participating group, in recognition of the fact that the way gender perspectives are relevant will vary depending on the particular work unit. Third, it uses participatory methods that draw on the experiences of participants, and is discussion based rather than dependent on lectures. Finally, it is framed as a “process,” instead of an “event,” in an effort to emphasize the need for continuous ongoing training and capacity building. The framework is carried out by a team that consists of an overall facilitator and a subject expert, who are also charged with providing feedback and make recommendations for future action.

The following four steps are to be carried out division-by-division to ensure adequate focus on the specific work of any given entity:

- *Step 1:* Introductory meeting for the whole division, led by the Director, to introduce programs, goals, and processes.
- *Step 2:* Working group sessions held with smaller groups of staff, usually by branch, where the work program is discussed in more detail, and the extent to which gender perspectives are already included is assessed. This gives consultants a better understanding of the work of the staff, their level of knowledge, and helps to identify opportunities for further consideration of gender perspectives in their work.
- *Step 3:* A one day workshop is held for groups of no more than 20-25 staff. This is an opportunity for discussion of concepts, analysis of case studies to develop and understanding of the linkages between gender and specific areas. Participants are encouraged to come up with concrete steps to be taken in their work.
- *Step 4:* A town-hall style meeting of the entire department, led by the Under-Secretary-General, where all Directors of the division are required to present plans for bringing greater attention to gender perspectives in their work programs.

A number of more subtle initiatives suggest that ongoing capacity building is taking place. The plethora of fact sheets, briefings by experts, brown bag lunches, and the participatory development of materials on gender which continue to emerge all provide opportunities for staff to increase the breadth and depth of their knowledge. In addition, internal studies show that departments are making greater use of networks and online databases to disseminate information, ensuring that staff can be exposed to new ideas and skills at any stage of their career. The

importance of this progress cannot be understated. For gender mainstreaming to succeed, staff must be committed to the policy, feel some ownership of it, and have the knowledge and skills to use gender perspectives in their respective areas or fields. Training and capacity building help to cultivate these characteristics, making them central to the long-term sustainability of the strategy.

Problems and Common Criticisms

In spite of the clear progress made in some areas, implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy has not been successful across the board. The same process of monitoring and review that has highlighted best practices has at the same time underscored areas where improvements should be made. A variety of analyses conducted by academics, development agencies, and international institutions alike have pointed out a variety of problems, including weak policies and oversight, insufficient time-bound targets for implementation, and inadequate allocation of resources. The underlying theme seems to be that the specific knowledge and capacity to fully bring the respective experiences, needs, and priorities of men and women to bear on data collection, analysis, policy and program development and implementation continues to just fall short of what is needed.

The following sections highlight some of the most commonly cited causes of these weaknesses, loosely grouped into the interrelated categories of commitment, clarity, and consistency. A number of academics and practitioners lament the lack of progress in these areas, and are frustrated by the fact that the progress which has been made, in areas such as those mentioned in the previous section, is sometimes not carried over into other areas of work or is not understood equally by all departments and agencies. This is not to say that the advances made in areas like institutional learning, training, or coordination are not the major achievements

they were made out to be in the previous section. Rather, the problems which still remain are a reminder that mainstreaming is an evolving paradigm. Discussion of these problems, and the debate and analysis which often ensues from constructive criticism, is an important part of the ongoing process of improving the strategy and moving it forward.

Commitment

A number of assessments posit that a lack of high-level commitment is largely responsible for shortcomings in implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy. There is clear evidence that when senior managers make concerted efforts to prioritize gender equality, real progress is made within their organizations. Conversely, in organizations where gender equality policies are made without clear dedication and participation from management the result tends to be maintenance of the status quo. This is because management support and guidance is necessary to move beyond endorsing gender equality to truly implementing a gender mainstreaming policy (Hannan 2008, 7). While most organizations have adopted the basic terminology of gender mainstreaming and put in place similar policies, that overarching framework has minimal impact if high-level support to enforce its implementation is lacking.

Evaluations of gender mainstreaming in the UN point to three main problems which could be indicative of a lack of senior level commitment. First, the senior management of many development agencies and UN entities continues to be male dominated. Additionally, commitment to and experience with gender issues tend to be weakly represented in terms of references for job descriptions, and are seldom rigorously pursued during the recruitment process. In many cases, gender experts and focal points working within various organizations have reported resistance from senior management to field staff, most often from men. Moser and Moser point out that an organizational culture which is male-biased in terms of recruitment,

attitudes, and working conditions will inevitably discriminate against female staff and clients (2005). Commitment at the management level is intrinsically linked to success in overcoming these obstacles. Consequently, the fact that these issues still exist may suggest weak management commitment in some UN entities.

Second, effective and consistent mechanisms for accountability, monitoring, and evaluation are not developed without a clear directive from senior management to do so, and it has been noted that in many organizations, accountability is limited to general guidelines provided in the official policy statement. Similarly, relatively little has been done to identify specific criteria for monitoring and evaluating gender mainstreaming outcomes and impacts. Assessments still tend to focus almost exclusively on quantitative input indicators such as increasing the number of female participants in a certain area, without addressing the impact or quality of that participation (Moser and Moser 2005, 18). Carolyn Hannan, Director of DAW, points out that explicit management support is crucial for underscoring the importance of the policy and overseeing its effective implementation, through measures like ensuring that gender mainstreaming is part of performance appraisal systems (Hannan 2008, 7).

Finally, a lack of commitment at the senior level results in a lack of funding for gender mainstreaming activities. Numerous official UN statements, including the system-wide policy on gender equality, reports of the Secretary-General, and an agreed conclusion adopted at the 52nd session of the CSW have called for the allocation of sufficient resources to gender mainstreaming. However, what constitutes “sufficient” has been left open to interpretation. As a result, many practitioners and experts from outside and within the UN have raised concerns that programming and resources for gender mainstreaming are significantly under-funded. This is noted most often in relation to the UN agencies devoted to women’s issues. For example,

UNIFEM is the only unit with any field presence, yet it is a fund that reports to the UNDP administrator, rather than an independent operational agency. As such, it does not have its own seat at the high-level decision making tables which decide on issues such as funding. In 2002, UNIFEM's budget was \$36 million. In comparison, UNFPA's budget for the same year was \$373 million, and UNICEF's was a staggering \$1.45 billion. An additional issue is that many entities cannot clearly track how much they spend on gender mainstreaming activities and women's empowerment, because these are not explicitly factored into the budget (Rao 2006). This suggests that at the highest levels of decision making within many organizations, gender mainstreaming is a low priority.

Clarity

A frequently cited issue in the implementation of gender mainstreaming is a lack of clarity on the part of UN employees regarding the key principles of gender mainstreaming and how it applies to all areas of their work. This refers in part to the low level of knowledge regarding gender mainstreaming among staff, an issue which is exacerbated by lack of senior level commitment. This often results in the failure to recruit staff on the basis of familiarity with relevant terms, or the failure to fund ongoing capacity-building for employees (Habib 2008). While training and capacity building has been a major focus of the UN in recent years, these are still important issues to address, and they will be discussed in more detail in the final portion of this paper. However, a related issue to reflect on at this point is the less discussed and perhaps more troubling problem of lack of clarity regarding responsibility for gender mainstreaming.

The ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 explicitly state that responsibility for gender mainstreaming is system-wide, resting at the highest levels within all UN funds and agencies, and never written off as the sole responsibility of one unit. However, some evaluations indicate

that in a number of UN entities the burden of implementing gender mainstreaming policies and programs falls disproportionately to gender units or gender focal points. A UN system-wide gender focal point study conducted by IANWGE in 1998 showed that, while all agencies had gender focal points, over 90% were women, and most were junior staff. Half of these employees indicated that they had been nominated by their offices regardless of level of competency, specialization, or professional interest, yet most supervisors admitted that these staff carried a disproportionately heavy workload. A third of the focal points participating in the study noted that they were given no description of their roles and responsibilities, further exacerbating the preexisting lack of clarity (UN Inter-Agency Committee on Gender and Women's Equality 2001).

An additional issue in this category is lack of clarity regarding responsibility for gender mainstreaming at the national level. While responsibility is to be system wide, UN employees and government officials in member states are to have the support of gender units or focal points at all times. The Beijing Platform for Action identified national machineries for women as central to coordinating and promoting gender mainstreaming within national governments. The assumption underlying this statement was that national machineries had been or were in the process of being established *inside* national governments. However, a 1999 DAW survey indicated that this not always the case. Fully one-third of what are considered to be the national machineries of various countries are in reality an NGO or some mixed structure of an NGO and government officials. Furthermore, those national machineries that did occupy a specific place within governments were often marginalized, with low ability to influence policy making (DAW 1999).

These realities are troubling to many gender experts and practitioners who draw parallels between the overburdened and underappreciated focal points of today and the marginalization of women's issues as the sole domain of these individuals and units during the WID movement. Even assuming that this is not the case, and that women's issues enjoy more breadth and depth of support today than in the past, these data still hint at issues to be addressed in the future. In essence, if national machineries and gender units are not adequately funded and optimally placed to participate in the design and implementation of policies and programs, they cannot provide the kind of guidance on gender mainstreaming that was intended in the official UN policy.

Consistency

The final set of commonly cited issues deals with overall consistency of gender mainstreaming among UN entities. The previous section posited that inter-agency meetings and partnerships among various UN entities may have helped the majority of departments and agencies attain some uniformity at the initial levels of implementation, such as adopting the same basic vocabulary and overarching policy structure for gender mainstreaming. However, this consistency begins to dissolve at later stages. Specifically, concerns have been raised regarding low uniformity in the application of the strategy, the techniques used, and the way in which fundamental concepts are understood. For example, in a discussion of gender equality architecture in the UN, Aruna Rao notes that the term gender mainstreaming is sometimes wrongly understood to mean simply including women as well as men, rather than bringing transformational change to gender relations. In the worst cases, this misinterpretation leads to reduced funding or complete dismantling of projects and units focused specifically on women, due to the belief that these are antithetical to the assumed goal of integration (Rao 2006).

A lack of consistency and coherence is evident in other ways as well. A problem that has been cited with increasing frequency is that of weak linkages between intergovernmental policy-making and implementation on the ground, which can result in uneven progress on gender mainstreaming. This problem was highlighted when a UN Development Group (UNDG) Task Team on Gender Equality commissioned a background paper on accountability mechanisms in UNDG agencies. This paper reviewed accountability for programming in support of gender equality in five different UN entities and found that:

“A common understanding of how to apply gender mainstreaming in UN operational activities is needed. This is because if there is no agreement on what constitutes a minimum level of actions to support gender equality, how will it be possible to hold agencies and UN Country Teams accountable for this? Reaching agreement across agencies on what constitutes a minimally acceptable performance to support gender equality, through an agreed set of indicators, would contribute to stronger guidance and accountability” (UN Development Group 2006, 2).

The need for greater consistency has been one of the subjects on which there has been the most debate and activity in recent years. In 2006, the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence submitted a report entitled “Delivering as One,” which posited that the effectiveness of the UN was being undermined by fragmentation. Specifically, issues such as inefficiency, unpredictable funding, policy incoherence, and duplication were cited as problems which detracted from the organization’s mission. The report goes on to assert that:

“A system reconfigured to optimally use its assets and expertise in support of country needs and demands will strengthen the voice and action of the UN in development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment. A repositioned UN – delivering as one – will be much more than the sum of its parts” (UN Security Council 2006, 2).

The One UN pilot initiative which developed from this report includes recommendations for the organization's gender architecture, which could have a substantial impact on gender mainstreaming. As part of efforts to reduce duplication, the Panel's report calls for consolidating several current UN entities focused on gender equality and women's empowerment. Specifically, a new gender entity would consolidate three existing entities under two organizational divisions. OSAGI and DAW would be subsumed under the "normative, analytical and monitoring" division, while UNIFEM's current activities would be incorporated into a "policy advisory and programming" division. The UN Office of Human Resources Management would take over human resources functions which are currently performed by OSAGI. The Executive Director of the consolidated entity would have the rank of Under-Secretary-General, consistent with the heads of other agencies, in an effort to increase the influence and stature of the UN gender entity (Cabrera-Balleza 2008).

The recommendation of a consolidated gender entity has met with a mixed response. At the time this paper was written, a number of options and alternative proposals were slated for further discussion at the 63rd session of the General Assembly, scheduled for March of 2009. While opinions on the issue vary greatly, the debate over a possible composite gender entity has led to some of the most extensive and sustained discussion on the UN gender architecture to date.

PART III: THE WAY FORWARD

The information provided in the previous sections makes plain the fact that gender mainstreaming has evolved from an indistinct concept into a concrete strategy with the potential to move the global community towards achieving gender equality. Through its own self-

analysis, the UN has documented both best practices and areas in need of improvement. At the same time, various women's groups and other individuals and groups within civil society have played an important role in tracking progress and shoring up weaknesses. However, the fact remains that despite this monitoring, strategizing, and planning, in many ways women continue to disproportionately bear the burden of poverty and discrimination. In addition, a number of weaknesses have been identified in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. While the UN is actively working to address some of these issues, others have not yet received adequate attention. In particular, the lack of understanding regarding the meaning and fundamental principles of gender mainstreaming is a problem which must be resolved, but which continues to confound efforts to do so.

This paper argues that further progress on gender mainstreaming will require additional analysis which looks at issues from new angles, to catalyze further progress in areas like coordination and capacity-building, and to assess the root causes of the already identified weaknesses and inconsistencies. In order to outline some areas of focus for this kind of future research, the following section will compare UNDP and UNHCR in terms of similarities and differences in their approaches to gender mainstreaming. Subsequently, certain points will be drawn out for further discussion and evaluation.

The goal of this comparison and analysis is to begin digging deeper into the often vague or generalized criticisms about issues like lack of consistency, by illuminating what these inconsistencies truly are in the policies and approaches of two actual UN funds. It is crucial that future research evaluate the implications of these differences at the level of individual agencies in more detail, in order to determine next steps in implementing the system-wide strategy on gender mainstreaming. Specifically, concerted efforts should be made to assessing the potential

ramifications of these variations, and what they mean for the overall effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. How are different approaches by individual entities affecting the relative success or failure of their activities on the ground? Does the existence of these differences mean a one size fits all approach to achieving gender equality is unrealistic, or can there be flexibility while still maintaining a relatively consistent approach? Do they represent different levels of commitment by some agencies, and if so, what structural changes can be made to cultivate buy-in? These are all questions which demand attention in the future.

It should be noted that due to significant constraints on time and resources, extensive quantitative or qualitative research was outside the scope of this paper. As such, the ideas and suggestions which will be made should be read simply as open reflections on certain realities. The goal here is not to prove or disprove the validity of current practices, but rather to stimulate discussion and generate creative ideas by providing a new lens through which to view gender mainstreaming.

A Comparison of Approaches to Gender Mainstreaming

The following comparison is meant to draw out areas of continuity and difference on gender mainstreaming within the UN. The entities being compared have very different mandates, structures, and organizational cultures. However, they are each bound by UN system-wide goals and principles related to development and human rights. The following sections will focus in greater detail on areas of divergence which have not been discussed consistently in contemporary literature. These differences may represent extremes, and are not necessarily representative of across the board issues for gender mainstreaming in the UN. However, highlighting these areas of divergence opens up the debate on gender mainstreaming to new ideas, and potentially to new progress.

Methodology

The methodology for this analysis is a simple comparison of two UN entities, based on their own publicly available policy documents and reports. The subjects under review are the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). There were three main reasons for choosing these entities. First, they are both UN funds, meaning they work under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to carry out the Organization's mandate for economic and social development. Thus, while they each have a specific area of jurisdiction, they follow the same overall guidelines and have common overarching goals and principles. For example, UNDP's mission statement identifies its focus areas as being poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development (UNDP 2008, 4). In contrast, UNHCR's stated domain is humanitarian assistance and protection for refugees and internally displaced persons (<http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/4565a5742.pdf>, n.d.). However, within their respective mandates, each fund orients its work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and both are guided by the UN system-wide emphasis on respect for human rights.

Second, they are among the largest and most prominent of the UN funds, meaning they have the ability to significantly advance or impede progress on gender mainstreaming. For example, UNDP is arguably one of the most influential UN entities, because it is the largest provider of grants for sustainable human development worldwide, and as such has a strong impact on policy analysis and the investment decisions of aid-recipient programs and countries (Jahan 1995, 15). However, UNHCR exerts significant influence as well, as it is one of the oldest and most well-established UN entities. In addition, due to the changing dynamics of

conflict and human diasporas which are growing in size and complexity, its mandate to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide has expanded exponentially in the past few decades.

Finally, whether by choice or unavoidable necessity, both funds have devoted significant time and resources to addressing women's issues within their respective areas of jurisdiction. UNDP was one of the first entities to establish a specific focal point on women, and the fund started an internal division for WID in 1977, changing this to a GAD program in 1992 to keep pace with the shift in ideology discussed in Part I (Pietilä and Vickers 1994, 52). In the case of UNHCR, its statute dictates that its activities be guided primarily by international refugee law, and it has been argued that this gives it a more rigid framework within which to address gender issues. However, attention to women and girls has increasingly been a topic of debate and significant organizational changes within UNHCR, due to the growing realization that these populations make up the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons. Consequently, UNHCR has developed a large volume of supplementary reports and guidelines for its work on gender issues, in addition to appointing a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women/Gender Equality in 2000, and developing a working group for the evaluation and development of gender equality policies and programs (Kumin 2001).

These two funds will be compared and contrasted in three areas: 1) presence of an official policy on gender equality with gender mainstreaming as the principal approach; 2) understanding of the principles of gender mainstreaming; 3) nature of the mainstreaming strategies developed to meet identified goals and targets. The criteria used to assess these components are adapted from the criteria used by Moser and Moser used to evaluate progress in "Gender Mainstreaming Since Beijing: A Review of Success and Limitations in International Institutions" (2005), and are

also reflective of the guidelines for implementing gender mainstreaming mentioned in Part II. Further explanation will be provided at the beginning of each subsection.

Official Policy on Gender Mainstreaming

Numerous sources suggest that the fundamental prerequisite for ensuring commitment to any given policy outcome is the existence of a written policy statement, endorsed by senior management, and understood by staff. It has been proven that the more explicit the commitment of an organization or UN entity to gender equality, the greater the potential for including gender perspectives in all areas and at all stages (Hannan 2008). According to UN directives, and in keeping with general best practices in organizational strategy, the official policy document on this topic should state the organizations' commitment to gender equality, indicate how the policy on gender equality relates to other important policies and goals, and outline a detailed strategy for how this is to be achieved, complete with concrete goals and indicators with which to monitor progress. The ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 recommend that UN entities emphasize gender mainstreaming in their policies as the principle strategy for achieving gender equality, stating that:

The Council calls upon all of its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies to mainstream a gender perspective in their work, and in this regard:

(a) To adopt, as a first step, an explicit decision on mainstreaming a gender perspective in their work (UN Economic and Social Council 1997).

A comparison of UNDP and UNHCR on the presence of such a formal policy statement reveals differences between the two even at this early stage - UNDP has an explicit policy document that meets these criteria, while UNHCR does not. The official policy for UNDP comes in the form of a document entitled "Empowered and Equal: Gender Equality Strategy

2008-2011.” The Gender Equality Strategy (GES) was prepared in conjunction with UNDP’s Strategic Plan for the same period and is to be read and operationalized with it, so as to link the gender equality policy to the fund’s broader goals. To facilitate this, the GES includes a results framework which describes a range of gender-sensitive outcomes and indicators for each result area of the Strategic Plan. Country Offices are to adopt the GES as well, tailoring it where necessary to local contexts.

UNDP’s gender equality policy also emphasizes gender mainstreaming as the strategy to achieve gender equality. The policy includes specific goals and indicators on gender equality, and outlines how gender perspectives will be incorporated in each of UNDP’s four focus areas. In addition, the GES emphasizes gender mainstreaming, discussing how the strategy emerged in the context of the Beijing conference, and tracing its development through the agreed conclusions 1997/2, the system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and other landmarks in the UN’s history. It goes on to specifically states what UNDP feels are its responsibilities in implementing gender mainstreaming, asserting that:

“The gender mainstreaming task in UNDP is a dual one: to support the empowerment of women to expand their capabilities, opportunities and choices, claim their rights and move into full substantive equality with men; and the capacity development of governments to respond positively to women’s interests and concerns.” (UNDP 2007, 7)

In contrast, UNHCR lacks an official policy statement in the form of a single document outlining key principles and sentiments. In a 2001 report on “Refugee Women and Mainstreaming, a Gender Equality Perspective,” the Executive Committee stated that work was currently underway towards the elaboration of a policy statement on gender mainstreaming. The proposed policy was to complement and upgrade the 1990 policy on refugee women, which to

date had been the framework for UNHCR's gender activities, by including the new directives established at Beijing (UNHCR 2001). However, thus far no such policy document has emerged.

The most overarching statement of UNHCR policy and principles are its "Global Strategic Objectives," which are outlined in its annual *Global Appeal* publication. Several of the strategic objectives include goals related to promoting women's rights and gender equality, and each goal is accompanied by performance targets for achievement, indicating that considerable thought has been devoted to addressing gender disparities. However, these goals have changed somewhat from year to year, and are more a direct response to current situations than overarching policy statements. While they are clearly based on UNHCR's mandate and principles, they do not comprise an explicit policy statement on gender equality, nor do they link these statements to the funds' key principles, organizational culture, or broad strategic framework.

Instead, UNHCR's principles and obligations related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming are elaborated through a number of different documents. For example, while UNHCR's Statute does not specify any particular responsibilities in relation to the protection of refugee women and girls, numerous Conclusions adopted by the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, as well as UNHCR's *Policy on Refugee Women* (1990), *Agenda for Protection* (2002), and the *Guidelines on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence* (2003) provide specific and detailed information on the protection needs of refugee women and refugee children. However, these still have not been incorporated into one policy statement which outlines the evolution of an explicit gender equality policy, its purpose, and its key principles.

References made by UNHCR to gender mainstreaming are similarly dispersed, and no document specifically mentions gender mainstreaming as the strategy for achieving gender equality. The *UNHCR Handbook on the Protection of Women and Girls* does discuss the fact that gender equality is necessary in order to protect women and further human rights, and immediately afterwards mentions the UN system-wide policy on gender mainstreaming. However, no explicit link is made between gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Similarly, the publication *A Practical Guide to Empowerment: UNHCR Good Practices on Gender Equality Mainstreaming* links “gender equality mainstreaming” to the realization of women’s empowerment, but not to gender equality (UNHCR 2001).

Gender Mainstreaming Principles

There is a general consensus that an official policy statement, if adopted, should lay out the core principles of an organization as they relate to gender equality, and link these to internal culture and external programs and strategies. Given that the official mandate for gender mainstreaming in the UN originated primarily from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2, the official policy statements of UN entities should reflect the official UN definitions for gender terminology provided by OSAGI, the entity responsible for overall coordination on gender issues. These official policy statements should also reflect the key principles of these founding directives, including:

- A **rights-based approach** which orients development towards meeting international human rights standards, and which views individual men and women as rights-holders and governments as duty-bearers with an obligation not only to uphold those rights, but to proactively build the capacity of men and women to claim their rights.

- A **people-centered approach** which takes into account the diversity of women and men, acknowledges that factors such as age and race in addition to gender can create barriers to equality, and which seeks to base and evaluate policies and programs on the concrete situation of men and women in different contexts.
- An **agenda-setting/transformational approach** that seeks to fundamentally change the social structures, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors which create and contribute to discrimination, as opposed to merely integrating women into the existing system, an approach sometimes referred to as “add women and stir.”

UNDP and UNHCR are essentially uniform in terms of their acceptance of official UN definitions. Both UNHCR’s *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls* (2008) and UNDP’s GES 2008-2011 recognize the UN policy on gender mainstreaming outlined in Beijing, the ECOSOC definition of the term, and the additional guidelines provided in the system-wide plan of 2006. The only difference in the discussion of these directives is that UNDP is more explicit in citing this as the foundation for its policies, while UNHCR only references these in footnotes to the statement that that “In carrying out our work, we are bound not only by Executive Committee Conclusions but also by resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Security Council that relate to our activities and mandate. Such decisions and resolutions have given UNHCR the responsibility to promote gender equality and work towards the elimination of violence against women and girls of concern as integral parts of our protection mandate” (UNHCR 2008, 23). Both the GES and UNHCR’s *Handbook for the Protection of Women* use the definitions of ‘gender’ and ‘gender equality’ provided by OSAGI (2001).

A comparison of key principles yields more varied results. UNDP states that the GES 2008-2011 is shaped in part by CEDAW as a framework to guide rights-based action for gender equality, as well as the Secretary-General's 1997 UN Programme for Reform, which called on all agencies to integrate human rights into their activities within the framework of their respective mandates (UNDP 2007, 6). It goes on to state that the priorities in the GES 2008-2011 are shaped by the "Human Development Paradigm", a concept developed by UNDP. The term attempts to embody the rights-based approach alluded to in the Beijing Declaration and related guidelines in that it emphasizes that individuals are entitled to certain rights, and that efforts must be made to empower those individuals to understand and be able to claim their rights. It suggests a people-centered approach in its stated focus on individuals rather than states (UNDP 2007, 6).

The Human Development Paradigm is in essence UNDP's articulation of the Human Rights-Based Approach, to which UN entities have become increasingly committed over the past decade. In 2003, an Inter-Agency Workshop led to the negotiation of a Common Understanding of the Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming for the UN system, and was incorporated into the Common Country Assessment/UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) Guidelines. Subsequently, during the second stage of the Secretary-General's reform program, an initiative called Action II was created as a means of strengthening the UN's work in protecting human rights. Because the program focused on strengthening the human rights related capacities of UN country teams (UNCTs), UNDP was central to the roll-out of Action II, serving on the core task force with six other UN entities (UNIFEM 2007).

UNHCR uses somewhat different terminology in discussing its commitment to a rights-based, people-centered approach. Instead of referring to a human rights-based approach, UNHCR endorses what it calls a "rights- and community-based approach." This may be due to

the fact that UNHCR was not part of the core task force charged with leading the implementation of the human rights-based approach in UN Country Teams (UNCTs). Despite the differing title, in some ways this approach seems fairly similar to UNDP's human development paradigm. Like UNDP, UNHCR makes specific reference to the rights-based approach, providing detailed explanations of refugees of every gender and background as rights-holders and the State as a duty-bearer (UNHCR 2008, 16). It also shares the stated goal of empowering affected populations to claim their rights and control their own lives.

However, a closer look reveals interesting variations in the approaches of UNDP and UNHCR regarding the rights-based and people-centered principles. The most visible is that there seems to be a fundamental difference in the way the two funds conceive of the 'people' who are both the subjects of a people-centered approach and the rights-holders in a rights-based approach. For UNDP, 'people' seems to be synonymous with 'women,' with a few recommendations to "address men's specific needs, where doing so will contribute to gender equality" (UNDP 2007, 6). Similarly, the GES frequently mentions women as the group to be empowered (UNDP 2007).

In contrast, UNHCR's conceptualization of 'people' seems more expansive. In its official guidelines on these principles, UNHCR states that "An integral part of a rights- and community-based approach is analyzing the different realities people face because of their age, their gender, and their diversity, which relates to ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation, among other factors" (UNHCR 2008, 19). Furthermore, UNHCR notes that forced displacement is a disempowering experience for all refugees, and suggests empowerment initiatives that involve men, women, boys and girls. In relation to empowerment, it is worth noting that UNDP's discussion of empowerment focused on its utility in promoting gender

equality, with gender equality often described as necessary or at least useful in realizing other development goals (UNDP 2007, 4). In contrast, while UNHCR also recognized the link between gender equality and women's rights in various reports, its discussions of empowerment focused more on changing gender roles at the community level (Baines 2001).

Attempting to assess the extent to which an organization understands and is engaging in an agenda-setting/transformational approach is a difficult undertaking, as it is a continuous, ongoing process for which there are few clear indicators. However, scanning relevant literature for references to this principle at the very least provides some insight into whether the organization is aware that transformation of the mainstream is the goal. Of the two funds, UNHCR references transforming the mainstream more often than UNDP. For example, the recent publication *A Community Based Approach in UNHCR Operations* discusses the need for a transformation of internal behaviors in order to pursue a rights-based approach, stating that "This requires an attitudinal shift in how we work with and for persons of concern" (UNHCR 2008, 16). Most importantly, when discussing gender mainstreaming outside of explaining the official ECOSOC directives, UNHCR defines the term in its own words as "both a strategy and a process for transforming gender relations" (2001, 7).

In contrast, very few references were made to transforming the mainstream in UNDP's literature. In fact, informational resources on UNDP's website assert that "The organization's corporate strategy on gender is designed to *integrate* the promotion of women's empowerment and equality fully in the organization's core business" (<http://www.undp.org/women/mainstream/> n.d.). Given that a clear distinction is made in relevant literature between integration and agenda-setting as opposite approaches, this is an interesting oversight.

Mainstreaming Strategies

The ECOSOC-agreed conclusions 1997/2 and subsequent UN directives outline detailed components of the gender mainstreaming strategy which is to be the main focus of policies on gender equality. In general, these include a twin track strategy of gender mainstreaming with targeted initiatives for women, and within this, certain criteria for effective implementation, such as the identification of baseline indicators, explicit steps, benchmarks, timelines, actions, and specific assignment of responsibilities. In addition, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure management commitment and accountability at all levels, and facilitate the capacity-building necessary for sustainable progress.

At a basic level, each fund meets these main overarching requirements – both UNDP and UNHCR adopt a twin-track approach, their individual strategies reflect their statements on policy and principles, and each has developed tools and indicators for implementation. However, these broad similarities masks a significant difference, namely that UNDP uses the twin-track strategy of gender mainstreaming combined with women’s empowerment initiatives, while UNHCR adopts its own Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) strategy. As mentioned previously, in 2001 UNHCR referred to “gender equality mainstreaming” in a handbook on best practices in that area (UNHCR 2001). However, that term was not used frequently in UNHCR reports and publications; far more references are made to AGDM, a strategy which was launched in 2004 after three independent evaluations on refugee women, refugee children, and the role of community services. Rollout of the AGDM strategy was completed at the end of 2007, and is now being used by over 109 UNHCR country operations. The stated purpose of the AGDM strategy is to:

“Support the meaningful participation of women, girls, boys and men of all ages and backgrounds, using a rights and community-based approach, in the design, implementation,

monitoring, and evaluation of UNHCR policies, programmes, operations, and activities on their behalf” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2008, 1).

The respective mainstreaming strategies of UNDP and UNHCR differ in their core components. UNDP’s gender mainstreaming strategy relies heavily on two management tools. The first is gender focal teams in each office. The fund fully embraces the idea that gender focal points provide vital support to UN employees in meeting their responsibilities for gender mainstreaming, and has done extensive work to strengthen and clarify the role of focal points, to ensure their effectiveness. The GES clearly states that the gender focal point function involves all aspects of an office's work, including areas like budgeting and advocacy, in addition to programmatic concerns. UNDP has also developed comprehensive terms of reference for the focal point function, which can be adapted to individual office circumstances. Some suggestions are appointing both senior and junior, male and female focal points, or rotating the function to ensure that all staff get a chance to serve in that capacity (UN Development Programme 2007, 15).

The second management tool for gender mainstreaming used by UNDP is a gender action plan for each office. The emphasis here is on professional staff capacity development, to build the knowledge of concepts and skills necessary to support national partners in achieving gender equality, and to ensure effective implementation of the GES in country offices. To facilitate this, UNDP has developed Community of Practice and Knowledge Management Frameworks. The Knowledge Management Framework codifies best practices, collaborates with women’s organizations and NGOs to gain new knowledge on gender equality goals, and consolidates internal resources and information on gender mainstreaming to support organizational consistency. The main function of the Community of Practice Framework is to stimulate “out-

of-the-box” thinking regarding UNDP’s work on gender equality, through initiatives like regional peer learning exchanges, electronic networking, and skill building workshops (UN Development Programme 2007).

The main components of the AGDM strategy used by UNHCR are a multifunctional team approach and the use of participatory assessments. Multi-functional teams are similar to UNDP’s gender focal teams, in that they are under the leadership of the head of each country office, and their purpose is to support UNHCR country offices to implement the AGDM strategy. However, they differ somewhat in their composition. Multi-functional teams are to include staff from all areas of UNHCR activity, including management, programmers, protection agents, public information specialists, and others, as well as representatives of government and NGO partners (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2008).

The multi-functional teams are also charged with carrying out participatory assessments, which are the central tool of the AGDM strategy. These primarily involve interviews and informal consultations with persons of concern as soon as possible after displacement, and at regular intervals thereafter. The purpose is to assess their protection risks, concerns, priorities, capacities, and proposed solutions, and to evaluate outcomes in partnership with these populations of concern. A participatory assessment involves ten steps, and UNHCR has published a handbook to guide practitioners through each of these. An overview of these steps, as published in *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*, is available in Appendix 3 (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2006, 17). The findings from participatory assessments with persons of concern are to be analyzed from an AGDM perspective, and form the basis of UNHCR’s protection strategies and programs. They are also meant to help identify areas where targeted actions should be initiated to support and empower groups discriminated

against due to gender, age, or background characteristics (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2008).

Both UNDP and UNHCR have worked to ensure the effective implementation of their respective strategies through the development of concrete indicators and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. UNDP has developed a gender mainstreaming scorecard to measure performance on gender equality, and which tracks outcomes of leadership on gender mainstreaming at the corporate level. Appendix D shows the overview provided by UNDP of the measures included in the scorecard, the process for implementing the scorecard, and an explanation of the scoring system which is used to gauge progress on these indicators (UN Development Group 2008, Section 3). The gender mainstreaming scorecard is in the process of being integrated into the UNDP Balanced Scorecard on overall programmatic activity. The GES itself is monitored alongside the Strategic Plans, and the results of this review are presented at the annual session of UNDP's Executive Board. The Administrator of UNDP established a Gender Steering and Implementation Committee in 2006, which serves as the principle internal oversight mechanism, and is now being replicated at the regional level. The Administrator as Chair of the Committee reports annual on progress in implementing the GES. In addition, Senior Management Compacts have begun to be initiated between the Administrator and Regional Directors, to formally document their responsibilities for promoting gender equality, and their accountability for operational activities within their respective bureaus (UN Development Programme 2007, 10).

UNHCR has placed a particularly strong emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and lesson learning. A Policy Development and Evaluation Service was established in 2006 to ensure the independence of the evaluation function. It conducts systematic evaluations of UNHCR

activities and provides information, analysis, and recommendations for improved planning and implementation. As part of the Executive Office, and because it reports directly to the High Commissioner, the Service has a fairly high profile, ensuring that its recommendations are more effectively utilized (Department for International Development 2007).

Increased accountability has been of particular concern for UNHCR, in response to weaknesses in this area identified through its own self-evaluation. In 2007, the *UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming* was published, outlining a stronger, more detailed framework. It describes clear responsibilities for staff at all levels, and requires that Country Representatives, Assistant High Commissioners, Regional Bureau Directors, and other managerial level positions report on various actions related to implementation of the AGDM strategy. Managers are instructed to work with their staffs to review the extent to which each action has been completed, indicate annual progress on a number of indicators, and write in personal reflections (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2007).

Outlining an Agenda for the Future

This final section is devoted to open-ended reflection on the comparison between UNDP and UNHCR. The questions posed are those which seemed most glaring to the author at the time of writing. There are certainly other questions which could be asked, or different ways of thinking about those presented here. However, the purpose is simply to demonstrate the fact that new ideas can be generated through open brainstorming, and to begin discussion on possible directions for future research.

How much variation in strategy is acceptable?

The previous sections outlined some considerable differences between UNDP's gender mainstreaming strategy and the AGDM strategy utilized by UNHCR. Significant time and resources have been devoted to developing and perfecting each of these strategies, and both have seen significant progress in achieving stated goals. The UN system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women does in fact allow for some flexibility in strategy, insofar as it gives UN entities the rights to add or enhance their own internal accountability mechanisms and to take into account their respective mandates and roles (UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination 2006). However, these are not to circumvent, diminish, or in any way compromise system-wide efforts. As such, future research and analysis should look more closely at the mainstreaming strategies in these and other UN entities, to assess the extent to which they align with system-wide UN goals, and to ascertain whether they present a challenge to policy and programmatic coordination, capacity-building, and other initiatives aimed at increasing the efficiency of the UN.

Some variation may be inevitable, and in fact necessary, in order to accommodate different mandates, modes of operation, and the unique organizational culture of any given UN entity. For example, UNDP focuses on internal training and details the role of gender focal teams as a central component of its gender mainstreaming strategy to a greater extent than UNHCR or many other UN entities. This is likely a reflection of its function as the manager of the Resident Coordinator system, which coordinates operational activities for development within the UN system at the country level. UNDP employees working as Resident Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that programmatic activities are consistent with official UN policy directives, including those on gender mainstreaming, and that country teams have the skills and support necessary to fulfill these mandates. As such, capacity-building for staff, and detailing

the important roles and responsibilities of gender focal teams as they are emphasized in UN directives on gender mainstreaming, is a central to UNDP's work.

Other differences are more difficult to reconcile as minor and acceptable variations stemming from unique organizational structures. One example is UNHCR's lack of an official written policy statement on gender equality. On one hand, UNHCR differs somewhat from many other UN entities in that its founding mandate and statute are tied to and guided by international law, specifically from the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. These founding directives do not include gender as a category for special protection in the official definition of a refugee. As such, UNHCR has had to carve out special protections for women in later documents and official statements. However, while this may explain why there are so many dispersed statements from UNHCR regarding women's rights and gender equality, it may not be an adequate rationale for the lack of a consolidated policy statement today, now that a legal framework for refugee women has been delineated. The lack of one official policy statement makes it difficult to align gender mainstreaming initiatives with an organization's broader goals and principles, and can slow efforts to monitor progress.

The question of the extent to which the UN should permit system-wide policies to be bent and molded to accommodate differences in organizational structure and culture is a difficult one. Too much flexibility risks limiting the effectiveness of UN development work as a result of wasted resources, duplicated efforts, and general confusion. At the same time, a mainstreaming strategy which is too rigid could impair the ability of individual entities to engage in substantive work within their area of jurisdiction. Further analysis is needed to identify current variations in strategy between other UN entities, and to assess whether any of these represent problematic

differences in the way any given entity understands the key principles of gender mainstreaming, or is committed to the general goals of the strategy.

Is The Scope of Gender Mainstreaming Too Narrow?

One of the most readily apparent and far-reaching differences between the mainstreaming strategies of UNDP and UNHCR is the specific inclusion of age and diversity by UNHCR as additional perspectives with which to analyze policies and programs. UNHCR also focuses on including men to a far greater extent than UNDP, causing the two funds to identify different goals and perceive a different range of programmatic options.

The AGDM strategy is actually in line with the principles outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action calling for recognition of the fact that women and girls face discrimination based on factors other than gender, including age, ethnicity, disability, and other factors related to diversity of background. UNDP mentions including men very briefly in its GES, and alludes to populations that are vulnerable to discrimination based on factors other than gender in some of its documents, most frequently in discussions of particular protection risks for children. However, as was discussed previously in this paper, UNDP's mainstreaming efforts in the past seem to have been focused on empowering women.

It is important to consider the ramifications of this emphasis on women as a homogenous category separate from other groups. This is precisely the approach to securing equal rights for women used by the WID movement, and which was eventually discredited and ostensibly replaced by the gender relations focus of the GAD approach. Without focusing on both men and women, and the relationships between them, it is impossible to enable the transformation of social structures and power relations that gender mainstreaming aims to achieve. In addition, a growing body of research suggests that including men and boys is crucial to the long term

viability of mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality. For example, Oxfam has published a study which documents experiences from five interventions in the field demonstrating that men are central to gender mainstreaming initiatives, not only because they tend to be privileged rights holders or perpetrators of violence, but because they can and do play a vital role in promoting gender equality (Oxfam 2004).

There is some evidence that the UN has already begun to acknowledge and promote the role of men in gender mainstreaming efforts. For example, at the Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Rio de Janeiro this year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon underscored the fact that men and boys must play their part in ending violence against women. In addition, UNDP's 2008-2011 gender mainstreaming strategy for its communities program includes a section on building partnerships with men and boys (2007, section 4.3.3). However, the vast majority of the plan emphasizes empowering women, without mentioning a role for men within this process. As such, future research should investigate the extent to which other UN entities include men in mainstreaming initiatives, and the degree to which other aspects of diversity are included in analyses aimed at identifying and addressing discrimination. If an exclusive focus on women turns out to be a pervasive issue throughout the UN system, efforts should be made to remedy this through revised training and capacity building, and the restructuring of programs and work plans.

How do Inter-Agency Relations Impact on Gender Mainstreaming?

A notable but as yet unsubstantiated trend which emerged from the research is variation in the degree to which any given agency or department partners with other UN entities on various projects. Regarding to the funds discussed in this paper, UNDP seems to collaborate and engage in joint ventures with other UN entities to a greater extent than does UNHCR. This may

not in fact be the case, as the evidence for the existence of such a trend comes only from an informal tally of references to joint initiatives made in documents and publications of each fund. However, because this discussion is intended to open the door for new ideas, it is worth some speculation here.

In the documents reviewed for this paper, it seems that through the years UNDP has frequently partnered with UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme (WFP) on various issues on which their jurisdictions overlap. This history of collaboration has culminated in the formation of the UN Development Group, which these entities lead as the members of the Executive Committee. UNHCR is a member of the UN Development Group, but is not part of this Executive Committee. Overall, UNHCR mentions partnering with other agencies less frequently, at least in the sources that formed the basis for this research. Several of UNHCR's more recent publications do include a stated intention to increase collaboration with other UN entities on areas where their mandates meet (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2006). However, while this may indicate that more collaboration is taking place now, or will in the future, it also suggests that this has been an area in need of improvement.

This potential issue of varying degrees of collaboration raises some interesting questions. Why would UNDP collaborate more readily than UNHCR? It may be that this is merely an extension of UNDP's role as manager of the resident coordinator system, which involves all UN entities working on a country team. However, other factors may be involved as well. For example, in recent years several UN directives aimed at increasing coordination have cited competition for funding due to overlapping mandates as an issue to be addressed (UN Secretariat 2006). If such competition is causing some UN entities to isolate themselves and withdraw from opportunities to share information on their work, this could have serious impacts on the success

of gender mainstreaming. Even if competition between UN entities is not leading to reduced efforts at collaboration, future research should investigate the extent to which information sharing and coordination is occurring within each UN entity, as this collaboration is directly correlated to a streamlined, effective system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has not been to provide concrete evidence for the success or failure of gender mainstreaming. Rather, it takes as a given that gender equality can be achieved by drawing on the principles and resources of the current gender mainstreaming strategy.

In keeping with this belief, the various sections of this paper have attempted to portray gender mainstreaming as a strategy which is grounded in time-tested, universally accepted concepts related to human rights. The idea that women's rights are human rights, the distinction between practical and strategic gender needs, and the elaboration of a transformative approach to gender relations are part and parcel of the gender mainstreaming strategy which is currently being used by the UN. The strategy has also successfully adapted to new pressures and changes at the national and international level. Despite the rapid growth of the UN and expansion of its mandate, concerted efforts have been made to maintain coherence in gender mainstreaming, and to present a unified front in working towards gender equality. As a result, gender mainstreaming has successfully been introduced into new and often unfamiliar areas of work, improving the chances that policies and programs will be gender-sensitive, and consequently more effective.

In the final section of this paper, it was suggested that fresh ideas may be needed in order to overcome lingering problems in implementing gender mainstreaming. The comparison of UNDP and UNHCR was an effort to stimulate creative thinking on how best to proceed on

gender mainstreaming. A crucial but often forgotten fact is that gender mainstreaming is a process, not an end goal. As such, discussion of its “failure” is somewhat misguided. As a process, gender mainstreaming is dynamic, and can evolve and adapt to keep pace with new developments. More importantly, it can and has been shaped through the agency of individuals and groups who are genuinely committed to the goal of achieving gender equality.

Appendix A

Handout: Gender Analysis

Gender analysis refers to a study of the different conditions that women and men face, and the differential effects that policies and programs may have on them because of their different situations. Gender analysis tells us who has access to resources and to decision-making power and who is likely to lose or benefit from a particular policy or programme.

Gender analysis involves both quantitative and qualitative research into the gender relations, the social, economic, political status of women and men, as well as into the differential impact of policies and projects on each sex. Quantitative research includes the collection, compilation and processing of sex-disaggregated data and indicators, while qualitative research involves the study of the broader cultural and historical trends that affect gender relations. Sex-disaggregated statistics and qualitative analysis are complementary to each other in understanding the gender situation in a given setting or sector.

Since women are not a homogeneous group, but, they reflect the diversity of the entire population, the data should further be disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, class and disability in order to understand not only how women have life experiences different than those of men but also how different women have different life experiences and needs. The main principle of gender analysis is to acknowledge that nothing is gender-neutral. On the basis of this main guiding idea, the steps to carry out a gender analysis for policy formulation are the following:

- Identify your constraints and knowledge gaps in your specific area of work.
- Identify existing contextual and sector analysis relevant to your analysis.
- Formulate questions/hypotheses about the human impact of policies or research in your specific area of work.
- Consider the following questions:
 - **What is the likely or actual impact of the proposed project on women and men?**
 - **Will the benefits likely to result from this policy affect women and men in the same way?**
- Identify the gender issues related to the specific area of work.
- Identify the need for disaggregated data.
- Identify the related influencing factors related to your policy development.
- Identify the people with whom you can consult and cooperate, and/or who might assist you in the analytical process (within or outside your organisation).

Gender analysis can also be used to reconsider and assess the existing statistics on the situation of women and men so as to see whether the data they contain is split up by sex, as well as to analyze the assumptions and criteria concerning the gathering of this data.

Appendix B

Suggested format for documenting good practice examples

A format for documenting good practice examples has been discussed.

The good practice example (2 pages only) should follow the format below.

1. *Background* on the overall intervention in which the good practice process/ activity takes place.
2. *The reason changes in relation to gender equality were required* - related to achievement of social justice/human rights and/or effective achievement of the goals of the programme.
3. The *objective* of the process / activity being recorded as good practice.
4. The *strategy* adopted to achieve this objective.
5. The *outcome* - specific changes as a result of the process /activity, and how these relate to the objectives set.
6. The *factors contributing to / hindering the success* of the process / activity.
7. Any ways in which the good practice activity *could have been improved*.
8. Plans to *follow-up* the good practice activity and the potential / constraints in relation to moving forward.
9. Any other lessons learned from the process.
10. The possibility for replication or *spin-off effects*.

If relevant, the following information could also be provided: *Further documentation on the example* (if anything exists) and *contacts for further information*.

Appendix C

Steps for conducting participatory Assessment

Overview

As outlined below, this Tool is composed of ten steps to assist the multifunctional team in preparing, conducting and following up on a participatory assessment in preparation for the participatory planning workshop with persons of concern, implementing partners and other key actors.

Step 1: Reviewing existing information

Step 2: Mapping Diversity

Step 3: Methods of enquiry

Step 4: Selecting themes

Step 5: Facilitating discussions

Step 6: Systematizing the information gathered

Step 7: Follow up actions

Step 8: Comprehensive analysis and prioritization

Step 9: Recording meetings

Step 10: Participatory planning workshop

Appendix D

UNDP Gender mainstreaming score card

UNDP has opted for mainstreaming gender as its main strategy to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. An effective gender mainstreaming requires:

- Explicit gender policies and implementation frameworks
- Capacities for systematic gender analysis in planning and programming
- Tracking and accountability system with specific performance indicators and measures of progress.

The challenge is to show, with concrete evidence that, by opting for a gender mainstreaming strategy, UNDP has effectively moved marginalized women's empowerment programmes to the center of its core business.

The Gender Mainstreaming Score Card is intended to summarize organizational performance in gender mainstreaming. It builds on programme performance indicators contained in the MYFF gender driver and it complements the gender balance score card managed by the Office of Human Resources.

Scores ranging between High, Medium and Low will be assigned to each of the following 12 Measures:

POLICY COMMITMENT

- 1. Corporate Gender policy**
- 2. Bureau level gender policy**

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

- 3. Guidelines on gender mainstreaming**
- 4. Capacities: gender expertise in programming**
- 5. Resources allocated to gender equality/women's empowerment: specific and mainstream resources**

RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT

- 6. Effective planning measures: gender analysis**
- 7. Specific reporting: indicators in MYFF gender driver**
- 8. Criteria for funding allocation: gender impact**
- 9. Tracking programme performance: Atlas/MYFF**

ACCOUNTABILITY

- 10. Gender responsiveness in management performance**
- 11. Transparent monitoring mechanism across units**
- 12. Gender on the agenda of senior management meetings**

Process for implementation

Typically, implementation of the Scorecard would proceed as follows:

- Step 1: The **Resident Coordinator** initiates the Scorecard process.
- Step 2: The **UNCT/Gender Theme Group** discusses the Scorecard and process of implementation. Technical support is available to the UNCT/gender theme group/national consultant for implementing the Scorecard, including a powerpoint presentation, and phone and email support, via tonybeck@shaw.ca.
- Step 3: A **national consultant** is identified and contracted by the UNCT (through the RC's budget) for 10 days. A generic terms of reference for a national consultant, including details of time allocation, are provided as Annex 3. These terms of reference will need to be adapted at the country level.
- Step 4: The **national consultant** reads through the background material, refines the generic questionnaire included as Annex 4, and sets up and carries out interviews. The UNCT should provide a letter of introduction to counterparts explaining why an interview is being requested.
- Step 5: The **national consultant** provides a draft of the completed Scorecard and accompanying narrative report to the RC; and makes a verbal presentation to the RC/UNCT. During this meeting a follow-up tracking matrix should also be completed – see Section 3.7. A generic outline for a narrative report is included as Annex 5. The UNCT led by the RC will review this report and send comments within two weeks. The national consultant should take these responses into account when completing the report.
- Step 6: The final Scorecard, narrative report and follow-up Table should be sent to the RC, who will forward this to the DGO with his or her comments.
- Step 7: A debrief through email, including a questionnaire survey for the UNCT/gender theme group, and national consultant.

The following Table explains the Scorecard columns.

Dimensions	Definition	Rating
<p>Dimensions refer to the overarching area which needs to be assessed.</p> <p>This column also includes the source of the indicator, that is the institutional mandate from which the indicator was</p>	<p>This provides you with the indicators against which you will assess the UNCT. The indicators have been defined as precisely as possible to help you decide which to choose.</p>	<p>Include one of the following ratings, based on the definition of indicators in the previous column. A numerical score should be given, as below.</p> <p>5 = exceeds minimum standards 4 = meets minimum standards 3 = Needs improvement 2 = Inadequate 1 = Missing 0 = not applicable</p>

developed.		Include reviewer comments as to why a particular rating was made, and the evidence base such as interviews and documents reviewed.
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3.4 How to rate the dimensions

Before starting on the exercise of completing the Scorecard, read through the different indicators to ensure that all are clear. As in all rating systems, there will likely be some uncertainty at times, in particular between ‘meets minimum standard’ and ‘needs improvement’. You will need to use your best judgment.

- **Exceeds minimum standard:** This rating should be used when UNCTs have gone beyond the minimum standards, in other words where excellent work on gender mainstreaming is taking place.
- **Meets minimum standard:** This is the minimum that a UNCT is expected to achieve on gender mainstreaming, following UN institutional mandates included in the first column of the Scorecard.
- **Needs improvement:** This rating applies to a situation where the UNCT is close to meeting the minimum standard, and is likely to reach this standard over the period of a year or two, if remedial action is taken.
- **Inadequate:** This rating is for dimensions that fall well below the adequate standard and where significant improvement is required.
- **Missing:** This rating should be applied where the dimension is not included, for example if no sex-disaggregated data is included or there have been no consultations with women’s NGOs and networks.
- **Not applicable:** This rating should be applied when the dimension is not relevant, for example where there is no Gender Theme Group, or Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper or its equivalent.

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