

GUIDANCE NOTE

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING



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Produced by the UN System Coordination Division of UN Women
Design: Melanie Doherty Design
Print: Colorcraft of Virginia
Manufactured in the United States of America

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UN Women

New York, November 2014

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FOREWORD

Sixteen years ago, in 1997, the United Nations adopted the first resolution on gender mainstreaming to guide the implementation of global commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In doing so, UN Member States agreed that specific concerns and experiences related to gender equality and women's empowerment need to be incorporated into all policies and programmes, in all sectors, so that women and men benefit equally from development, and inequalities are not perpetuated.

Over the years, there has been rising awareness and a substantial increase in commitments to gender mainstreaming in the major areas of work of development practitioners, including the UN system. There is now greater recognition of the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to sustainable development, and both national governments and the international community increasingly institutionalize gender mainstreaming. Yet despite these gains, evaluations and studies have found that gender mainstreaming has not been effective in all aspects of policy and programming, or in all sectors. Misleading and false dichotomies between targeted programme interventions and those incorporating gender perspectives across different sector policies and programmes persist. There is also a continuing lack of comparable data for tracking allocations and expenditures of resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women. A lack of accountability delays progress in advancing gender equality.

Today we are at a pivotal juncture. Gender mainstreaming is no longer optional. Priority should be given to its implementation as global discussions take place on accelerating progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 20-year legacy of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and the post-2015 development agenda and future sustainable development goals.

Through its 2010 founding resolution on system-wide coherence,¹ the UN General Assembly mandated UN Women to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment, and to support gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. With recent further impetus from General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decisions,² the United Nations has been challenged to better support Member States in strengthening the implementation of commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

It is therefore timely that UN Women provides updated guidance on gender mainstreaming to help bridge gaps between global norms and actual implementation in country policy-making and programme planning processes.

This Guidance Note addresses major changes in global norms and aid modalities within the current development context; provides general principles for implementing gender mainstreaming at the country level; describes the substantive and technical programming aspects of gender mainstreaming at the country level drawing on good practices; and examines changes related to more gender-responsive organizations

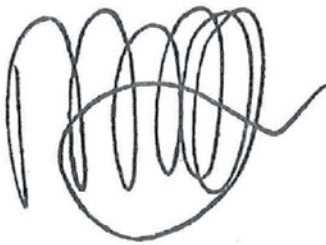
¹ A/RES/64/289.

² For instance, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review or [A/RES/67/226](#), and [E/2012/24](#).

and the required transformation of government systems such as those for national statistics. It provides broad conclusions on the relevance of gender mainstreaming in global policy debates related to the 20-year reviews of global commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), as well as the post-2015 development agenda.

I am pleased to note that a wide range of gender experts from various organizations, including members from the UN Inter-Agency Network of Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the UN Development Group (UNDG), have contributed substantive inputs and practical insights.

I am convinced that this Guidance Note will make a significant contribution to more effective and evidence-based gender mainstreaming. I encourage you to apply its recommendations and findings, and disseminate it widely to advance collective efforts towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director of UN Women

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UN Women through the UN System Coordination Division produced this publication. Authors include Sylvie I. Cohen, Senior Adviser on Gender Mainstreaming; Annalise Moser, Gender Consultant; Sharon Taylor, Inter-Agency Coordination Specialist; and Patricia Cortes, Programme Specialist.

International experts from multiple development organizations, sectors and themes, including UN Women staff, and members of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the Task Force on Gender Equality of the UN Development Group (UNDG), provided state-of-the-art inputs on substantive, technical and organizational advances in gender mainstreaming practice. These were discussed during an international Expert Group Meeting convened by UN Women ("[Approaches to Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming: Being Strategic and Achieving Results in an Evolving Development Context](#)") in May 2013; an online discussion with practitioners prior to the meeting; and throughout the drafting process of this Guidance Note. UN Women extends its heartfelt thanks to each contributor.

Special thanks are due to Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women and Moez Doraid, Director of the UN System Coordination Division of UN Women, for their leadership, review and support of the production of the Note.

The Note has been produced as part of the implementation of intergovernmental resolutions and decisions, including by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

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