



PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

GENDER THEME GROUP FOR THE UN SYSTEM IN SIERRA LEONE

Background

The United Nations commitment to gender equality can be traced to its Charter, and numerous subsequent resolutions of its different organs and specialized agencies. Different agencies have committed themselves to mainstreaming gender in their programmes and structures. Gender is a crosscutting issue in the UN Reform process, and accordingly the UNCT in Sierra Leone is resolved to mainstream gender in the CCA/UNDAF process and documents. Gender is a crosscutting and central concern for the UNDAF objectives, and in all the priority thematic areas of UNDAF. However, the inter-agency assessment of CCA/UNDAF and PRSP processes and documents in West and Central African regions noted significant weaknesses in this regard, and recommended strengthened leadership and coordination among UN agencies. A gender-responsive implementation of UNDAF implies a continued need for the country team to develop and tap into expertise and technical support of a dedicated gender team. A first step has been made by individual agencies that have a designated gender officer or gender focal point.

The proposed Theme Group will be a forum for further developing capacities, providing technical support to agencies, the Resident Coordinator, single issue theme groups, and the various coordination groups of the UN System in Sierra Leone. The Theme Group will provide leadership towards systematically and effectively addressing gender perspectives in the context of the UN's assistance to Sierra Leone, particularly within the context of UNDAF and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It will be an instrument for dialogue and the development of common strategies, programmes and action plans in appropriate circumstances. The Theme Group will be a forum for the UN system to interact with other development actors, including donor agencies, government and NGOs, committed to gender responsiveness in development practice.

Objectives

The objective of the Gender Theme Group is to promote and support the mainstreaming of gender as a crosscutting issue in UN System programmes

and activities, and to promote a deeper understanding and commitment to gender-responsive development programming and implementation in Sierra Leone. The Theme Group aims to develop a common and coherent UN Agency approach to gender mainstreaming in the implementation of UNDAF and support to Sierra Leone.

Specific terms of reference

The Gender Theme Group will:

1. Identify and promote common ways for the UN agencies to mainstream gender, as well as other strategies for addressing gender-based inequalities and inequities, within the UNDAF priority thematic areas;
2. Develop gender-responsive frameworks and tools, including progress indicators and monitoring and evaluation guidelines, for tracking and measuring impacts of programmes;
3. Support the identification, development and dissemination of tools for the collection of gender and sex disaggregated data for and from the work of UN Agencies and other interested parties.
4. Collect, document and disseminate best practices for addressing gender concerns in the thematic areas of UNDAF, and in development cooperation.
5. Collect, document and disseminate best practices and share gender resources with UN Agencies, Government Ministries and civil society.
6. Promote cooperation and coordination between UN Agencies, donor agencies and humanitarian organisations to support and build capacity of the Department of Gender in the Ministry of Social Welfare, gender and Children's Affairs, Line Ministries and civil society in the area of gender.
7. Identify opportunities for advocacy, and provide leadership for gender equality and equity, by the UN System in Sierra Leone as outlined in international legal instruments.
8. Undertake any other responsibilities/tasks at the request of the RC/UNCT.