



**Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

# **GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

**Geneva, Switzerland  
September 2011**

## TITLE

Gender Equality Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

1.1. OHCHR Gender Equality Policy provides internal guidance on how the Office will ensure that a gender perspective and integration of women's human rights are reflected throughout policy formulation, programme development and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation.

1.2. To this end, the Gender Equality Policy is informed by the human rights based approach and the gender integration policy of the United Nations.

### 2. RATIONALE

2.1. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is mandated to contribute to the realization of all human rights for all people. Accordingly, non-discrimination on the basis of sex is a fundamental principle of human rights law. In addition, OHCHR is expected to implement the gender integration policy of the United Nations.

2.2. The present Gender Equality Policy has been developed in response to the above mentioned mandates, lessons learnt in the past ten years and results of the internal evaluation on gender mainstreaming conducted by OHCHR in 2010. In general, it aims to create an environment and shape a culture conducive to promoting women's human rights and to advancing gender equality.

2.3. Within OHCHR, the need to integrate gender aspects into the overall human rights approach of the Office was officially recognized in 2000 with the adoption of the first OHCHR Gender Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women. This was later followed by an OHCHR Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in 2002, which aimed to facilitate further progress in the integration of gender perspectives into OHCHR activities. Both documents were developed prior to

## Policy on Gender Equality

### Scope

High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, ASG/New York Office, Directors, Chiefs of Branch, Heads of Field Presences, Heads of Human Rights Components of Peace Missions, Human Rights Advisers and Chiefs of Sections, all Staff members at Headquarters and Field level

### Entry into force

September 2011

  
Signature of HC and date of signature

### Review date

Review foreseen every four year at the initiative of the Chief, Women's Human Rights and Gender Section

### References, sources and link

- OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women (2000)
- OHCHR Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2002)
- Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)
- Evaluation of OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming (2010)
- ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2010)

### Annexes

- Glossary
- References

### History

The present Gender Equality Policy replaces OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women (2000)

the articulation of the global strategies, outlined in OHCHR's Strategic Management Plan, for the achievement of its mandate, which limited their applicability. Since 2005, women's rights and gender integration have increasingly been recognized and accepted within OHCHR as a core principle, which should consistently and systematically inform all areas of the Office's human rights work. The capacity to translate this core principle into operational activities was created in 2007 within the new special unit on Women's Human Rights and Gender.

2.4. The evaluation of OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming (2010) confirmed, inter alia, that a revision of the existing gender policy statement was of importance to insure a more systematic approach in this regard. The new Gender Equality Policy takes into account the current strategic thinking and is expected to provide clear policy guidance for ensuring the proactive and constant integration of gender equality in all aspects of OHCHR's work.

### **3. SCOPE**

3.1. The Gender Equality Policy of OHCHR is largely an internal guidance document, outlining a joint vision, strategic priorities and processes for integrating gender throughout the Office. This policy applies to all OHCHR staff members at Headquarters and in the field, and is lead by the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General in New York, Directors, Chiefs of Branch, Heads of Field Presences - including Heads of Human Rights Components of Peace Missions - and Chiefs of Sections.

3.2. The Policy gives broad strategic orientations for implementation, including institutionalizing gender equality in OHCHR organizational culture, and advancing gender equality in all areas of OHCHR mandate (see Section 6). It will be complemented by a detailed strategy as well as a set of tools on gender integration (currently under development).

### **4. POLICY**

#### Framework and vision

4.1. The Gender Equality Policy is based on the international human rights framework including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It reflects the application by the Office of international human rights standards, norms and principles which include gender equality and non-discrimination.

4.2. Gender integration (or mainstreaming)<sup>1</sup> is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies

---

<sup>1</sup> A 2008 evaluation of OHCHR's performance in mainstreaming human rights within the UN noted that staff avoided using the term "mainstreaming" due to lack of clarity about its meaning. Throughout this Policy the term "gender integration" is used rather than "gender mainstreaming" unless there is an explicit reference to an existing document using the word "mainstreaming".

or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is 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; and this in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender integration goes hand in hand with the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the elimination of discrimination against women. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality<sup>2</sup> (see more on gender integration in Glossary, annex 1).

4.3. OHCHR's areas of expertise such as Human rights treaties monitoring – particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) provide an important entry point to promote gender equality and women's rights, in particular at country level. Human rights treaty bodies and special procedures can make a contribution to further efforts towards integrating a gender perspective into the understanding of human rights norms through their assessment of compliance with treaty obligations by States parties. Moreover, implementing the Gender Equality Policy will impact the work of OHCHR at large not only in carrying out applied research on critical human rights issues affecting women in particular but also on the ground, integrating a gender perspective while mainstreaming human rights into the work of the United Nations Country Teams and helping strengthen national institutions and civil society organizations striving for better gender equality.

4.4. The vision is that all OHCHR Divisions, the New York Office and Field Presences with the support of Women's Human Rights and Gender Section (WRGS) develop their own approach to integrate a gender perspective in their work and apply gender equality principles in working with external partners. In addition, it is expected that all staff members will commit to acquire basic knowledge in their respective areas of work. Finally, it is expected that Management Plans, work and cost plans, including budgets, policies, programmes, activities and documents at all levels are developed in a gender-responsive fashion.

### Guiding Principles

4.5. Gender integration has been established as the global strategy of the United Nations for promoting gender equality, which refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys (see more on gender equality in the Glossary Annex I). The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) reaffirmed that women's rights were human rights within the international human rights framework. In implementing human rights work, OHCHR must comply with human rights guiding principles which should also inform its gender integration agenda. Gender integration has been explicitly called for in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as in several General Assembly, ECOSOC and Security Council resolutions<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions as contained in resolution 1997/2

<sup>3</sup> ECOSOC resolution 1997/2 on Gender Mainstreaming (1997) and General Assembly resolution A/RES/S-23/2 on mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (1997), followed by ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2010). Security resolutions

(a) Universality

4.6. All people everywhere, women and men, are entitled to all human rights because of the immutable character of rights. However, people in many countries continue to be victims of unequal access and treatment in all spheres of life. Women are one group whose very entitlement to human rights is often challenged. For example, in some States, a female victim of rape may be accused of adultery while the perpetrator is not brought before the courts. Another example is the application of the right to property which in some instances is denied to women.

4.7. Mandated by member States to promote the universal respect for, observance and effective enjoyment of all human rights by all, OHCHR focuses attention on those who are at risk and vulnerable. OHCHR aims to ensure that States take all necessary steps to enable every person to enjoy their human rights. These steps include the removal of obstacles to the equal enjoyment of such rights, the adjustment of domestic legislation, the adoption of measures of protection, but also positive measures in all areas so as to achieve the effective and equal empowerment of women. By applying the principle of universality in gender integration and in the promotion of women's rights, OHCHR strives to ensure that cultures and their diversity, religious values and traditional practices do not negatively impact women.

(b) Indivisibility, Interdependence and Interrelatedness

4.8. The spectrum of international human rights instruments covers civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. These human rights are intertwined and as such, cannot be subjected to selectivity. The deprivation of women or men of the right to food and nutrition for example will inevitably impact the enjoyment of the right to health and may threaten the right to life. The fulfillment of each human right contributes to the realization of human dignity.

4.9. In the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality, OHCHR seeks to address the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights by ensuring that programmes, policies and activities are mindful of this principle for men and women. Economic, social and cultural rights are now widely recognized at equal status with civil and political rights in attending to the rights of groups subjected to discrimination and disadvantages. However, some of the cultural, economic and social rights related to gender issues such as right to health and education may take more time to realize than some of the civil and political rights, as they are strongly ingrained in societies' structure.

(c) Participation and inclusion

4.10. Both women and men have the right to access information and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, well-being and enjoyment of other

---

1325, 1820, 1880, 1888, 1889 and 1960 related to women, peace and security.

human rights. Under international human rights law, States have the obligation to ensure free and meaningful participation in political life and the economy of both women and men from all age groups, belonging and status. The political and socio-economic empowerment of women is a crucial area to be supported, including through the promotion of equality of participation in peace processes, fostering women's contribution to democracy and to the economy<sup>4</sup>.

4.11. Applying this principle to its own work and gender mainstreaming, underlying consultative processes leading to OHCHR policies, programming and activities should be structured so as to ensure the participation of both women and men. This would be reflected in all areas of the Office work: from gender-responsive policy and programming, ensuring gender balance with respect to sources for monitoring and fact-finding, participants in training activities, seminars and workshops, to consultations informing strategic thinking of the Office. It is not enough to programme FOR women, one has to programme WITH women.

#### (d) Equality and Non-discrimination

4.12. Equality between women and men refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Law should recognize such equality and should be applied equally to men and women. Moreover, the principle of non-discrimination is the corollary of the principle of equality as inequality is understood in human rights framework as the product of discrimination. Under CEDAW, discrimination includes not only direct discrimination, which occurs when a difference in treatment relies directly and explicitly on distinctions based exclusively on sex and characteristics of men or of women (e.g. inheritance law based on patriarchal transmission) but indirect discrimination, when a law, policy or programme has the effect of creating or perpetuating inequality between men and women (e.g. law on working hours).

4.13. Applying equality and non-discrimination in its work, OHCHR will make sure women and men benefit equally from its policies, programmes and activities and that inequality is not perpetuated. It will accompany States in taking positive measures to ensure the realization of women's human rights on the basis of equality with men. It will also support gender responsive frameworks tackling social and cultural patterns in society that inhibit the realization of women's human rights. It will moreover bring particular attention to multiple discrimination affecting individuals who are rendered more vulnerable by different discriminatory practices based on gender, ethnicity, race, beliefs, or any other grounds (see more on Multiple Discrimination in 5.7 and Annex 1)

## **5. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS**

5.1. To be effectively implemented, the Gender Equality Policy requires that gender equality be institutionalized in OHCHR organizational culture, while it is tackled as a cross-cutting issue in all fields of OHCHR mandate. These broad strategic orientations and their practical implications will be further detailed in a strategic framework for operationalizing the Office's commitment to gender equality

---

<sup>4</sup> CEDAW and the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming: a UNIFEM guide (2007)

(forthcoming).

(a) Institutionalizing gender equality in OHCHR organizational culture

5.2. *Gender equality in human and financial resource management.* Changing the institutional culture and structure will be crucial in moving beyond commitment to gender equality often associated with particular individuals, to an Office-wide engagement on the basis of shared values of diversity. As part of the UN wide commitment to gender equality<sup>5</sup>, OHCHR supports equal career opportunities for all staff and appropriate working arrangements to balance work and family life. It also encourages the hiring of women for posts at equal qualification and aims at progressively increasing the representation of women at decision-making levels. Furthermore, OHCHR staff individually and collectively has a responsibility to promote women's human rights and integrate a gender perspective into all aspects of the Office's work at all levels. In this regard, incoming staff may be evaluated during the interview process on their knowledge of gender concepts and methodologies and international standards on women's rights and their sensitivity to gender inequality and women's human rights. Institutional incentives will be created to strengthen the accountability of managers for gender integration work, and assimilating gender integration objectives into work plans and staff review, ensuring that these are reviewed on a regular basis (see more in 7, Monitoring and compliance).

5.3. *Capacity development.* Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender analysis is essential to the successful mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Staff members who are responsible for programme design and implementation, as well as those responsible for technical advisory services, will be trained in order to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in their work. Training of staff on gender integration is foreseen by the Office, first for Gender Facilitators and programme management units, and to be expanded to all staff as part of their mandatory training package. Tools such as checklists and theme-specific guidance notes will be made available to facilitate the gender integration work of every staff member. Accordingly, staff performance assessment will cover gender integration

5.4. *Knowledge and information management.* The increased work of the Office in gender mainstreaming in general and women's human rights in particular has generated many good practices in ensuring gender-sensitive programming and implementation. This has, however, often remained ad hoc, unable to affect change. Systematically collecting and sharing good practices is essential for developing lessons learned. All organizational entities, including Field Presences are encouraged to make an assessment of gender integration efforts of their offices when reporting, and regularly undertake lessons learning exercises to improve the way they are integrating a gender perspective in their programmes.

(b) Advancing gender equality in all field of OHCHR mandate

---

<sup>5</sup> Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)

5.5. *Placing women's rights and gender equality as one of the Office's priorities at the highest level.* There is a perceived commitment to gender equality at the highest levels of OHCHR as reflected, for example, in the public statements of the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner. The fight against sex and gender-based discrimination is also an integral part of both the High Commissioner's Compact and the Management Plan.<sup>6</sup> Though gender equality is relevant to all of the priorities, this is not made explicit through the articulation of the strategies and global expected accomplishments. Gender concerns need to be fully integrated in the strategy process and captured in the monitoring and reporting processes.

5.6. *Integration of gender dimensions into the work of the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures and Treaty bodies.* By adopting resolution 6/30 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed its commitment effectively to integrate the human rights of women as well as gender perspective into its work and mechanisms. This includes integrating gender equality concerns in all phases of the universal periodic review, the Advisory Committee, the review of mandates, as well as incorporate into its programme of work sufficient and adequate time (at minimum an annual full-day meeting) to discuss the human rights of women, including measures that can be adopted by States and other stakeholders, to address human rights violations experienced by women.<sup>7</sup> As for Special Procedures, the report by the Special Rapporteur on Torture on the application of his mandate to women (2008) is a good example of ensuring that that a specific legal framework (in this case, the torture protection framework) is interpreted and applied in a gender-sensitive manner with a view to strengthening the protection of women. Regarding the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, integrating a gender perspective requires more than attention to specific issues of relevance to women, in particular eliminating discrimination against women to which the CEDAW is entirely devoted. It requires that women's and men's socially constructed realities be addressed explicitly in the context of each of the rights in human rights instruments with a view to preventing, or reducing, women's traditionally accepted disadvantages<sup>8</sup>. The General Comments adopted since 2000 by the Human Rights Committee and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights giving States Parties detailed guidance on how to approach gender issues under individual articles and on the areas and types of information that should be provided in reporting to the Committees are important steps in this direction.<sup>9</sup>

5.7. *Gender as a cross-cutting issue for the Office's thematic work.*

Thematic units provide the critical link between the analysis of human rights and gender issues and organizational priorities. They can contribute to raising awareness

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, "countering discrimination, in particular [...] on the ground of sex" is part of one of the six priorities in the High Commissioner's Compact for 2010 and 2011 and the Strategic Management Plan for 2010-2011.

<sup>7</sup> Resolution 6/30 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system (2007)

<sup>8</sup> Integrating a gender perspective into UN human rights work, Women 2000, UN-DAW (1998)

<sup>9</sup> Other treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee against Torture (CAT) or Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have taken account of the situation of women within the framework of guarantees of equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights and have focused on situations that are specific to women including gender-based violence.



and understanding of gender and women's human rights issues, to make sure that gender aspects have been properly identified and are not lost in the process of aggregating organizational priorities. In the fight against discrimination for example, elimination of entrenched, complex and multiple forms of discrimination is one of the key priorities of the Office. Racism and related intolerance is most significantly experienced by the most vulnerable members of society, in particular minority women. Despite encouraging advancements in the legal field, such as the adoption of General Comment n° 16 on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights,<sup>10</sup> women throughout the world remain disproportionately affected by poverty and socio-economic inequalities. More work can be done to unpack and deconstruct the cultural, religious and social beliefs that have historically held women in inferior positions and advocate for the interconnectedness and indivisibility of all women's rights. Other areas such as the human rights of women migrants or domestic workers, often falling outside the scope of labour laws are increasingly brought to the attention of the High Commissioner and deserve to be further explored.

5.8. *Promoting gender equality at the regional and country level.* OHCHR field offices at country and regional level cover several issues related to women's rights and gender equality. These include violence against women, sexual violence in armed conflict, laws and practices that discriminate against women, impunity and its impact on women, administration of justice, including access to justice and support to human rights mechanism including the CEDAW. OHCHR has also been working closely with a key group of States, to promote gender issues within the programme of the Human Rights Council, resulting in major outcomes such as a Joint Statement on equality before law (2009) and resolution 6/30 on "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System."<sup>11</sup> Other major outcomes from OHCHR collaboration with Member States include Human Rights Council resolutions 11/8 and 15/17 on eliminating preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity and a Joint Statement by 108 Countries of June 2010 on the issue.

However without a systematic gender analysis, key issues affecting men and women at country and regional level may be missed. UN country teams often combine substantial gender expertise and provide opportunities to work on priority gender issues across organizations. OHCHR can draw on expertise and analysis that are already available within other UN organizations and add its own human rights lens to capitalize on existing synergies at the field level, where other agencies' gender advisors (UNDP, UNFPA or UNICEF) are actively promoting gender integration.

5.9. *Strengthening collaborations on promoting women's human rights and gender integration with partners including UN Women.* In implementing the Gender Equality Policy, OHCHR will strengthen its working relations with relevant partners through bilateral and multilateral engagement at policy and operational levels. Partners include

---

<sup>10</sup> General comment No. 16 (2005) "The equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights (art. 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/435/39/PDF/G0543539.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 6/30 on "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System" (2007)

the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the Working Group on Discrimination in Law and Practice, the SRSG on sexual violence and the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict. Within the UN system, the Office will continue to actively contribute to the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) on women's rights issues, as well as sharing lessons learnt and good practices in gender integration. In particular, the Office will contribute to the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming coordinated by UN Women, which includes the development of a common accountability framework containing a set of minimum performance standards for the UN system on gender integration. At the bilateral level, OHCHR will pursue its engagement on specific women's rights and gender issues such as reproductive health with UNFPA or violence against women with UN women.

## **6. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

6.1. Responsibility for gender mainstreaming, the promotion of women's human rights and the advancement of gender equality will be ensured through OHCHR's institutional machinery. Internal OHCHR monitoring mechanisms to assess compliance with the Gender Equality Policy are crucial for effective performance management. This process is the basis for holding staff members accountable and documenting good practices. To achieve desired outcomes, adequate human and financial resources will be allocated to the implementation of gender integration. This will entail better utilization of current resources, the assignment of additional resources where required and the alignment of resources with expected outcomes. The development of common-system approaches whereby the entire United Nations system will apply agreed-upon norms and standards, indicators and targets, and evaluation frameworks will considerably reduce duplication of efforts, especially at the country level.<sup>12</sup> An external evaluation to verify the implementation of the Policy in OHCHR organizational structure and activities is foreseen after four years.

6.2. The High Commissioner (HC), and also the Deputy High Commissioner (DHC), the Assistant Secretary-General in New York (ASG), Directors, Chiefs of Branch and Heads of Field presences have primary responsibility in ensuring that the respect for women's human rights and the advancement of gender equality are effectively carried out office-wide, guided by this Policy and related documents. The HC, DHC and ASG oversee all in-house initiatives and chair the Senior Management Team<sup>13</sup> (SMT), holding all managers and staff accountable for gender integration efforts. Accountability frameworks (including provisions on gender responsive budgeting, programming, reporting and staffing) are being progressively developed. Those follow UN Chief Executive Board guidance to monitor Senior Management and their

---

<sup>12</sup> Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)

<sup>13</sup> Other members of the SMT are: the Chief of PSMS, the Chief of PPMES, the Deputy Director NYO, the Chief of DEXREL, the Chief of the Communications Section, the Chiefs of the Civil Society Section and Safety and Security Unit, the Chief of Office, and four representatives from the field. The SMT is the principal consultative and advisory body providing support, advice and recommendations to the High Commissioner when addressing, notably, women's human rights and gender equality. Such responsibility must be informed by and reflect a gender perspective.

staff's commitment to implement the Gender Equality Policy and will be detailed in the Gender Equality Strategy document (forthcoming). Sustainable funding will be made available for activities that advance women's human rights and promote gender equality.

6.3. Gender Facilitators<sup>14</sup> are OHCHR staff members who are strategically placed in the different Branches, Divisions, NYO and the field and who are generally involved in strategy development, analysis, planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation. Their responsibilities will include *inter alia* the facilitation of gender integration in the planning, programming, reporting and monitoring of implementation within their organizational entity. Gender facilitators will assist to report on the integration of gender under the coordination of the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section within the context of the OHCHR Annual Report. This information will also feed into the Office's report on progress on gender mainstreaming.

Gender facilitators will be trained on gender integration and equipped with tools and knowledge on how OHCHR's strategic priorities are linked with women's rights and gender equality. They will also participate in further defining their terms of reference and work plan.

6.4. The Women's Human Rights and Gender Section (WRGS) is responsible for the provision of substantive and operational guidance on the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy by all organizational entities. WRGS oversees the work of regional Gender Advisers<sup>15</sup> (or staff member designated by the Head of Field Presences<sup>16</sup> to perform gender integration tasks) who monitor and report periodically on gender integration efforts in the field, in close cooperation with local partners, including United Nations entities. WRGS is also responsible for the coordination of Gender Facilitators and will provide them with technical support in carrying-out their function. Furthermore, WRGS contributes to developing knowledge management tools related to gender integration with a view to enhancing office-wide capacity in close cooperation with Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service (PPMES) and Methodology, Education and Training Section (METS). Efforts will be made to progressively integrate gender dimensions into all planning and reporting documents of the Office. For example WRGS and PPMES will jointly develop performance indicators to measure progress made in gender integration within the Office, to be included in the existing monitoring framework of OHCHR Global Management Outputs or that of Expected Accomplishments to ensure that the identified indicators are gender-responsive.

---

<sup>14</sup> Gender Facilitators functions were established as per SMT decision adopted on 15 June 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Regional Gender Advisers are positions established in OHCHR Field Presences. They work in line with the strategic objectives of the WRGS by providing expert advice on the integration of women's human rights and gender perspectives in the work and implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

<sup>16</sup> Field presences include Regional offices, Country offices, Support to Peace Missions, or Human Rights Adviser positions within United Nations Country Teams (UNCT).

## **7. CONTACT**

Women's Human Rights and Gender Section  
Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch  
Research and Right to Development Division

Isha Dyfan, Chief of Section (Tel: 022/928.9845; Email: [idyfan@ohchr.org](mailto:idyfan@ohchr.org))  
Pierre Sob, Human Rights Officer (Tel: 022/928.9109; Email: [psob@ohchr.org](mailto:psob@ohchr.org))  
Saori Terada, Human Rights Officer (Tel: 022/928.9203; Email: [sterada@ohchr.org](mailto:sterada@ohchr.org))

## **8. DATES**

8.1. The present Gender Equality Policy is issued at Geneva on September 2011.  
It will be reviewed at the end of every other biennium (four year periodicity).

## **ANNEXES**

### **ANNEX I**

#### **GLOSSARY**

*This glossary is largely based on definitions from Human Rights Treaty Bodies, including General recommendations and comments, and when those do not exist, definitions commonly used in the UN system. The glossary is not an exhaustive list of commonly used definitions but those used in the document or closely linked to them.*

#### **Gender<sup>17</sup>**

While the term “sex” here refers to biological differences between men and women, the term “gender” refers to socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men and society’s social and cultural meaning for these biological differences resulting in hierarchical relationships between women and men and in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging women. This social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and can be changed by culture, society and community.

#### **Gender analysis<sup>18</sup>**

Gender analysis is a tool to diagnose the differences between women and men regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and their access to development benefits and decision-making. It studies the links between these and other factors in the larger socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental context. A gender sensitive or gender responsive project reflects the application of gender analysis to project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Gender balance and equal participation<sup>19</sup>**

Participation is one core element of gender equality. Eliminating discrimination against women in the political and public life means to ensure women, on equal terms with men, the right: (i) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (ii) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (iii) To participate in non-

---

<sup>17</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5.

<sup>18</sup> ABC of Women Worker’s Rights and Gender Equality, International Labour Organization (2007)

<sup>19</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on women in political and public life, under the article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1997)

governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

### **Gender-based discrimination<sup>20</sup>**

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms is discrimination, even where discrimination was not intended. Direct discrimination against women constitutes different treatment explicitly based on grounds of sex and gender differences. Indirect discrimination against women occurs when a law, policy, programme or practice appears to be neutral in so far as it relates to men and women, but has a discriminatory effect in practice on women because pre-existing inequalities are not addressed by the apparently neutral measure.

### **Gender equality and gender equity<sup>21</sup>**

Inherent to the principle of equality between men and women, or gender equality, is the concept that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention. Gender equity is used in some jurisdictions to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

### **Gender integration / mainstreaming**

Gender integration (or mainstreaming) is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is 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 societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality<sup>22</sup>. Gender integration as a strategy and methodology does not in theory mean an emphasis on women's experiences. However in practice the implementation of gender integration often results in - given the socially constructed differences and relations between males and females in most of the world's societies - a specific focus on women because they are mostly adversely affected by existing gender inequalities.

---

<sup>20</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5.

<sup>21</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 22.

<sup>22</sup> ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions as contained in resolution 1997/2

### **Multiple discrimination<sup>23</sup>**

The discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. Likewise, racial discrimination does not always affect women and men equally or in the same way. There are circumstances in which racial discrimination only or primarily affects women, or affects women in a different way, or to a different degree than men. Such racial discrimination will often escape detection if there is no explicit recognition or acknowledgement of the different life experiences of women and men, in areas of both public and private life.

### **Sex-disaggregated data**

Sex-Disaggregated Data is data that is collected and presented separately on men and women, boys and girls. Sex-disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men in every aspects of the society. For instance, the literacy rate, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependants, house and land ownership, loans and credit, and debts are included.<sup>24</sup>

### **Women's Empowerment<sup>25</sup>**

Empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied. Women's empowerment has five components, including both civil and political as well as cultural, economic and social dimensions : (i) women's sense of self-worth; (ii) their right to have and to determine choices; (iii) their right to have access to opportunities and resources; (iv) their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; (v) and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

---

23 General Recommendation No. 25: Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2000) and General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010),

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (2003)

<sup>25</sup> Guidelines on Women's Empowerment, UN Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

## ANNEX II

### REFERENCES

The following sources are mentioned in the Gender Equality Policy:

- (i) The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948)
- (ii) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and General Comment No. 28 on Equality of rights between men and women (2000)
- (iii) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and General comment No. 16 on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights (2005)
- (iv) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- (v) *Integrating a gender perspective into UN human rights work*, Women 2000, UN-DAW (1998)
- (vi) The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1994)
- (vii) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- (viii) ECOSOC resolution 1997/2 on Gender Mainstreaming (1997)
- (ix) General Assembly resolution A/RES/S-23/2 on mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (1997)
- (x) OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women (2000)
- (xi) Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)
- (xii) OHCHR Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2002)
- (xiii) Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)
- (xiv) *CEDAW and the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming: a UNIFEM guide* (2007)
- (xv) Human Rights Council resolution 6/30 on "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System" (2007)
- (xvi) Evaluation of OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming (2010)
- (xvii) ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2010)