



## OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

### Good practice

An example of good practice in recent OHCHR efforts to mainstream gender into all its activities is provided by human rights activities undertaken or supported in Afghanistan. These efforts will become an example for future endeavours particularly because of the participation of Afghan women and their empowerment in the planning of future activities, not only in connection with women's rights but also with regard to human rights education or the establishment of the national Human Rights Commission. Close collaboration between gender specialists and human rights officers within the United Nations mission also makes this effort an example of good practice.

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### Recent policy statements

In 2000, an "OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women" had been adopted. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, has committed himself to making gender issues and the human rights of women one of the priorities of his mandate. OHCHR aims to mainstream gender perspectives to reinforce the principle of non-discrimination as a means of ensuring gender equality in the enjoyment of human rights.

### Programme objectives

In July 2002, the OHCHR Senior Policy Committee adopted a "Gender Mainstreaming Strategy". The Strategy requires the establishment of a network of gender focal points for all OHCHR units, inclusion of gender mainstreaming discussions in the agenda of OHCHR bodies and meetings, integration of gender review in project screening, inclusion of gender mainstreaming objectives in team and individual workplans, monitoring of progress and identification of training requirements.

The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights has provided an opportunity to restate OHCHR's aim of ensuring that women's rights are fully part of all human rights activities and efforts. Gender perspectives must also be included in activities to follow up on the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Durban World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Their numerous references to the intersection of gender and racial discrimination, and to the human rights of women and girls, provide OHCHR with a detailed set of programme objectives requiring the integration of gender analyses into all efforts to combat racial discrimination.

OHCHR is also fully involved in inter-agency efforts to ensure that gender dimensions and the human rights of women are kept at the centre of efforts to support and monitor the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

### Operational activities

OHCHR has an annual Joint Work Plan with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, presented to both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2003/73-E/CN.6/2003/5), reporting on activities implemented and planned. Progress is also reflected in the integration of a gender perspective in operational activities led or supported by OHCHR at national level, including in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Iraq and Sierra Leone. OHCHR collaborates with other UN bodies and agencies in efforts connected to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, for example working with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women to ensure the inclusion of a gender specialist in the UN Mission to Côte d'Ivoire.

The UN human rights treaty bodies have also continued to highlight gender

equality and to seek ways to increase their attention to sexual and reproductive rights. A General Comment on article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is being drafted, and will complement those already adopted by the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2000. Events focusing on violence against women were organized during the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and during the 59th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

### **Other recent activities**

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, participated in the commemoration at UN Headquarters, in New York, of International Women's Day on 7 March 2003. He also addressed the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). For the first time ever, the Chairperson of the 59th session of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) also addressed the CSW session. Collaboration between both functional commissions continues to improve - the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women has addressed the Commission on Human Rights for several years.

Other recent activities undertaken by OHCHR include the establishment in May 2003 of a post of "Senior Gender Adviser", located in the office of the High Commissioner, through extra-budgetary support. The Senior Gender Adviser will complement the mandate of the Gender Coordinator (to pursue further progress in institutionalising gender mainstreaming), and increase the capacity of OHCHR to provide support to geographic units and field presences, particularly with regard to women, peace and security. ■