



## **Policy Instruction**

---

# **Gender Equality: A people-centred approach**

---

Approved by: Valerie Amos, Emergency Relief Coordinator and  
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs  
Approval date: 10 December 2012  
Contact: Senior Policy Officer - Gender Equality, PDSB  
Review date: 10 December 2015

---

---

## Policy Instruction on Gender Equality

---

<b>Contents:</b>	<b>A.</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
	<b>B.</b>	<b>Scope</b>
	<b>C.</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
	<b>D.</b>	<b>Policy</b>
	<b>E.</b>	<b>Terms and definitions</b>
	<b>F.</b>	<b>References</b>
	<b>G.</b>	<b>Monitoring and compliance</b>
	<b>H.</b>	<b>Dates</b>
	<b>I.</b>	<b>Contact</b>
	<b>J.</b>	<b>History</b>

---

### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy instruction is to strengthen the way OCHA responds to humanitarian crises by ensuring awareness of the different needs, capacities and voices of all affected population groups. These groups include women, girls, boys and men of all ages, people with disabilities, and other diversity characteristics such as ethnicity and religion. The end result of a people-centred approach is to ensure targeted actions are taken to address these needs and make humanitarian action more effective.

---

### B. SCOPE

This policy instruction applies to all OCHA staff, as they have a responsibility to ensure gender mainstreaming is integrated into their day-to-day activities. An updated OCHA Gender Toolkit and an implementation plan will support the use of this policy instruction.

Gender balance in the organization is treated as a human resource issue and does not form part of this policy instruction. Separate policy guidance is in place to guide OCHA in attaining gender balance.

---

### C. RATIONALE

External and internal reviews have indicated the need to strengthen OCHA's gender-equality policy to ensure that humanitarian action recognizes and responds to the different protection and assistance needs of women, girls, boys and men, and to develop a system that ensures responsibility by all staff to integrate gender-equality programming into their work.

OCHA is obligated to implement the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN SWAP) on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, and gender-equality mandates deriving from ECOSOC-agreed conclusions, General Assembly resolutions and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on gender-equality programming in humanitarian action.

---

## **D. POLICY**

### **I. Seven Minimum Gender Commitments**

OCHA's humanitarian policy and programming work will ensure the following seven minimum gender commitments<sup>1</sup> to support the effective mainstreaming of gender in humanitarian action.

OCHA staff will:

1. Apply the ADAPT and ACT C Framework in all programming areas, ensuring, at a minimum, the following three elements are addressed, as they are fundamental to an effective humanitarian response:
  - Routine analysis of gender concerns to inform humanitarian programming and policy processes.
  - Regular and timely collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data.
  - Support to coordination of gender programming in the response.
2. Integrate gender issues into preparedness and resilience processes from data collection, assessments, planning and capacity-building for national partners.
3. Support the application of the IASC Gender Marker into OCHA-managed appeals and funding mechanisms.
4. Ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can ascertain if the different needs of women, girls, boys and men have been met in the humanitarian response.
5. Develop communication and advocacy products that capture the different needs, capacities and voices of women, girls, boys and men.
6. Provide support to humanitarian country leadership, including cluster leads, to effectively integrate gender within humanitarian programming.
7. Put in place necessary actions to protect women, girls, boys and men from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse by OCHA staff, in line with the Secretary-General's bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

### **II. Actions to Support the Implementation of the Seven Minimum Gender Commitments**

Relevant OCHA heads of offices and chiefs of branches, sections and units will, on an annual basis and as appropriate, report on efforts to meet the minimum gender commitments articulated within this policy.

#### **a. Coordination and Response**

##### **Headquarters**

- Ensure that all country and regional office strategies and workplans incorporate gender-related analysis, coordination and support actions.
- Support country and regional office teams to collect and analyse sex- and age-disaggregated data to support planning and monitoring of programmes. A rationale should be provided in cases where this is not possible.
- Work closely with field operations to ensure the adequate human resources required for gender-equality programming.
- Ensure that HC compacts pay close attention to the leadership role that HCs need to exert regarding incorporating gender into overall humanitarian strategy and actions.

---

<sup>1</sup> These commitments are based on identified priorities from a survey undertaken by field and headquarters staff, in line with OCHA's core mandate areas and key outcomes on gender in the Strategic Framework 2011-2013.

### **Field Office**

- Host gender experts (GenCaps) and support their efforts to mainstream gender throughout clusters and with humanitarian leadership.
- Appoint office staff to be trained by GenCaps and who will assume certain GenCap functions once that service ends. In large-scale situations, support full-time gender expertise following GenCap support.

### **Regional Office**

- Ensure that all preparedness packages developed and implemented out of an RO duly integrate a gender perspective.
- Ensure that surge personnel are duly trained in integrating gender in surge operations.
- Ensure that partnership efforts duly advocate a people-centred approach to ensure differentiated actions are taken to address the different needs of affected people.

## **b. Corporate Programmes**

### Administrative Services Branch:

- Assessment of gender equality integrated as a core value and competency for all staff as part of recruitment criteria on Inspira and in the ePerformance document in line with UN SWAP.
- Provide gender-mainstreaming guidance in corporate inductions and trainings.
- Ensure compliance with the mandatory gender e-learning course in line with OCHA's Organizational Learning Strategy accountability mechanism.

### CERF Secretariat and Funding Coordination Section:

- Integrate the Gender Marker into applications, guidelines and criteria for CERF, ERF and CHF funding.

### Communication and Information Services Branch:

- Clearly communicate the different needs of women, men, boys and girls affected by crisis, and promote gender equality between women and men in humanitarian response. This should be carried out in all branch work through internal and external channels, including through new technologies.
- Ensure statistical databases incorporate sex- and age-disaggregated data as a basis for appropriate humanitarian programming.

### Policy Development and Studies Branch:

- Formulate policy incorporating gender analysis and relevant gender concerns.
- Ensure protection of civilians work, including access issues, is informed by a gender analysis.
- Provide gender programming advice to stakeholders, including in the inter-governmental system.

## **c. Office of the ASG**

### Strategic Planning

- Monitor compliance through OCHA's mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reviews.
- Monitor indicators on gender equality throughout the planning process, reflecting the seven minimum gender commitments contained in this policy.
- Incorporate at least one outcome and indicator on gender equality into OCHA's future strategic plans.

### Evaluation: Meet UNEG gender-related norms and standards, including:

- Incorporate gender elements into TORs and evaluation-inception reports.

- Ensure systematic disaggregation of data by sex and age.
- Make sure evaluation reports address how gender issues were implemented as a cross-cutting issue; how gender-related gaps were identified; and how the design and implementation addressed the identified gaps.

#### Guidance Support

- Ensure inclusion of the seven gender commitments in all policy formulation, as relevant.
- Promote coherence on gender mainstreaming, and incorporate accepted recommendations on gender from audits, evaluations, reviews, etc.
- Feed gender components of guidance into OCHA performance processes.

#### **d. OCHA Geneva**

##### Programme Cycle Support

###### Preparedness:

- Take into account the different needs, capacities and skills of women, girls, boys and men, and ensure gender programming in preparedness programming.

###### Needs Assessments and Monitoring:

- Collect, analyse and use sex- and age-disaggregated data to differentiate the specific needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys and men.
- Ensure assessment teams comprise women and men.

###### Consolidated Appeals:

- Provide support to strengthened analysis of the impact of crisis on women, girls, boys and men.
- Support the use of the Gender Marker and analyse trends over time, including in relation to allocation of funding by Gender Marker code.

###### Inter-cluster Coordination

- Mainstream gender, age and other diverse identities into the clusters' work and monitor inclusion of these issues in cluster activities.

##### Partnership and Resource Mobilization

- Ensure that communication and advocacy products directed at corporate partners capture the importance of recognizing the different needs, capacities and voices of women, girls, boys and men.
- Provide gender programming advice to private-sector partners so they can effectively integrate gender within their humanitarian programmes.
- Integrate gender-equality programming into donor presentations on OCHA's work.

##### Emergency Services

- Ensure integration of gender concerns, as relevant, into all Branch publications, tools and mechanisms, e.g. UN-CMCoord and UNDAC.
- Ensure that training courses provided to surge personnel by SCS fully integrate gender equality.
- Set and track activities and targets to reach gender parity in surge deployments to ensure OCHA deploys women and men equally to crises.

### **III. Management Responsibility**

#### **a. Actions required of the Senior Management Team**

The Senior Management Team will provide leadership and oversight for implementation of this policy instruction.

The USG annual compact with the UN Secretary-General will meet and, whenever possible, exceed requirements in line with the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

**b. Actions required by heads of offices, branches, sections and units**

Heads of offices and chiefs of branches, sections and units will:

- Support and facilitate capacity development for staff on knowledge and skills on gender analysis.
- Support the fulfilment of seven minimum gender commitments.
- Provide adequate financial and human resources to implement this policy instruction.
- Promote cooperation and collaboration with other specialized UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, FAO, UNHCR and WFP, to promote learning and integration of good practices.

**IV. Critical Institutional Support Functions**

**Senior Gender Advisory Support**

- OCHA will continue to have dedicated senior gender expertise in the organization to provide the necessary leadership and support to policy and programming on gender equality for OCHA and the humanitarian system. S/he will also lead/participate systematically in inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender equality.

**Gender Equality Focal Points**

- Each country/regional/liaison office, division and branch will nominate a gender equality focal point to facilitate and coordinate the integration, implementation and monitoring of practical gender actions into their workplans and strategies.
- The focal point will commit 20 per cent of his or her time to this function, which will be tracked in ePerformance documents.
- All focal points in HQ and field offices will be senior staff (P4 and above).

---

**E. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Gender:** This refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, and the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities.

**Gender analysis:** ECOSOC-agreed conclusions 1997/2 defines gender analysis as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation in all areas and at all levels. Elements of an adequate gender analysis include:

- Examination of inequalities between women and men and how gender equality can be promoted.
- Data or information to allow the experiences and situations of women and men to be analysed, i.e. through the collection and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data.
- Assess levels and extent of participation between males and females in activities.

**Gender equality:** This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Gender equality is achieved when the different behaviours, aspirations

and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured. They do not give rise to different consequences that reinforce inequalities.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The strategy of mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC=agreed conclusions 1997/2 as "...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."

**Gender-equality programming:** Gender equality programming (GEP) is an umbrella term encompassing several approaches or interventions to help reach the goal of gender equality. These include gender mainstreaming, targeted actions, prevention and response to gender based violence, and gender balance initiatives. These actions are undertaken based on a thorough context specific gender analysis.

**Sexual exploitation and abuse:** Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts specifically relating to humanitarian workers. The IASC adopted six core principles relating to SEA in 2002, which are included in the UN Secretary-General's bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13). These principles together constitute SEA programming (PSEA). They are binding on humanitarian staff.

**Gender balance:** This is a human resource issue that refers to the number of women versus men employed by agencies. As with many organizations, OCHA has decided to treat gender balance differently from gender mainstreaming. Hence gender balance is not a focus of OCHA's Gender Equality Programming but rather a human resource issue.

---

## F. REFERENCES

### UN System-Wide policies:

- 15 December 2006, CEB/2006/2: UN System-Wide Policy and Strategy on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact.
- 13 April 2012, CEB/2012/HLCPCP-XXIII/CRP: System-Wide Action Plan on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

### Agreed ECOSOC conclusions on gender, ECOSOC humanitarian segments:

- E/1998/1, op8: "ensuring a gender perspective into humanitarian activities and policies".
- E/2011/8, op26: "ensuring humanitarian responses address the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men."

### General Assembly resolutions:

- A/RES/65/133, op17 (2010), "taking into account the specific needs of the affected population... giving appropriate consideration to age, gender and disability."
- A/RES/60/124, op5 (2005), "calling on states to implement strategies to report, prevent and punish all forms of violence against women, girls, boys and men".
- A/RES/65/133, op25: "addressing gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies" op17 (2010).
- A/RES/58/114, op13 (2003), "addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts".

**Security Council resolutions:**

- 31 October 2000, S/RES/1325: UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security; and subsequent resolutions reinforcing Security Council resolution 1325.
- 12 June 2008, S/RES/1820, 30 September 2009, S/RES/1889, 5 October 2009, S/RES/1889, 16 December 2010, S/RES/1960.
- 16 July, S/RES/1612, Children and armed conflict.

**Secretary-General's bulletins:**

- 9 October 2003, ST/SGB/2003/13: Secretary-General's bulletin on Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

**IASC-related guidance**

- IASC Transformative Agenda: [www.humanitarianinfo.org](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org)
  - IASC Gender Equality Policy: <http://gender.oneresponse.info>
  - IASC Gender Handbook: <http://gender.oneresponse.info>
- 

**G. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

OCHA's Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) will monitor compliance through OCHA's mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reviews. SPU will report to the Steering Committee. Through the OCHA planning process, SPU will monitor indicators on gender equality reflective of the seven minimum gender commitments contained in this policy.

Elements of this policy instruction will also be monitored through the UN individual performance appraisal system through ePerformance, and through the reporting framework under the UN SWAP on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

There will be an external evaluation of this policy instruction after three years of its adoption and another evaluation two years subsequent to that.

---

**H. DATES**

This policy instruction shall be effective on 14 December 2012 and reviewed no later than 14 December 2015.

---

**I. CONTACT**

The contact for this policy instruction is the Senior Policy Adviser on Gender Equality.

---

**J. HISTORY**

This policy instruction supersedes the previous OCHA Gender Equality Policy of 2005.

---

**SIGNED:****DATE:**