

Annex 5: Executive Summary of Midterm Review of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013

Introduction

In 2008, UNDP established a Gender Equality Strategy (GES) to accompany the strategic plan (2008-2013). Importantly, this was the first time UNDP had established a specific strategy to guide the organization in achieving gender equality results. The GES was established following a strongly negative evaluation in 2005 which concluded that UNDP had not effectively engendered its development programmes.

From May 2011-January 2011, a Mid-Term Review of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013 was conducted by a team of four consultants with the overall goal of taking stock of achievements and recommending adjustments to implementation of the strategy for the remaining years 2011-2013. It also was envisaged that the findings of the review would provide input into broader organizational reform. More specifically, the review intended to:

1. Identify areas in which UNDP has achieved gender equality results across Focus Areas and regions and analyze how UNDP supports governments in improving gender-responsive capacity;
2. Determine the best ways to strengthen UNDP's response in light of emerging challenges, such as the ongoing economic and financial crisis, and in regard to the 10-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals;
3. Make specific, practical recommendations for UNDP to more fully bring gender equality into all of its practices areas and within the organization.

The Review methodology included: an extensive *desk review* of reports and data; *interviews and focus group discussions* at UNDP headquarters that engaged all Bureaux, the Gender Team, former RCs, and sister UN agencies; *field visits* to one Country Office per region (El Salvador, Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal and Serbia); and visits to the Regional Centers in Bratislava and Panama.

Overall Findings

UNDP responded forcefully to the findings of the 2005 Gender Equality Evaluation, systematically putting in place the approaches and leadership noted then as being lacking. These included the establishment and strengthening of programme tracking and monitoring mechanisms and the development of an overall strategic framework (the GES). The strengthening of the Gender Team was also important as organizational and individual capacities have improved considerably. While both remain a continuing challenge, especially in country offices, there have been advances, and the means to address the remaining problems are now clear and remain only to be implemented and monitored.

UNDP is now a gender aware organization, with personnel at all levels aware of the linkages between gender mainstreaming and development results. This has resulted in significant programme successes, primarily in the development of gender relevant inputs into policy and planning systems; a range of interventions supporting women's political and economic empowerment; and greater availability and use of gender-relevant data.

UNDP has developed a range of innovative gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies for gender integration in economic policy management and dialogue processes. These include the MAF, the Gender Economic Policy Management Initiative (GEPMI), and the Gender Needs Assessment Tool. However, there is still a lack of prioritization, application, resources and monitoring of the application of these tools and there is a need for continued capacity building in country offices for them to be applied. Likewise, the global, regional and national HDRs continue to exemplify sound gender analysis and are leading advocacy tools, although they do not all address gender equality considerations in their various themes.

UNDP has developed a particular strength in the promotion of women's political participation through its programming in electoral assistance, parliamentary support and constitutional/legal reform. These

investments are yielding returns, and this work should be expanded. Activities to develop national capacities to ratify and implement CEDAW also appear to be making a useful contribution. However, significant gaps still remain in UNDP's work in the areas of public administration, local governance, human rights and anti-corruption.

About one third of Country Offices have been engaged in initiatives for preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV), especially in developing gender-based violence legislation and building more gender-sensitive legal and judicial institutions. Groundbreaking work is underway on partnerships with men in the prevention of GBV and there is a growing body of work related to the interaction of GBV with the incidence of poverty. More needs to be done, however, to embrace this work as a core theme in justice and security sector reform and the connections between GBV and poverty have to be better incorporated into the programming. UNDP's GBV programming would be greatly enhanced by the completion of its planned overarching strategic framework or guidelines on GBV programming.

There is now strong awareness within UNDP that the situation of women and girls in post conflict countries requires specific support, and that it is critical for women to participate in recovery and reconstruction processes. The framework of UNDP's approach is well reflected in the Eight Point Agenda although significant gaps remain in terms of implementation – especially in the areas of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). It is vital to ensure that specialized gender expertise is included in all assessment missions.

UNDP is playing a leading role in bringing gender equality issues into the global and national environmental policy dialogue. This is reflected in the recent incorporation of gender issues into operational policy guidelines of climate financing mechanisms and gender equality principals in international agreements – most notably the Cancun agreement. However, UNDP has considerable room to strengthen its commitment, staff capacities and operational frameworks to better integrate gender equality considerations into environment programme areas.

Despite notable improvements, gender mainstreaming in project and programme activities remains uneven and *ad hoc*: in other words, the “islands of success” identified in the 2005 Evaluation remain. While frameworks have been developed at the corporate level, capacity for implementation is inconsistent and particularly weak at the field level.

The Executive Board has consistently demanded that UNDP increase its core allocations and better track resources for gender mainstreaming. Initial gender marker results indicate that such allocation is happening, but that it is still uneven.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNDAFs and CCFs provide an important strategic opportunity for advancing gender equality throughout all of UNDP's work at the country level. More efforts must be focused on drawing on gender disaggregated data and analysis in the preparation of these programming tools and on establishing gender specific indicators. Furthermore, the range of innovative gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies that UNDP has developed in the area of economic policy management and poverty reduction such as the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), the Global Economic Policy Management Initiative (GEPMI), and the Gender Needs Assessment Tool, should be applied more systematically across the organization.
2. It is important that global, regional and national Human Development Reports address the gender equality dimensions of their individual themes and that all programming units use the findings of these reports to spark programme action at the country level.

3. Working in collaboration with member states and partners, UNDP should expand on initial successes made in global climate change policy and finance mechanisms by supporting more comprehensive gender mainstreaming in the operationalization of climate policy and funds. UNDP should also work through its country offices to leverage UN system wide resources and capacities to support governments in addressing gender inequalities in the context of increasing scarcities in land, water, energy, food and to develop low emission climate resilient development strategies.
4. UNDPs investments in women's political participation are yielding results. The Global Programme for Electoral Cycle support represents a good model on how to integrate gender across a thematic area. It should be a model to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the areas of public administration, local governance, human rights and anti-corruption. UNDP is also undertaking good work to build capacity to advance women's rights, and strengthen legal frameworks, systems and access to justice. UNDP should further develop its work in this area, including to support consistency between customary laws and informal mechanisms and international norms and standards.
5. UNDPs framework for gender issues in crises context, "The Eight Point Agenda", remains relevant. However, in its implementation, more attention should be given to the deficit areas of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), , Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR), Peacebuilding and Security Sector Reform (SSR). It will also be important to review mechanisms for the provision of human and financial resources to ensure optimal impact-particularly ensuring the timely provision of specialized gender expertise in assessment missions. Finalization of the pending corporate guidance for GBV is an immediate priority. As GBV is an inherently cross-sectoral phenomenon and a priority across UN agenda, inclusion of multi sectoral and interagency approaches and partnerships would be essential.
6. UNDP leads the UN system in adopting accountability mechanisms for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In order to sustain and build upon this success UNDP will have to strengthen its internal gender architecture within the context of the agenda for organizational change. The change process presents an opportunity for UNDP to review the optimal investments in gender capacities at country, regional and global levels, for different practices areas and the different country typologies it serves. Intensified efforts will be required to strengthen senior management leadership, including Bureau and Practice Directors, and holding them accountable for realizing gender equality results. To realize these objectives, and despite the current challenging resource outlook, UNDP should increase or at least maintain the level of its total investment in gender mainstreaming across the organization from the core resources.
7. Discussions with UNW are required, on how to strengthen cooperation and ensure coordination in areas of overlapping mandates. This should be facilitated by UNDP/UNW leadership to ensure the highest level of commitment to effective implementation and then be brought to UNDG for wider discussion with other agencies less affected by the overlap.