

Annex 1: Terminology Used in the Gender Equality Strategy

Gender

“Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. 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, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.”¹

Gender Equality

“Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration—recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a ‘women’s issue’ but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.”²

Gender Mainstreaming

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implication 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.”³

Women’s Rights

“The human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.”⁴

“As defined in Article 1, ‘discrimination against women’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”⁵

Women’s Empowerment

“Women’s empowerment has five components: Women’s sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.”⁶

“The concept of empowerment is related to gender equality but distinct from it. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny. This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as are provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions. And to exercise agency, women must live without the fear of coercion and violence.”⁷

Gender Parity

“...equal numbers of men and women at all levels of the organization. It must include significant participation of both men and women, particularly at senior levels. Gender parity is one of several integrated mechanisms for improving organizational effectiveness.”⁸

Gender-based Violence

“Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men...Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of Article 1 of (CEDAW).”⁹

“...any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”¹⁰

“...any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially associated differences between males and females. As such violence is based on socially ascribed differences. Gender-based violence includes, but it is not limited to sexual violence.

While women and girls of all ages make up the majority of the victims, men and boys are also both direct and indirect victims. It is clear that the effects of such violence are both physical and psychological, and have long term detrimental consequences for both the survivors and their communities.”¹¹

1 OSAGI, 2001, ‘Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality Document’.

2 Ibid.

3 ECOSOC, 1997, ‘Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997’, A/52/3, chapter IV, ‘Special Session on Gender Mainstreaming.’

4 World Conference on Human Rights, 1993, Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, A/CONF.157/23, paragraph 17.

5 CEDAW.

6 UN Secretariat, Inter-agency Task Force on the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development’s

Programme of Action, ‘Guidelines on Women’s Empowerment’

[www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html].

7 Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, 2005, *Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women*.

8 UNDP Gender Parity Report 2007.

9 Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1992, General Recommendation 19 [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm].

10 DEVAW, Article 1.

11 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, 2006, ‘Addressing Gender-based violence in Humanitarian Emergencies, ‘Gender-based violence and the role of the UN and its Member States’

[www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/docs/Presentation%20Mr.%20Michel.pdf].