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MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN RESEARCH

Mehrinaz El Awady
Senior SWAP Coordinator
Office of the Executive Secretary

United Nations
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I. INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of this paper is to contribute to achieving the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) goal to "foster comprehensive, equitable, integrated and sustainable development"[1] in a gender-sensitive manner. Its specific objective is to guide all staff at the professional and general service levels, who are involved in conducting research, on how to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected from conceptualization of research to its final stage.

It draws on the existing body of knowledge on mainstreaming gender in research, including the work done by United Nations agencies. It also builds on previous efforts by international organizations to mainstream gender in their work.

II. ESCWA RESEARCH

ESCWA produces recurrent and non-recurrent publications, including research studies, surveys, bulletins, newsletters, handbooks and manuals. During the period 2004-2013, ESCWA produced 272 publications on economic and social development, out of which 55 were published during 2012-2013. ESCWA plans to produce 42 publications during 2014-2015, constituting 10.7 per cent of its total outputs for the biennium. Publications are diversified among ESCWA focus areas, including executive direction and management (6); sustainable development policies (7); social development (4); economic development and globalization (5); technology for development (5); social development (7); women (5); and emerging and conflict-related issues (3).

ESCWA research is geared towards influencing policymaking in the Arab region, with the aim of kick-starting a transformative path to sustainable development. It is used by a broad spectrum of clients, including policymakers, United Nations agencies, researchers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Applying a gender lens is fundamental to ESCWA research to provide a better comprehension of the studied problem, shape the outcomes of studies and enhance the development of policies. This will ensure that both men and women can equally influence and benefit from ESCWA research. Failure to integrate a gender perspective may lead to unscientific and distorted results that do not capture the views and needs of half the population. This can lead to designing policies that are not reflective of the realities of both men and women.

III. MANDATE FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Beijing Platform for Action established gender mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The need to mainstream gender at all socioeconomic and political levels was clearly highlighted and stressed in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Declaration requested the Secretary-General to mainstream a system-wide gender perspective in all United Nations activities.[2]

This Declaration was followed by a letter from the Secretary General to Heads of United Nations organisations and Regional Commissions on 13 October 1997, requesting them to reflect a gender dimension in their medium-term plans and programme budgets.[3]

Gender mainstreaming is a global strategy to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm

[1] A/69/6 (Prog.19), Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2016-2017: Part two: Biennial Programme Plan, Programme 19, p. 2. Available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/6(Prog.19).

[2] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf.

[3] A/S-23/10/Rev.1, Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, Mandates for incorporating gender perspectives in medium-term plans and programme budgets in the United Nations (June 2000). Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/activities/gmbudgets.htm.

Later in 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council agreed to conclusions by all United Nations agencies stressed the importance of systematically integrating a gender perspective in all their work. Gender mainstreaming was defined 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. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality".[4]

The concept of gender mainstreaming is not new. It was articulated in the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth Conference on Women that took place in Beijing in 1995.

The mandate for gender mainstreaming within the United Nations was further discussed and reiterated on several occasions,[5] including the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly where the concept of gender mainstreaming was reaffirmed as a global strategy for gender equality and women empowerment.[6]

In 2006, the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) issued a "United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact". Members of CEB committed themselves to this policy to reflect a gender-sensitive perspective in all United Nations practices, policies and programmes.[7] In 2012, the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) for gender equality and the empowerment of women was designed to operationalize the United Nations mandate, including the CEB policy. The Economic and Social Council welcomed the development of the UN-SWAP and called on United Nations entities to actively engage in its roll-out.

Gender is NOT

- **The responsibility of one person/division.**
- **Used interchangeably with "woman".**
- **Research only related to women.**

The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) reaffirmed the commitment to the empowerment of women and gender equality, recognized as a driving factor for sustainable development. The Rio+20 outcome document suggested the design of prioritizing measures to advance the agenda of gender equality in all walks of life. It called for reforming institutions to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in all activities. This included the commitment to collect, use and analyse data in the different programming cycles.[8] The commitment to mainstream a gender perspective will be renewed again, as gender equality is central to the dialogue of the post-2015 development agenda. It was suggested by the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons among the twelve goals that will shape the post-2015 agenda.[9]

[4] Excerpt from A/52/3 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/ECOSOCAC1997.2.PDF.

[5] See http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/intergovernmentalmandates.htm for a full list of related resolutions.

[6] UN Women, Five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 5) held in the General Assembly, 5-9 June 2000. Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5.htm.

[7] CEB/2006/2, United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact. Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm/UN_system_wide_P_S_CEB_Statement_2006.pdf.

[8] A/RES/66/288*. Available from http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement.

[9] http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf.

IV. CHALLENGES FACING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Although gender mainstreaming has gained momentum since the Economic and Social Council 1997/2 recommendations and the subsequent United Nations resolutions, some institutional gaps remain. Key challenges in the United Nations system include the absence of internal mechanisms supporting the process of gender mainstreaming as well as the scattered efforts of the United Nations system.[10]

ESCWA faces similar challenges to mainstream gender in research and in its work at large. An online assessment survey of ESCWA staff capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming conducted in 2013 revealed that lack of knowledge on gender-related concepts remains a fundamental problem hindering the mainstreaming process. Staff knowledge was generally fair and varied significantly across grades and divisions, with professional staff demonstrating better knowledge compared to general service staff. In addition, the level of experience of staff in mainstreaming a gender perspective in research varied. To a large extent general service staff, who constitute the majority of research assistants, have not taken part in gender mainstreaming efforts. On average, only 15.3 per cent of respondents have been part of a team that worked on mainstreaming gender in their divisions, and only 22.4 per cent have attended a training session on gender-related concepts in the past three years.[11]

In the light of the above mandate and challenges facing the United Nations system, including ESCWA, to mainstream a gender perspective in its work, the following practical steps ensure a smoother process.

V. WHAT IS GENDER-SENSITIVE RESEARCH?

Gender-sensitive research is one that is based on the concept of "gender and development" (GAD), whereby both men's and women's concerns, needs and aspirations are identified and addressed throughout the research cycle. It is not research that focuses on women exclusively, but rather acknowledges that men and women have different socially ascribed roles and responsibilities that directly affect their status in the society.

Hence, gender-sensitive research lays the foundations for tailoring development interventions to accommodate for societal differences and similarities based on gender. Gender-sensitive research is different from gender-specific research, which focuses on gender itself as a subject matter. It differs from gender-blind research, which does not take gender into account despite the gender relevance to the topic. It also differs from the gender-neutral research that does not consider gender, based on the fact that the differences and commonalities between men and women are irrelevant to the topic.[12] ESCWA adopts a four-level categorization for engendering research as detailed on page 14.

VI. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN RESEARCH?

Gender mainstreaming in research is not the responsibility of one person or one division. It is the amalgamation of efforts of senior management and all ESCWA staff. Figure I lists the main responsibilities of key stakeholders in the mainstreaming process.

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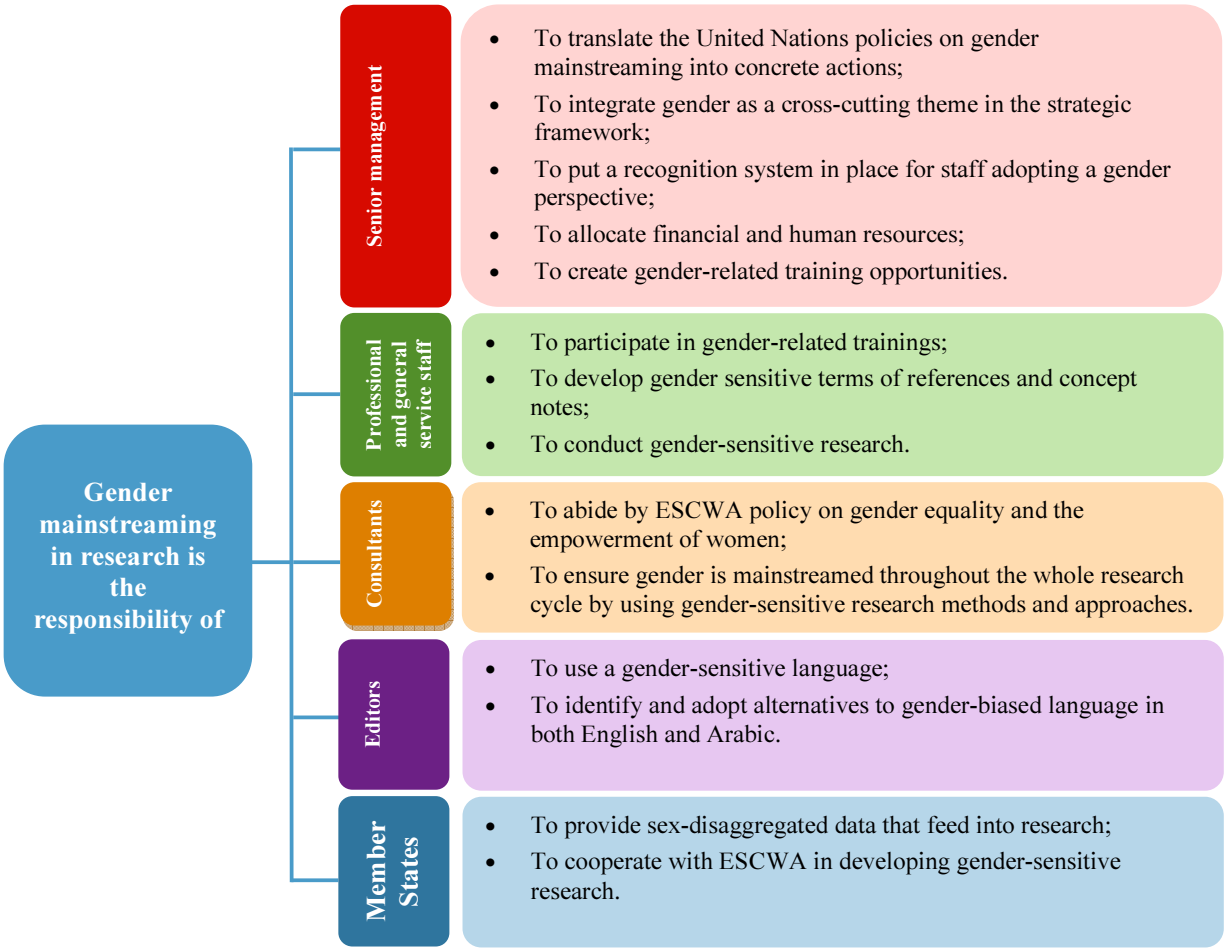
[10] UN-Women, Expert Group Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming Approaches in Development Programming: Being Strategic and Achieving Results in an Evolving Development Context (Santo Domingo, 30 April – 3 May 2013). Report available from http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/FINAL%20EGM%20REPORT%201%20NOV%20version%20pdf.pdf.

[11] Assessment of ESCWA staff capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming: Survey results, analysis and recommendations, p. 3 (unpublished).

[12] European Commission, *Toolkit: Gender in EU-Funded Research* (Brussels, 2009).

Figure I. Responsibility of mainstreaming gender in research



As shown in figure I, leadership demonstrated by senior management is crucial for setting the foundations for mainstreaming a gender perspective into the entire work of ESCWA. This is reflected in their responsibility to develop an accountability framework, including the design of a reward and incentive system. Senior management is also responsible for ensuring that the ESCWA policy on gender equality is in place and is linked to performance targets, and that adequate human and financial resources are allocated. This may include revisiting the organization's budget to ensure that sufficient funds are disbursed for mainstreaming gender into all aspects of its work.

Professional and general service staff are also responsible and accountable for mainstreaming a gender perspective into ESCWA research. This starts by demonstrating commitment to participate in training opportunities and ensuring that consultants are selected based on terms of reference that reflect the gender requirement. One of the staff's principle responsibilities is to ensure that research is conducted with a gender lens. This could be done through tailoring the guidelines on engendering publications to their substantive work and through seeking internal assistance within ESCWA.

ESCWA consultants should follow the requirements on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the entire cycle of research. This includes ensuring the diversity of research methods adopted and their effectiveness in addressing gender differences. The consultant is also responsible to ensure that both men and women are included in the primary and secondary data employed in the research, as well as in the analysis and policy recommendations.

Editors have an equally important role in ensuring that ESCWA publications in Arabic and English use gender-sensitive language. They are responsible for ensuring that the publications follow the guidelines listed in section IX – C (see page 10 of this document).

Member States are audiences as well as contributors to ESCWA research. As such, they are responsible for providing sex-disaggregated data that feeds into research analysis and lead to policies that take into consideration both men and women.

VII. PRACTICAL STEPS TO MAINSTREAM GENDER IN RESEARCH

It is important to mainstream gender throughout the different phases of the research cycle. Figure II outlines the different stages of the research cycle and highlights important aspects to be considered in each phase to ensure that the research is gender-sensitive.

Figure II. Gender mainstreaming in the research cycle

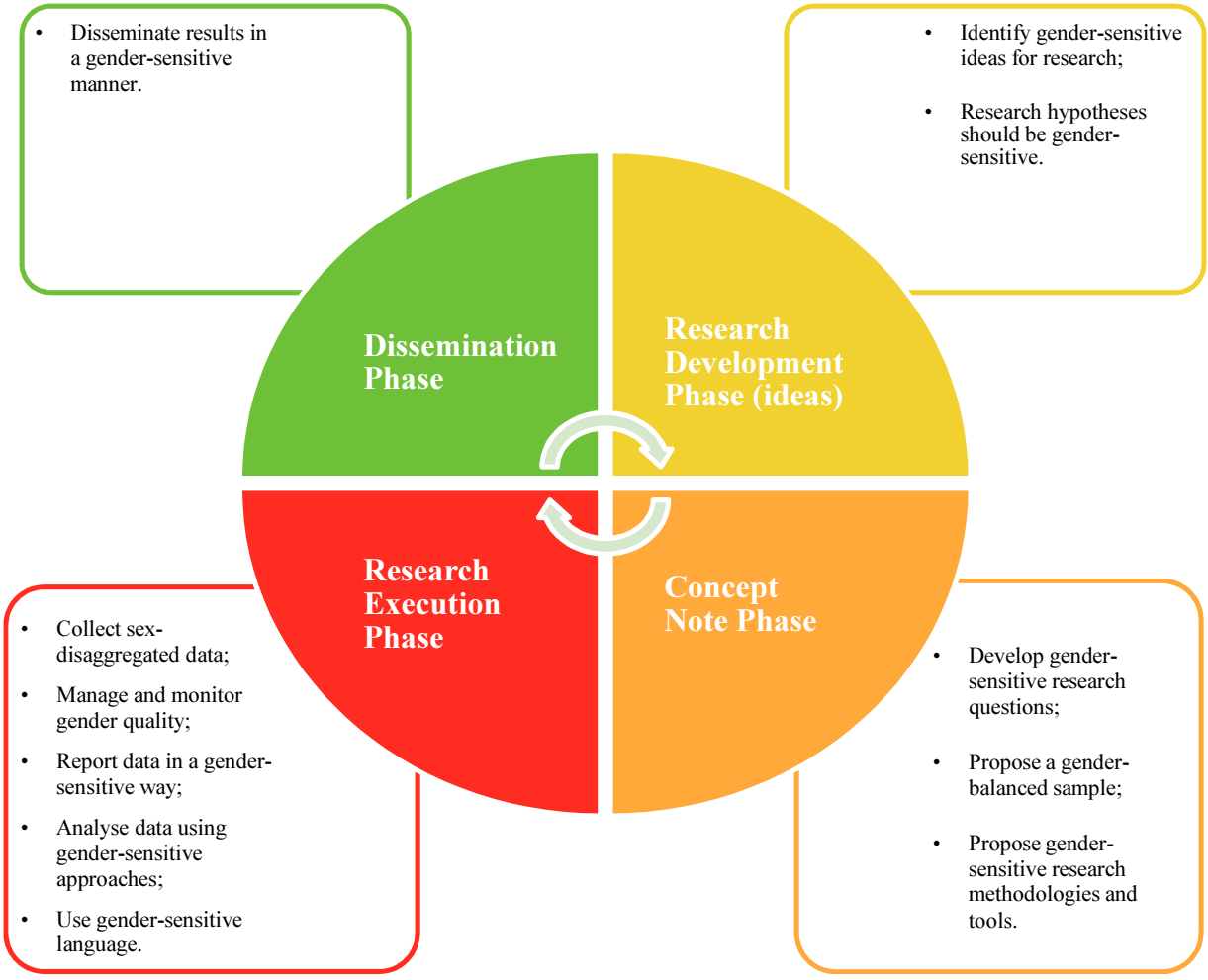


Figure II shows that gender mainstreaming is a process that stretches from the research development phase to disseminating the research to the final reader. In order to unify the terms and concepts used in the

field of gender mainstreaming in research, the annex, which is directly extracted from the United Nations course on "Gender Equality: UN Coherence and You",[13] provides a glossary of the various terms (see annex to the present paper).

The following table provides a detailed checklist to guide researchers in the integration of gender in the research cycle. It provides a list of questions that could be adapted to fit in the work of each division.

The checklist is in line with the research cycle and is clustered in nine categories; each of them providing a set of questions that guides the researcher through the process. The nine categories are as follows: (1) forming the research team, (2) designing the research questions and hypothesis, (3) designing the methodology, (4) collecting data; (5) analysing data; (6) formulating key findings; (7) formulating policy recommendations; (8) peer reviewing; and (9) disseminating main findings and publications.

The first set of questions on the formation of the research team and the selection of the consultant refers to the importance of having a gender-trained researcher to provide technical assistance throughout the cycle, and of having clear terms of reference for the consultant to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the research. These questions can be tailored to accommodate for cases where the research is conducted by one person. In such cases it is preferable that the researcher has knowledge of gender issues and coordinates with the resource persons within ESCWA to seek technical support. The second set of questions refers to the importance of designing the research in a manner that makes reference to men and women and does not assume their homogeneity. Clearly defining the questions from the onset will allow for differentiation between men and women. The third category covers the research methodology phase. The questions ensure that the design of the research methodology allows for collecting sex-disaggregated data and is reflective of the differences between men and women, capturing the views of both sexes. The fourth category highlights the need to collect sex-disaggregated data to assess if both men and women are equally affected by the study or benefited equally from it. Calling attention to the lack of sex-disaggregated data is of importance to fill these gaps in future research projects. The fifth category provides a set of questions to ensure that both primary and secondary data are analysed to understand the differences and similarities between men and women and to design responsive policies. The questions also highlight the need to examine the differences between sexes in access to and control over resources. The sixth category covers questions on the formulation of key findings. Research findings should reflect the gaps in data availability, gender differences, and the experiences of men and women. The seventh category includes questions that stress the formulation of policy recommendations that take into account the needs of both sexes, as well as their ability to equally benefit from the proposed policies. The eighth set of questions refers to the process of peer reviewing and the role of a gender expert in it. The ninth and last set of questions refers to the research dissemination strategy, which should ensure that the findings are accessible to both men and women. The checklist is fully or partially applicable whenever gender is relevant to the studied topic.

CHECKLIST FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN RESEARCH

Key questions	Yes	No	Comments
(1) Formation of research team: ESCWA staff: • Does the research team include both men and women? • Does the research team include a gender-trained researcher?			

[13] http://www.unicef.org/gender/training/content/scoIndex.html.

Key questions	Yes	No	Comments
• Is the research team coordinating with any of the resource persons within ESCWA (ESCWA Centre for Women, UN-SWAP Senior Coordinator, Gender Focal Points)? • Was a member of the gender focal point network appointed to work with the research team? ESCWA consultants: • Does the consultant have experience in gender mainstreaming? • Does the consultant's terms of reference require him/her to - Collect sex-disaggregated data? - Provide gender analysis? - Use gender-sensitive language?			
(2) Designing the research questions and hypothesis • Do the research questions take into consideration the needs and experiences of both men and women? • Is there a separate research question aiming to examine the needs and impact of the studied population on both men and women? • Do the research questions reflect the gender of the studied population?			
(3) Designing the methodology • Are the research tools diversified and do they address gender differences? • In case of fieldwork, does the research sample include both men and women? • In case of holding interviews, focus group discussions and case studies, does the studied population include both men and women? • In case of holding interviews, focus group discussions, etc., do the questions reflect the needs of both men and women?			
(4) Collecting data • Are gender statistics employed to reflect the situation of men and women in all areas? • Is the data sex-disaggregated? • Does the study refer to the gaps in the availability of sex-disaggregated data? • In case of suggesting indicators, do they take into account both men and women?			

Key questions	Yes	No	Comments
(5) Analysing data • Does the analysis reflect the gender roles (who does what)? • Does the study adopt a gender and development approach rather than a "women in development" approach? • Were correlations between data collected and gender differences employed? (Should data be broken down to the basics such as: age and sex and other relevant factors)? • Was gender-sensitive analysis employed? • Does the analysis include the needs, opportunities and experiences of both men and women? • Does the analysis include the impact of the sex-disaggregated data on both men and women?			
(6) Formulation of key findings • Are findings based on sex disaggregated data? • Do findings identify differences in needs between women and men according to their socially ascribed roles? • Do findings address how women and men are differently affected by the problem/phenomenon under investigation? • Do findings highlight gender inequalities and differences and not just women's issues? • Are the recommendations gender-sensitive (taking into consideration the needs and concerns of both sexes)? • Does the report include gender-sensitive language and avoid stereotypes?			
(7) Formulation of policy recommendations • Are the proposed policies gender-sensitive? • Do the proposed policies take into account the impact on both sexes? • Will both sexes benefit equally from the proposed policies? • Do the recommendations suggest ways to fill the gap in gender-disaggregated data or gender-related knowledge?			

Key questions	Yes	No	Comments
(8) Peer reviewing • Does the peer review team include both men and women? • Do evaluators' terms of reference specify the need for gender expertise? • Does the peer review team include at least one gender expert?			
(9) Dissemination of main findings and publications • Were the main findings/publications uploaded on the ESCWA website? • Is there a plan to disseminate the report at large, specifically to groups who have an interest and/or are affected by gender issues? • Was the publication shared with women's organizations and research centres?			

VIII. LEVELS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN RESEARCH

Below is a list of the various levels of gender mainstreaming in research applied by ESCWA:

1. *Fully engendered*

- Gender-sensitive perspective and approaches are mainstreamed throughout the research;
- Sex-disaggregated data is used on the primary and secondary levels;
- Gender-sensitive analysis of the data is employed;
- Findings and recommendations reflect the different needs and priorities of both men and women;
- Gender-sensitive language is used throughout the research.

2. *Partially engendered*

- The research addresses some gender aspects but gender is not mainstreamed throughout the entire process;
- The research has only one section dealing with gender;
- Sex-disaggregated data are used whenever available;
- Findings and recommendations may suggest ways to fill the gap in absence of sex-disaggregated data and knowledge about gender issues in this specific area;
- Gender-sensitive language is used throughout the research.

3. *Gender neutral*

- Gender issues are not relevant to the topic discussed;
- Gender-sensitive language is used whenever possible.

4. *Gender blind*

- Gender is absent throughout the research, although the research topic has a gender dimension;
- Sex-disaggregated data are not used, in spite of their availability;
- Gender-sensitive language is not used throughout the research.

IX. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

This section provides reference to further thematic guidelines that researchers can use. It is divided into four sets of guidelines. The first provides background information on the United Nations mandate to mainstream gender. It also provides guidelines to apply gender mainstreaming in the entire research cycle. The second set includes guidelines to develop terms of reference with a gender lens, to ensure that gender expertise and knowledge are reflected. The third set includes guidelines for using a gender-sensitive language. It provides alternative words to exclusionary ones. The fourth set includes a glossary on the various terms and concepts used in the field of gender mainstreaming.

A. GUIDELINES ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

European Commission (2009). *Toolkit: Gender in EU-Funded Research*. Brussels. Available from http://www.yellowwindow.be/genderinresearch/downloads/YW2009_GenderToolKit_Module1.pdf.

Hong Kong, Women's Commission (2009). "Gender mainstreaming checklist for legislation, public policies and programmes", December. Available from http://www.women.gov.hk/download/enabling_env/GM-checklist-form.pdf.

Leduc, Brigitte (2009). "Guidelines for gender sensitive research", November. Available from http://www.google.com.lb/url?url=http://www.icimod.org/resource/1290&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=gGOyU9WUEIHaOvj1gfgF&ved=0CCoQFjAE&sig2=TAeAJlROA2NJx0cG1aT03g&usg=AFQjCNH2LNx3C-sO1hssuCSUfEjPQ0fszg.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012) UNESCO Publications: Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines. Available from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ERI/pdf/UNESCO_Gender_Mainstreaming_Guidelines_for_Publications.pdf.

United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (2002). *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview*. New York. Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf.

B. GUIDELINES ON GENDER-SENSITIVE TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNESCO Gender Lens (2002). "Development of Terms of Reference (TORs) of UNESCO Surveys & Research", last updated in February 2003. Available from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BSP/GENDER/PDF/4.%20UNESCO%20Gender%20Lens%20for%20developing%20terms%20of%20reference%20(TORs)%20of%20surveys%20&%20research.pdf.

C. GUIDELINES ON GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

Empire State College – State University of New York. "Gender-exclusive language: introduction and exercise". Available from http://www8.esc.edu/esconline/across_esc/writerscomplex.nsf/0/564e043922d70d98852569c3006d727e?OpenDocument.

ESCWA Gender Sensitive Guidelines http://intranet.escwa.un.org/css/docs/1400199.pdf.

National Council of Teachers of English (1975, Revised 2002). Guidelines for Gender-fair Use of Language. Available from http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang.

Shaun Fawcett's Writing Help Central. "Gender-neutral equivalent words" Available from http://www.writinghelp-central.com/gender-neutral.html.

UNESCO (1900). *Guidelines on Gender-neutral Language*. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Writing Center. "Gender-sensitive language". Available from http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/gender-sensitive-language.

D. GENDER CONCEPTS AND TERMS

European Commission. *Glossary of Gender and Development Terms: Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation*. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sp/gender-toolkit/en/pdf/section3.pdf.

Gender Equality, UN Coherence & You. Glossary. Available from http://www.unicef.org/gender/training/content/resources/Glossary.pdf.

Annex

GLOSSARY*

The United Nations has clearly defined gender-related concepts as follows:

- **Gender** is a social and cultural construct, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of both of them. Gender-based roles and other attributes, therefore, change over time and vary with different cultural contexts.

- **Gender analysis** is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men and women in certain situations or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to, and control of, resources and the constraints they face relative to each other.

- **Gender equality** means that women and men have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences of men and women, and of the roles they play. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that their 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 and that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and prejudices.

- **Gender equity** is the process of being fair to men and women and is about equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage due to gender roles. It is a means to ensure that women and men have an equal chance, not only at the starting point, but also when reaching the finishing line.

- **Gender perspective** refers to the methodology or approach employed to investigate any issue or phenomenon through highlighting the different impact on men and women.

- **Gender statistics** is the sum of the following characteristics (a) data are collected and presented disaggregated by sex as a primary and overall classification; (b) data are reflecting gender issues; (c) data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of men and women and capture all aspects of their lives; and (d) data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Glossary.ashx).

- **Sex:** refers to the biological and physiological reality of being males or females.

- **Sex-disaggregated data** are data that are cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for men and women. When data are not disaggregated by sex, it is more difficult to identify real and potential inequalities. Sex-disaggregated data are necessary for effective gender analysis.

* Extracted from the course on "Gender Equality: UN Coherence and You". Available from http://www.unicef.org/gender/training/content/resources/Glossary.pdf.

- **Women in Development (WID)** is an approach to development based on the concept that women are marginalized in development-oriented interventions, with the result that women are often excluded from the benefits of development. Hence, the overall objective is to ensure that resources and interventions for development are used to improve the condition and position of women. The WID approach does not necessarily result in changing male-female hierarchal gender relations. Rather, it intends to support women-specific practical needs, such as women's skills development for income generation.

- **Gender and Development (GAD)** came into being as a response to the perceived shortcomings of women in development (WID) programmes. GAD-centred approaches are essentially based on three premises: (1) Gender relations are fundamentally power relations; (2) gender is a sociocultural construction rather than a biological given; (3) structural changes in gender roles and relations are possible. Central to GAD is the belief that transforming unequal power relations between men and women is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable improvements in women's lives.