



Gender Mainstreaming for Good Governance

Centre for Women
UN- ESCWA

A quarterly ECW issuance aiming at raising the gender awareness and responsiveness through highlighting the gender dimensions in various fields.



Delegates from Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar and the Sudan representing National Women Machineries (NWMs) and Ministries of Labour, asked ESCWA to follow up on the results of a meeting they attended on 29-30 March 2011 to discuss gender assessments of their Ministries of Labour they had conducted as a result to a training workshop the Regional Commission held in August 2010. The workshop hosted participants from the same sectors in six member countries and made them familiar with gender mainstreaming approaches and tools, concepts of organizational change, and with the necessary tools for conducting gender assessments in organizations and institutions.

As a result to the August training workshop, participants summarized the process of conducting their assessments in respective reports and included a number of recommendations for designing gender mainstreaming strategies based on their assessments.

Participants in the March meeting reviewed the assessment reports; explored the challenges during the preparation process and proposed measures to overcome them; and discussed how gender assessment results could be used to formulate gender mainstreaming strategies and what such strategies should contain. They asked ESCWA to follow up on the results through providing regional advisory services when required, and recommended to repeat the same exercise with member countries who did not participate in the August training workshop and the March assessment meeting.

Highlights:

- Gender Mainstreaming
- Analyzing, Strategizing and Monitoring
- How Institutional Gender Inequality is Expressed
- Gender Assessment Tools
- Why NWMs?
- Why Ministries?



*Upcoming events in the
ESCWA
Centre for Women*

- ▶ *Expert Group Meeting on "Media campaigns for gender equality and the empowerment of women in selected ESCWA member states", Beirut, 21-22 June 2011"*



Analyzing, Strategizing and Monitoring



The August 2010 Training Workshop

How Institutional Gender Inequality is Expressed

- Women occupy only few managerial and decision-making positions;
- While men are mainly decision-makers, women fill mainly subordinate and service jobs;
- Different wages are paid for the same job, with women earning 75% on global average for the same jobs compared to men;
- Women climb up in the hierarchy much slower than men;
- Management and supervisors have different expectation towards women and men;
- Part-time positions are usually filled with women;
- Women interrupt their work more often than men;
- Men have serious accidents during work more often than women;
- When pursuing a career, women postpone their marriage or having children more often than men.

Gender Assessment Tool

- **Sex-disaggregated data:** for collecting quantitative information on differences and inequalities between women and men. They can e.g. reveal differences in access to services, differences in access to decision making positions. All data that are collected should always be disaggregated by sex.
- **Gender analytical information:** for collecting qualitative information on differences and inequalities between women and men. They provide information about cultural norms and patterns and reveal the underlying causes of inequalities. Gender analysis should be a part of any kind of analysis or evaluation process.

Why NWMs?

The Beijing Platform for Action states that “a national machinery for women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.¹” It is, thus, essential for all governmental bodies and mechanisms to closely coordinate with the national women machineries in mainstreaming gender into their programmes and policies.

Nineteen out of the 22 Arab States have either established high-level National Women Machinery or restructured existing mechanisms to bring them in line with the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action. In their capacity as governmental authorities, National Women Machineries have been entrusted with two functions:

- (a) coordination among various public institutions and among them and civil society institutions;
- (b) monitoring and tracking the work of all governmental agencies in addressing women’s issues and promoting gender equality.

They have to safeguard and advise on how to mainstream gender into policies, strategies, programmes, and project budget allocations.

Hence, National Women Machineries are important key sources of information and expertise for line ministries. Due to their mandates, they have already worked on gender mainstreaming and can provide important information on lessons learned and good practices. They can also help harmonizing and synchronizing gender mainstreaming efforts in different ministries and between ministries and producers of national statistics, and, last but not least, they are an important link for ministries to the civil society and can contribute to establishing strategic alliances.

1 Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, chapter IV.

Why Ministries?

Gender mainstreaming is based on the understanding that gender-neutral policies do not exist. Any kind of decision made by organizations and institutions, especially in politics and governance, always has different implications for men and women. Therefore, it is essential that ministries ensure that their decisions take into account the specific needs and requirements of women as well as of men in order to work towards providing equal opportunities for all staff in their organisation as well as all citizens in their country. Ministries are also the ones that can and must ensure that resources are allocated in a way that allow for mainstreaming gender in all policies and programmes.

Ministries of labour play a key role in regulating the workforce at the national level. In many Arab countries, the role of labour ministries extends to include updating labour legislations so as to meet the needs of the labour market in light of the social and economic developments, providing needed quantitative and qualitative data on the status of labour at the national level as well as other services, such as nationalisation of the labour force, support programmes for the labourers, regulating the work of foreign workers, and regulating the relationship between the employers, employed and the state.

To that extent, actions of ministries of labour have a direct implication on women's participation in the economic sphere, be it through legislation and regulations that guide the economic sectors and labour force participation, or through extensive supervision of the technical and vocational education and other support programmes that enhance the labour force skills to enter the job market. Therefore, the partnership with the Labour ministries would allow for tangible and maximum impact and influence on women. In fact, more gender-sensitive ministries of labour will ensure the provision of more sensitive programmes that will have an impact on female participation in the labour force, particularly in ESCWA countries.

Quotes

Only through women's full and equal participation in all areas of public and private life can we hope to achieve the sustainable, peaceful and just society promised in the United Nations Charter.

Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General, United Nations

The agenda to secure gender equality and women's rights is a global agenda, a challenge for every country, rich and poor, north and south.

Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director, UN Women

As the world approaches a population of seven billion, it's high time to unleash the full potential of half the world's population.

Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UNFPA

Let us use the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day to make the millennium development goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education a reality.

Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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About Our Organization...

The ESCWA Centre for Women was established on October 1, 2003, following the Commission's adoption of Resolution 240(XXII). This resolution, recognizing that a fundamental part of development is the empowerment of women, called for the creation of a Committee on Women comprising the member countries, and for the establishment of a women's Centre at ESCWA. The Centre continues and expands on the work carried out by the Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming Team, formerly a part of the Social Development Division at ESCWA.

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