



# Gender Equality Policy



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



# Gender Equality Policy

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# FOREWORD BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



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Dear colleagues,

The OHCHR Gender Equality Policy that I approved on 9 September 2011 is now fully in force. It is the result of an extensive consultation process which started in late 2010.

As we advocate for women's rights and gender equality worldwide, I am conscious that we should first put these principles into practice in our daily lives, starting with our own Office. You will thus see that the Gender Equality Policy of OHCHR is largely an internal guidance document, outlining a joint vision, strategic priorities and processes for integrating gender perspectives throughout the work of the Office.

I would like to emphasize that this policy applies to all human rights staff members at Headquarters and in Field Presences, including Human Rights Components of Peace

Missions. Myself, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General, Directors, Chiefs of Branch, Heads of Field Presences and Chiefs of Section are primarily responsible for ensuring its implementation. I will hold all staff accountable for contributing towards gender integration efforts.

I therefore call on all of you to familiarize yourselves with the document and to understand its guiding principles and accountability mechanisms.

The policy is complemented by a Gender Equality Strategic Plan, which maps out concrete actions required to operationalize the policy, with detailed performance indicators, resources and timeframes for implementation.

I count on your full cooperation in implementing the Gender Equality Policy and Strategic Plan in your respective work, making gender equality a reality for our entire Office.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Navi Pillay' followed by the date '9/9/11'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Navi Pillay

United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights



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# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

## SCOPE

High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in New York, Directors, Chiefs of Branch, Heads of Field Presences, Heads of Human Rights Components of Peace Missions, Human Rights Advisers and Chiefs of Section, all staff members at Headquarters and Field level

## ENTRY INTO FORCE

9 September 2011



*Signature of HC and date of signature*

## REVIEW DATE

Review foreseen every four years, at the initiative of the Chief, Women's Human Rights and Gender Section

## REFERENCES AND SOURCES

- OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women (2000)
- OHCHR Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2002)
- Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)
- Evaluation of OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming (2010)

- ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2010)

## ANNEXES

- Glossary
- References

## HISTORY

The present Gender Equality Policy replaces OHCHR Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women (2000)



# 1. PURPOSE

**1.1** The Gender Equality Policy of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides internal guidance on how the Office aims to integrate a gender perspective and women's human rights throughout policy formulation, programme development and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation.

**1.2** To this end, the policy is informed by the human rights-based approach and the gender integration policy of the United Nations.

## 2. RATIONALE

**2.1** OHCHR is mandated to contribute to the realization of all human rights for all people. Accordingly, non-discrimination on the basis of sex is a fundamental principle of human rights law. In addition, OHCHR is required to implement the gender integration policy of the United Nations.

**2.2** The present policy has been developed in response to the above-mentioned mandates, lessons learned over the past ten years and results of the internal evaluation on gender mainstreaming conducted by OHCHR in 2010. In general, the policy aims to create an environment and shape a culture conducive to promoting women's human rights and to advancing gender equality.

**2.3** Within OHCHR, the need to integrate gender aspects into the overall human rights approach of the Office was officially recognized in 2000, with the adoption of the first OHCHR Gender Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights of Women. This was later followed by an OHCHR Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in 2002, which aimed to facilitate progress in integrating gender perspectives in the OHCHR activities.

Both documents were developed prior to the articulation of the global strategies, outlined in OHCHR Management Plan, for the achievement of its mandate, which limited their application.

Since 2005, women's rights and gender integration has increasingly been recognized and accepted within OHCHR as a core principle, which should consistently and systematically inform all areas of the Office's human rights work. The capacity to translate this core principle into operational activities was created in 2007 via the establishment of a special unit on Women's Human Rights and Gender.

**2.4** The evaluation of OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming (2010) confirmed, *inter alia*, that a revision of the existing gender policy statement was of importance to ensuring a more systematic approach in this regard. The present Gender Equality Policy takes into account current strategic thinking and is expected to provide clear policy guidance for ensuring the proactive and consistent integration of gender equality in all aspects of the Office's work.





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OHCHR staff visit a place of detention in Nepal (2009)

### 3. SCOPE

**3.1** The policy is largely an internal guidance document, outlining a joint vision, strategic priorities and processes for integrating gender perspectives throughout the Office. This policy applies to all OHCHR staff members at Headquarters and in the Field, and is led by the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in New York, Directors, Chiefs of Branch, Heads of Field Presences—including Missions—and Chiefs of Section.

**3.2** The policy gives broad strategic orientations for implementation, including institutionalizing gender equality in the organizational culture of OHCHR, and advancing gender equality throughout all areas of the Office's mandate (see Section 6). The policy be complemented by a detailed strategy as well as a set of tools on gender integration.





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*Human rights  
for everyone, everywhere.*



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## 4. POLICY

### FRAMEWORK AND VISION

**4.1** The Gender Equality Policy is based on the international human rights framework, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It reflects the application by the Office of international human rights standards, norms and principles, which include gender equality and non-discrimination.

**4.2** Gender integration (or mainstreaming)<sup>1</sup> is 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; and this in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally,

thereby ensuring that inequality is not perpetuated. Gender integration goes hand in hand with the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the elimination of discrimination against women. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality<sup>2</sup> (see more on gender integration in the Glossary, annex 1).

**4.3** The Office's areas of expertise, such as human rights treaties (particularly the monitoring of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provide an important entry point to promoting gender equality and women's rights, especially at country level. Human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) can make a valuable contribution towards to integrating a gender perspective in the understanding of human rights norms through their assessment of compliance with treaty obligations by States Parties. Moreover, implementing the Gender Equality Policy will impact the work of OHCHR at large, not only in carrying out applied research on critical human rights issues affecting women in particular, but also on the ground. This ground work will be evidenced by integrating a gender perspective, while mainstreaming human rights in the work of the United Nations Country Teams and helping strengthen national institutions and civil society organizations striving for improved gender equality.

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<sup>1</sup> A 2008 evaluation of the Office's performance in mainstreaming human rights within the United Nations noted that staff avoided using the term "mainstreaming" due to lack of clarity about its meaning. Throughout this policy the term "gender integration" is used rather than "gender mainstreaming", unless there is an explicit reference to an existing document featuring the word "mainstreaming".

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<sup>2</sup> ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, as contained in resolution 1997/2





**4.4** The vision of the Gender Equality Policy is that all OHCHR Divisions, the New York Office and Field Presences, with the support of the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section (WRGS), develop their own approach to integrating a gender perspective in their work and applying gender equality principles when working with external partners. In addition, all staff members should commit to acquiring basic knowledge in their respective areas of work. Finally, OHCHR Management Plans, work and cost plans, including budgets, policies, programmes, activities and documents at all levels, should be developed in a gender-responsive manner.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**4.5** Gender integration has been established as the global strategy of the United Nations for promoting gender equality, which refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys (see more on gender equality in the Glossary, annex I). The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirmed that women's rights are human rights within the international human rights framework. In implementing human rights work, OHCHR must comply with human rights guiding principles and these should also inform its gender integration agenda. Gender integration has been explicitly called for in the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action (1995), as well as in several General Assembly, ECOSOC and Security Council resolutions.<sup>3</sup>

### (a) Universality

**4.6** All people everywhere, women and men, are entitled to all human rights because of the immutable character of rights. However, people in many countries continue to be victims of unequal access and treatment in all spheres of life. Women constitute one group whose very entitlement to human rights is often challenged. For example, in some States, a female victim of rape may be accused of adultery while the perpetrator is not brought before the courts. Another example is the application of the right to property which, in some instances, is denied to women.

**4.7** Mandated by Member States to promote the universal respect for, observance and effective enjoyment of all human rights by all, OHCHR focuses attention on those who are at risk and vulnerable. OHCHR aims to ensure that States take all necessary steps to enable every person to enjoy their human rights. These steps

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<sup>3</sup> ECOSOC resolution 1997/2 on Gender Mainstreaming (1997) and General Assembly resolution A/RES/S-23/2 on mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (1997), followed by ECOSOC resolution 2010/29 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2010). Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880, 1888, 1889 and 1960 related to women, peace and security.

include the removal of obstacles to the equal enjoyment of such rights, the adjustment of domestic legislation, the adoption of measures of protection, but also positive measures in all areas, so as to achieve the effective and equal empowerment of women. By applying the principle of universality in gender integration and in the promotion of women's rights, OHCHR strives to ensure that cultures and their diversity, religious values and traditional practices, do not negatively impact women.

### **(b) Indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness**

**4.8** The spectrum of international human rights instruments covers civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. These human rights are

intertwined and as such, cannot be subjected to selectivity. The deprivation of women or men of the right to food and nutrition, for example, will inevitably impact the enjoyment of the right to health and may threaten the right to life. The fulfilment of each human right contributes to the realization of human dignity.

**4.9** In the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality, OHCHR seeks to address the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights by ensuring that programmes, policies and activities are mindful of this principle for men and women. Economic, social and cultural rights are now widely recognized at equal status with civil and political rights in attending to the rights of groups





subjected to discrimination and disadvantages. However, some of the cultural, economic and social rights related to gender issues, such as the right to health and education, may take more time to realize than some of the civil and political rights, as they are strongly ingrained in societies' structures.

### (c) Participation and inclusion

**4.10** Both women and men have the right to access information and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, well-being and enjoyment of other human rights. Under international human rights law, States are obliged to ensure free and meaningful participation in political life and the economy of both women and men from all age groups, belonging and status. The political and socio-economic empowerment of women is a crucial area to be supported, including through the promotion of equality of participation in peace processes, fostering women's contribution to democracy and to the economy.<sup>4</sup>

**4.11** Applying this principle to its own work, consultative processes leading to OHCHR policies, programming and activities should be structured so as to ensure the participation of both women and men. This would be reflected in all areas of the Office's work: from gender-responsive policy and programming, ensuring gender balance with respect to sources for monitoring and fact-

finding, participants in training activities, seminars and workshops, to consultations informing strategic thinking of the Office. It is not enough to programme FOR women; one has to programme WITH women.

### (d) Equality and non-discrimination

**4.12** Equality between women and men refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Legislations should recognize such equality and should be applied equally to men and women. Moreover, the principle of non-discrimination is the corollary of the principle of equality, as inequality, within the human rights framework, is understood as the product of discrimination. Under the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, discrimination includes direct discrimination, which occurs when a difference in treatment relies directly and explicitly on distinctions based exclusively on sex and characteristics of men or of women (e.g. inheritance law based on patriarchal transmission). It also includes indirect discrimination, when a law, policy or programme has the effect of creating or perpetuating inequality between men and women (e.g., a law on working hours).

**4.13** In applying equality and non-discrimination in its work, OHCHR will ensure that women and men benefit equally from its policies, programmes and activities and that inequality

<sup>4</sup> CEDAW and the Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming: a UNIFEM guide (2007)



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*The Human Rights Council at Palais des Nations, Geneva*

is not perpetuated. The Office will accompany States in taking positive measures to ensure the realization of women's human rights on the basis of equality with men. It will also support gender responsive frameworks tackling social and cultural patterns in society, which inhibit the realization of women's human rights. Moreover, OHCHR will create awareness about multiple discrimination affecting individuals who are rendered more vulnerable by different discriminatory practices based on gender, ethnicity, race, beliefs or any other grounds (see more on multiple discrimination in 5.6 and annex 1).

## 5. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

**5.1** In order to be effectively implemented, the Gender Equality Policy requires that gender equality be institutionalized in the Office culture, structure and processes, while a gender perspective be tackled as a cross cutting issues in all fields of OHCHR mandate. These broad strategic orientations and their practical implications will be detailed in a strategic framework for operationalizing the Office's commitment to gender equality.





*Silhouettes of a father and his child, Germany (2013)*

### **(a) Institutionalizing gender equality in OHCHR organizational culture**

#### **5.2** *Gender equality in human and financial resource management.*

Changing the institutional culture and structure will be crucial in moving beyond commitment to gender equality often associated with particular individuals, to an Office-wide engagement on the basis of shared values of diversity. As part of

the United Nations wide commitment to gender equality,<sup>5</sup> OHCHR supports equal career opportunities for all staff and appropriate working arrangements to balance work and family life. It also encourages the hiring of women for posts at equal qualification and aims at progressively

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<sup>5</sup> Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)



© EPA, photo



increasing the representation of women at decision-making levels. Furthermore, OHCHR staff individually and collectively has a responsibility to promote women’s human rights and integrate a gender perspective into all aspects of the Office’s work at all levels. In this regard, incoming staff may be evaluated during the interview process on their knowledge of gender concepts and methodologies and

international standards on women’s rights and their sensitivity to gender inequality and women’s human rights. Institutional incentives will be created to strengthen the accountability of managers for gender integration work, and to assimilate gender integration objectives into work plans and staff review, ensuring that these are reviewed on a regular basis (see more in section 6).



Gender integration training for the Heads of Field Presences and Gender Focal Points of the Middle East and North Africa region, in Doha, Qatar (2012)

### 5.3 Capacity development

Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender analysis is essential to the successful mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Staff members who are responsible for programme design and implementation, as well as those responsible for technical advisory services, will be trained in order to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in their work. Training of staff on gender integration is foreseen by the Office, first for Gender Facilitators and programme management units, and to be extended to all staff as part of their mandatory training package. Tools such as checklists and theme-specific guidance notes will be made available

to facilitate the gender integration work of every staff member. Accordingly, staff performance assessment will cover gender integration.

### 5.4 Knowledge and information management

The increased work of the Office in gender integration in general and women's human rights in particular has generated many good practices in ensuring gender-sensitive programming and implementation. This has, however, often remained ad hoc and unable to result in change. Systematically collecting and sharing good practices is essential for developing lessons learned. All organizational entities, including Field Presences, are encouraged to make an assessment of gender integration efforts of their offices when

reporting, and regularly undertake lessons learning exercises to improve the way they integrate a gender perspective in their programmes.

## **(b) Advancing gender equality in all fields of the OHCHR mandate**

### **5.5** *Placing women's rights and gender equality as one of the Office's priorities at the highest level.*

There is a perceived commitment to gender equality at the highest levels of OHCHR as reflected, for example, in the public statements of the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner. The fight against sex and gender-based discrimination is also an integral part of both the High Commissioner's Compact and the OHCHR Management Plan.<sup>6</sup> Though gender equality is relevant to all of the Office's priorities, this is not made explicit through the articulation of the strategies and global expected accomplishments. Gender concerns need to be fully integrated in the strategy process and captured in the monitoring and reporting processes.

### **5.6** *Integration of gender dimensions into the work of the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures and Treaty bodies.*

By adopting resolution 6/30 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed

its commitment to effectively integrate the human rights of women, as well as a gender perspective, in its work and mechanisms. This includes integrating gender equality concerns in all phases of the universal periodic review, the Advisory Committee, the review of mandates. It also extends to incorporating into its programme of work, sufficient and adequate time (at least an annual full-day meeting) to discuss the human rights of women, including measures that can be adopted by States and other stakeholders to address human rights violations experienced by women.<sup>7</sup> As for Special Procedures, the report by the Special Rapporteur on Torture, focusing on the protection of women from torture (2008), is a good example of ensuring that a specific legal framework (in this case, the torture protection framework) is interpreted and applied in a gender-sensitive manner, with a view to strengthening the protection of women. Regarding the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, integrating a gender perspective requires more effort than paying attention to specific issues of relevance to women, in particular eliminating discrimination against women, to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is entirely devoted. It requires that women's and men's socially constructed realities be addressed explicitly in the context of each of the rights in human rights instruments, to preventing,

<sup>6</sup> For example, "countering discrimination, in particular [...] on the ground of sex" is part of one of the six priorities in the High Commissioner's Compact for 2010 and 2011 and the OHCHR Strategic Management Plan for 2010-2011.

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Council Resolution 6/30 on "Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System" (2007)





or reduce, women's traditionally accepted disadvantages.<sup>8</sup> The General Comments adopted since 2000 by the Committee on Human Rights, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, giving States Parties detailed guidance on how to approach gender issues under individual articles and on the areas and types of information that should be provided in reporting to the Committees, are important steps in this direction.<sup>9</sup>

### **5.7** *Gender as a cross-cutting issue for the Office's thematic work.*

Thematic units provide the critical link between the analysis of human rights and gender issues and organizational priorities. They can contribute to raising awareness and understanding of gender and women's human rights issues, to ensure that gender aspects have been properly identified and are not lost in the process of aggregating organizational priorities. In the fight against discrimination, for example, elimination of entrenched, complex and multiple forms of discrimination is one of the key priorities of the Office. Racism and related intolerance is most significantly experienced by the most vulnerable members of society, in particular minority women. Despite

some encouraging advancement in the legal field, such as the adoption of General Comment on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights,<sup>10</sup> women throughout the world remain disproportionately affected by poverty and socio-economic inequalities. More work can be done to unpack and deconstruct the cultural, religious and social beliefs that have historically held women in inferior positions and to advocate for the interconnectedness and indivisibility of all women's rights. Other areas, such as the human rights of women migrants or domestic workers, often falling outside the scope of labour laws, are increasingly brought to the attention of the High Commissioner and deserve further attention.

### **5.8** *Promoting gender equality at the regional and country level.*

OHCHR Field Offices at country and regional level cover several issues related to women's rights and gender equality. These include violence against women, sexual violence in armed conflict, laws and practices that discriminate against women, impunity and its impact on women, the administration of justice, including access to justice and support to human rights mechanisms, such as the The Committee on the Elimination

<sup>8</sup> Integrating a gender perspective into United Nations human rights work, Women 2000, UN-DAW (1998)

<sup>9</sup> Other treaty bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee against Torture (CAT) or Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have taken account of the situation of women within the framework of guarantees of equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights and have focused on situations that are specific to women including gender-based violence.

<sup>10</sup> General comment No. 16 (2005) "The equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights" (art. 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)  
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/435/39/PDF/G0543539.pdf?OpenElement>



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of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). OHCHR has also been working closely with a key group of States to promote gender issues within the programme of the Human Rights Council, resulting in major outcomes such as a Joint Statement on equality before law (2009) and resolution 6/30 on “Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System.”<sup>11</sup> Other major outcomes from OHCHR collaborations with Member States include Human Rights Council resolutions 11/8 and 15/17 on eliminating preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity and

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 6/30 on “Integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations System” (2007)

a Joint Statement by 108 countries, (June 2010) on the issue.

However, without a systematic gender analysis, key issues affecting men and women at country and regional level may be missed. United Nations country teams often combine substantial gender expertise and provide opportunities to work on priority gender issues across organizations. OHCHR can draw on existing expertise and analysis within other United Nations organizations and add its own human rights lens to capitalize on existing synergies at the field level particularly, where other agencies’ gender advisers (UNDP, UNFPA or UNICEF) are actively promoting gender integration.



**5.9** *Strengthening collaborations on promoting women's human rights and gender integration with partners, including UN Women.*

In implementing the Gender Equality Policy, OHCHR will strengthen its working relations with relevant partners through bilateral and multilateral engagement at policy and operational levels. Partners include the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the Working Group on Discrimination in Law and Practice, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence or the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Within the United Nations system, the Office will continue to actively contribute to the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the United Nations Development Group) on women's rights issues, as well as share lessons learned and good practices in gender integration. In particular, the Office will contribute to the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming coordinated by UN Women, which includes the development of a common accountability framework containing a set of minimum performance standards for the United Nations system on gender integration. At the

*High Commissioner Navi Pillay addresses a ministerial meeting on the role of the United Nations in ending violence and discrimination against LGBT individuals, New-York, 26 September 2013*



bilateral level, OHCHR will pursue its engagement on specific women's rights and gender issues, such as reproductive health, with the United Nations Population Fund or violence against women, with UN Women.

## 6. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

**6.1** Responsibility for gender integration, the promotion of women's human rights and the advancement of gender equality will be performed through OHCHR institutional machinery. Internal OHCHR monitoring mechanisms to assess compliance with the Gender Equality Policy are crucial for an effective performance management. This process is the basis for holding staff members accountable and documenting good practices. To achieve desired outcomes, adequate human and financial resources will be allocated to the implementation of gender integration. This will entail better utilization of current resources, the assignment of additional resources where required and the alignment of resources with expected outcomes. The development of common-system approaches, whereby the entire United Nations system will apply agreed-upon norms and standards, indicators and targets, and evaluation frameworks will considerably reduce duplication of efforts, especially at the country

level.<sup>12</sup> An external evaluation to verify implementation of the policy in the OHCHR organizational structure and activities is foreseen after four years.

**6.2** The High Commissioner Deputy High Commissioner, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in New York, Directors, Chiefs of Branches and Heads of Field Presences have primary responsibility in ensuring that the respect for women's human rights and the advancement of gender equality are effectively carried out office-wide, guided by this policy and related documents. The High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and Assistant Secretary-General oversee all in-house initiatives and chair the OHCHR Senior Management Team,<sup>13</sup> holding all managers and staff accountable for gender integration efforts. Accountability frameworks (including provisions on gender responsive budgeting, programming, reporting and staffing) are being progressively developed.

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<sup>12</sup> Chief Executive Board resolution CEB/2006/2 on United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact (2006)

<sup>13</sup> Other members of the SMT are: the Chief of PSMS, the Chief of PPMES, the Deputy Director NYO, the Chief of DEXREL, the Chief of Communications Section, the Chiefs of Civil Society Section and Safety and Security Unit, the Chief of Office, and four representatives from the field. The SMT is the principal consultative and advisory body providing support, advice and recommendations to the High Commissioner when addressing, notably, women's human rights and gender equality. Such responsibility must be informed by and reflect a gender perspective.



These follow United Nations Chief Executive Board guidance to monitor Senior Management and their staff's commitment to implement the Gender Equality Policy and will be detailed in the Gender Equality Strategy document (forthcoming). Sustainable funding will be made available for activities that advance women's human rights and promote gender equality.

**6.3** Gender Facilitators<sup>14</sup> are OHCHR staff members who are strategically placed in the different Branches and Divisions at Headquarters, as well as the New York Office and Field

Presences. They are generally involved in strategy development, analysis, planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation.

Their responsibilities include *inter alia* the facilitation of gender integration in the planning, programming, reporting and monitoring of implementation within their organizational entity. Gender facilitators report on the integration of gender aspects in the different areas of the Office's work. These efforts are coordinated via the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section, within the context of the OHCHR Annual Report.

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<sup>14</sup> Gender Facilitators' functions were established as per the Senior Management Team decision adopted on 15 June 2010.



*UNAMID staff march alongside Sudanese women against gender-based violence, El Fasher, Sudan (2010)*





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This information also feeds into the Office's report on progress on gender integration.

Gender facilitators receive training on on gender integration and are equipped with tools and knowledge on how the Office's strategic priorities are linked with women's rights and gender equality. They also participate in further defining their terms of reference and work plans.

**6.4** The Women's Human Rights and Gender Section is responsible for the provision of substantive and operational guidance on the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy by all organizational entities. The Section oversees the work of

regional Gender Advisers<sup>15</sup> (or staff members designated by the Heads of Field Presences<sup>16</sup> to perform gender integration tasks) who monitor and report periodically on gender integration efforts in the Field, in close cooperation with local partners, including United Nations entities

The Section is also responsible for coordinating the work of Gender Facilitators and providing them with

<sup>15</sup> Regional Gender Advisers are positions established in OHCHR Field Presences. Advisers work in line with the strategic objectives of the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section by providing expert advice on the integration of women's human rights and gender perspectives in the work of the Office and on the implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

<sup>16</sup> Field Presences include Regional Offices, Country Offices, Support to Peace Missions, as well as Human Rights Adviser positions within United Nations Country Teams.



*Congolese women welcome UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mambassa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013)*



technical support in carrying out their functions. Furthermore, The Section contributes to developing knowledge management tools related to gender integration, with a view to enhancing Office-wide capacity, in close cooperation with the Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service and the Methodology, Education and Training Section. Efforts will be made to progressively integrate gender dimensions in all planning and reporting documents of the Office.

For example, the Women’s Human Rights and Gender Section and Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service will jointly develop performance indicators to measure progress made in gender integration within the Office. These will be included in the existing monitoring framework of OHCHR Global Management Outputs or that of Expected Accomplishments, to ensure that the identified indicators are gender-responsive.



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## 7. CONTACT

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## 8. DATES

The present Gender Equality Policy is issued at Geneva on 9 September 2011. It will be reviewed at the end of every other biennium (four year periodicity).



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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I

#### GLOSSARY

*This glossary is largely based on definitions from Human Rights Treaty Bodies, including general recommendations and comments, and where these do not exist, definitions commonly used in the United Nations system. The glossary is not an exhaustive list of commonly used definitions but includes terms mentioned throughout the policy or to those closely linked to these terms.*

#### Gender<sup>17</sup>

The term “sex” refers to biological differences between men and women. The term “gender” refers to socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men, and society’s social and cultural meaning for these biological differences, which result in hierarchical relationships between women and men and in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging

<sup>17</sup> General recommendation No. 23 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5.



women. This social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and can be changed by culture, society and community.

### **Gender analysis<sup>18</sup>**

Gender analysis is a tool to diagnose the differences between women and men regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and their

<sup>18</sup> ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality, International Labour Organization (2007)

access to development benefits and decision-making. It studies the links between these and other factors in the larger socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental context. A gender sensitive or gender responsive project reflects the application of gender analysis to project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### **Gender balance and equal participation<sup>19</sup>**

Participation is a core element of gender equality. Eliminating discrimination against women in the political and public life means to ensure women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- (i) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- (ii) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- (iii) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

<sup>19</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on women in political and public life, under the article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1997)





## Gender-based discrimination<sup>20</sup>

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms is discrimination, even where discrimination was not intended.

Direct discrimination against women constitutes different treatment explicitly based on grounds of sex and gender differences. Indirect discrimination against women occurs when a law, policy, programme or practice appears to be neutral in so far as it relates to men and women, but has a discriminatory effect in practice on women because pre-existing inequalities are not addressed by the apparently neutral measure.

## Gender equality and gender equity<sup>21</sup>

Inherent to the principle of equality between men and women, or gender equality, is the concept that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of

equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention.

Gender equity is used in some jurisdictions to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

## Gender integration/mainstreaming

Gender integration (or mainstreaming) is 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.<sup>22</sup> In theory, gender integration, as a strategy and methodology, does not mean an emphasis on women's experiences. In practice the implementation of gender integration - given the socially constructed differences and relations between males and females in most of the world's societies - often results in a

<sup>20</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5 and 16.

<sup>21</sup> General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 22.

<sup>22</sup> ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, as contained in resolution 1997/2

specific focus on women because they are mostly adversely affected by existing gender inequalities.

### **Multiple discrimination<sup>23</sup>**

The discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. Likewise, racial discrimination does not always affect women and men equally or in the same way. There are circumstances in which racial discrimination only or primarily affects women, or affects women in a different way, or to a different degree than men. Such racial discrimination will often escape detection if there is no explicit recognition or acknowledgement of the different life experiences of women and men, in areas of both public and private life.

### **Sex-disaggregated data**

Sex-Disaggregated Data is data that is collected and presented separately on men and women, boys and girls. Sex-

disaggregated data reflect roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men in every aspects of the society. For instance, the literacy rate, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependants, house and land ownership, loans and credit, and debts are included.<sup>24</sup>

### **Women's Empowerment<sup>25</sup>**

Empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied. Women's empowerment has five components, including both civil and political as well as cultural, economic and social dimensions: (i) women's sense of self-worth; (ii) their right to have and to determine choices; (iii) their right to have access to opportunities and resources; (iv) their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; (v) and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

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<sup>23</sup> General Recommendation No. 25: Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2000) and General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010),

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<sup>24</sup> UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (2003)

<sup>25</sup> Guidelines on Women's Empowerment, United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs



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- (ii) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and General Comment No. 28 on Equality of rights between men and women (2000)
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— Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States holding a Declaration of Human Rights poster in English

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