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Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF: Planned Follow-up Action

Summary

This conference room paper outlines the planned follow-up action by UNICEF to the recent evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF. The executive summary of the evaluation prepared by independent consultants is attached as an annex to this conference room paper.

* E/ICEF/2008/9.

“With concerted efforts, real progress, based on respect, universal human rights and equal opportunities, can be made towards transforming discriminatory attitudes, behaviours, customs, laws, institutions and practices in society. Effective partnerships, involving governments, donors and international agencies, can support this process through the design and implementation of human rights-based development strategies. For women, men, and for children, the time to refocus our efforts is now.”

*The State of the World's Children 2007:
Women and Children - The Double Dividend of Gender Equality*

1. UNICEF is fully committed to promoting “the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities”¹. Only by ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, girls and boys, can societies expect to create the conditions for ending poverty and enable every person to develop to his or her full potential.

2. To support both these and future efforts to improve performance, UNICEF included provisions in the MTSP and the 2006/2007 Organizational Management Plans of the Evaluation Office and Division of Policy and Planning for an evaluation of UNICEF’s application of its gender mainstreaming policy of 1994². The evaluation began with a self-assessment conducted by five country offices and one regional office³, then moved on to an external evaluation, conducted by an independent team of evaluators and managed by the Evaluation Office. A Reference Group was established that included UNICEF headquarters and field staff, as well as representatives from Burkina Faso, Canada and India. The evaluators conducted interviews with UNICEF staff and partners, reviewed an extensive range of documents and carried out six country visits. Their initial conclusions were discussed at a validation meeting in Ottawa in 2007 attended by UNICEF staff and Reference Group members from Burkina Faso and Canada.

3. The summary of the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation provides an overview of the external context for UNICEF’s work towards gender equality. With regard to the more recent context, since the start of the current Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006-2009, UNICEF has been assessing its progress in gender mainstreaming and seeking opportunities to improve performance. UNICEF’s 2007 report, *The State of the World's Children*, on the double dividend of gender equality, reflected the intent to transform UNICEF into a champion for gender equality. More recently, the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of 2007 provided a further impetus for all United Nations agencies, particularly through its section on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment⁴, and notably with regard to improved attention to the role of men and boys, strengthened accountability, disaggregated data, and gender parity in staffing. UNICEF has also noted the response of UNDP to its 2005 gender evaluation, and appreciates the significant efforts and improvements that UNDP and other sister agencies have achieved.

4. Most recently, UNICEF assessed its gender mainstreaming performance through a review of Country Office Annual Reports and of new Country Programme Documents approved by the

¹ UNICEF Mission Statement.

² E/ICEF/1994/L.5.

³ Barbados, Egypt, Kenya, Pakistan, Turkey and East and Southern Africa Regional Office.

⁴ A/C.2/62/L.63 paras 56 to 66 and A/62/253.

Executive Board during 2006 and 2007, both of which showed scope for improvement. The review of Country Office Annual Reports gave indications of which MTSP Focus Areas require greater attention with regard to gender mainstreaming, highlighting specifically the need for efforts with regard to gender-sensitive approaches to child survival programming. These reviews, alongside the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation, are being used as the basis for improved targets, indicators and strategies for attaining better gender equality results as part of the 2008 midterm review of the MTSP.

5. At the inter-agency level, UNICEF entered into a ‘complementarities process’ with UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM, identifying ways in which the work of all four organizations could be more strongly aligned to achieve gender equality results. A joint paper was presented to an informal session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in June 2007. UNICEF has committed itself to ensuring that the actions identified are followed up, and is in the process of doing so. One immediate agreement arising from the complementarities process was the preparation of a shared gender e-learning package for the four organizations, which will be completed by the end of 2008.

6. The evaluation identifies areas of both strength and weakness within UNICEF, including significant examples of good practice. Its overall conclusions with regard to the state of gender mainstreaming and gender equality as pursued by UNICEF are considered accurate. While acknowledging that UNICEF has suffered from many of the same challenges as other development agencies in relation to implementing gender mainstreaming, we are far from satisfied with UNICEF’s ability to deliver on our commitment to gender equality. The task of transforming UNICEF into a genuine champion for gender equality requires additional thinking and effort, both through and beyond the evaluation’s recommendations, which emanated from a necessarily incomplete reflection of UNICEF’s performance. It also requires efforts for improvement that address the challenges and are driven and owned by UNICEF and its partners at the field level.

7. **Follow-up.** The evaluation’s recommendations are broad, covering a range of issues including: policy, strategy, staffing, capacity, the programming process, financing, partnerships (including within the United Nations system) and gender in emergencies. UNICEF’s response will be undertaken in three phases. First will be the **initial response** to the gender evaluation; second, the development of a **comprehensive gender action plan** through a consultative process with UNICEF staff at all levels, and with partners; and third, a continuous process of **improvement and transformation** of UNICEF’s work. This will be supported by a dedicated Senior Coordinator for Gender Evaluation Follow-up and an allocation of additional core resources to support the actions described below.

8. The **initial response** in 2008/2009 will consist of a list of concrete actions in response to the specific recommendations of the evaluation. These include but are not limited to:

- (i) Appointing a dedicated Senior Coordinator for Gender Evaluation Follow-up.
- (ii) Updating policy and guidance through a **revision of UNICEF’s 1994 Policy** on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls which clarifies, *inter alia*, UNICEF’s specific role with regard to the rights of women and the role of men and boys; providing **updated organizational guidance on gender concepts and terminologies** to accompany the new policy; developing **guidance by sector/MTSP Focus Area** on the application of gender mainstreaming; providing guidance to Country Offices on UNICEF support to the processes around implementation

of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**; and updating the gender components of the **Programme Process and Procedures Guidance Manual and training**⁵. (*Evaluation recommendations 1, 2, 4, 22*)

(iii) Addressing gender in humanitarian response by identifying key bottlenecks and other factors limiting gender equality mainstreaming, through developing and evaluating pilot projects in five countries⁶ to provide lessons learned with a view to replication⁷. (*Evaluation recommendation 21, 23*)

(iv) Strengthening accountability through developing an **enhanced system** to incorporate gender perspectives and gender equality results into all aspects of work, including all new Country Programme Documents and the next generation of Situation Assessments and Analyses, which will be reviewed to assess their incorporation of gender equality considerations; and preparing guidance on incorporation of responsibilities relating to **gender equality in generic job descriptions**. (*Evaluation recommendations 6, 7, 11, 13, 18*)

(v) Strengthening capacity through creating a **pool and roster of female and male gender expertise** within specific sectors and areas who are available to support work at country level; completing the joint **CD ROM-based training**⁸ (with UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM) on gender equality and establishing it as a foundation training for all staff alongside the existing programme process and basic security courses; and promoting UNICEF staff involvement in inter-agency Gender in Emergencies training (GENCAP). (*Evaluation recommendations 12, 14*)

(vi) Improving data by reviewing UNICEF's support to the roll-out of **DevInfo** and identifying ways in which sex-disaggregation of data and other data considerations relevant to gender might be further promoted and strengthened in that support. (*Evaluation recommendation 27*)

(vii) Reinforcing the existing instructions that require **gender assessments** of existing Country Programmes of Cooperation. (*Evaluation recommendation 17*)

(viii) Promoting innovative programming on gender equality through encouraging Field Offices to develop Regular Resource Set-Aside proposals that emphasize gender equality results. (*Evaluation recommendation 24*)

(ix) Undertaking research to assess and identify primary **gender disparities affecting men and boys**, with particular regard for the MTSP Focus Areas (*Evaluation recommendation 19*)

9. For the second phase, a **comprehensive Gender Action Plan** will be prepared through a detailed consultative process with partners and UNICEF field staff, and completed by the second quarter of 2009. The plan will address the remaining recommendations of the evaluation not covered by the initial response⁹. The consultative process will include both further review of

⁵ Initial update of PP training already complete and being piloted in Pakistan in May.

⁶ Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan.

⁷ Already under way through the DFID/Norway funded project on "Strengthening gender programming in humanitarian contexts".

⁸ Joint course with UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM already under development, expected completed end-2008.

⁹ Recommendations 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 20, 25.

recommendations that require additional management consideration, and wider consideration within UNICEF, including at regional and field levels, as several recommendations have major change implications. The plan, including the consultative preparatory process, will also respond to the broader overall goal of long-term transformation of UNICEF's work on gender, which will be key for the implementation of several of the recommendations.

10. These efforts will be a major aspect of follow-up to the midterm review of the MTSP, and will be closely linked to the revision of the Gender Policy and the submission of the revised Policy to the Executive Board. Following the initial consultation with all regions in the second quarter 2008, Regional Offices and Headquarters Divisions will initiate consultations (whether as part of Management Team meetings or through dedicated meetings), to provide inputs for the organizational Gender Action Plan and specific regional and country actions. This will include consideration of changes in staff capacity in relation to the next biennial and/or country office budgets (the subject of a number of outstanding recommendations that will be addressed in the consultative process). There will also be a consultation in the first quarter of 2009 with key partners both from within and outside of the United Nations system, including agencies with recognized good practice in gender policy.

11. Both the immediate actions and the development of the Comprehensive Gender Action Plan will be undertaken in consultation and collaboration with other United Nations partners in order to promote coherence in policy and programming. UNICEF will draw upon the new United Nations Development Group (UNDG) mechanisms, building upon collaborative work undertaken through the former UNDG Gender Task Team. UNICEF will also take advantage of the resources and expertise within the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality taskforces, including the Taskforce on Capacity Development (co-chaired by UNICEF) and the new Taskforce on System-Wide Tracking, which will provide valuable inputs on tracking resource allocations for gender equality. UNICEF will continue its efforts to support the Secretary-General's Campaign to End Violence against Women and other relevant initiatives under the MTSP.

12. The initial response and consultative process will be coordinated by the Division of Policy and Practice. The Executive Director will be briefed on progress on a regular basis. Regional and Divisional Directors will brief the Executive Director on progress within their regions and divisions at Global Management Team meetings. UNICEF senior management will write to all staff to inform them of the key conclusions of the evaluation, envisaged follow-up and responsibilities at all levels to contribute to the initial response, the longer-term development and implementation of the Gender Action Plan and goals for continuous strengthening and transformation of UNICEF's work in this area.

13. UNICEF will present an update on the initial response to the Evaluation and actions taken at the 2009 second regular session of the Executive Board.

Executive Summary of the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF*

A. Overall Assessment

1. There is a strong correlation between increased gender equality and the achievement of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 (to promote early child survival) and other MDGs. For this reason, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) can only achieve its core goals by addressing gender inequality at multiple levels. UNICEF's 1994 Gender Policy notes that, "...*the social economic situation of women, as de facto managers of households, income earners, caregivers of family health...profoundly affects efforts [in] infant and child mortality and nutrition*"¹.

2. However, UNICEF has failed to implement its 1994 Gender Policy systematically. This is due more to the way that UNICEF has implemented gender mainstreaming, rather than to any inherent weakness in gender mainstreaming as an approach. The primary failure has been in the organization's understanding of what is actually required to mainstream gender equality in a development programming and emergency context.

Despite multiple institutional weaknesses identified by the evaluation, UNICEF has generated many good practices in gender equality programming. However, these have tended to be the result of individual efforts and there is no system in place to ensure they are shared throughout the organization or scaled-up to the national level or beyond.

3. UNICEF has also significantly under-resourced the gender mainstreaming process and has not built in effective accountability mechanisms. This problem has worsened in the past 10 years, and the organization's commitment to gender mainstreaming at the most senior levels has either flagged or has not been communicated effectively to managers and programme staff at the regional and country levels.

4. Due to its poor performance in implementing its Gender Policy, UNICEF is not achieving optimum results; the organization faces the prospect of some programmes reinforcing or exacerbating existing gender inequalities, or failing to meet their objectives. If UNICEF continues to implement its Gender Policy with the same ad hoc approach, it will further undermine programming effectiveness and waste institutional resources. It may also cost lives.

5. UNICEF's 1994 Gender Policy is unique in combining a focus on increased equality in programming with a life cycle and rights-based approach. While the Policy needs to be updated in some areas, its main tenets and principles are sound. However, UNICEF needs to recognize that to fulfil its core mandate, its Gender Policy must go beyond being stated as a priority on paper, and should be treated as a real institutional priority and operationalized accordingly.

6. Compared with similar institutions, UNICEF is well-placed to be effective in gender mainstreaming because of its high credibility with partners, its strong field presence, the

* This text comprises the Executive Summary of the independent Evaluation Report.

¹ 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls: A Policy Review' (E/ICEF/1994/L.0005).

commitment of its staff to social justice, its life cycle and right-based approaches, its innovative programming, and given that UNICEF already has a core group of leaders actively engaged in integrating gender equality into programming. Their work in this area, however, is not yet rewarded in any systematic way.

B. Evaluation Context and Purpose

7. UNICEF commissioned a global evaluation of its Gender Policy in March 2007. The evaluation was overseen by a reference group led by a Deputy Executive Director and managed by UNICEF's Evaluation Office. Its purpose was to identify the organization's strengths and weaknesses related to the integration of gender equality into UNICEF's programming; and to identify good practices in gender equality upon which UNICEF could build effective future programming.

8. The evaluation represents the second step in a three-part process. The first, also led by the Evaluation Office, was a self-assessment of UNICEF's Gender Policy implementation in five country offices (CO) and one regional office (RO).² The third step will be a consultative strategic planning process based on the evaluation results and the priorities for change that UNICEF identifies, to be led by the Division of Policy and Planning.

9. This evaluation takes place in the context of the United Nations reform process and at a time when many multilateral and bilateral institutions are reconsidering their gender mainstreaming and integration processes. 'Gender mainstreaming' here refers to the process of assessing the implications for women, men, boys and girls of any planned action, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels to ensure that both women's and men's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres - with the goal of achieving gender equality.³

10. A 2005 study by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) summarized the conclusions of gender equality evaluations from nine aid agencies. It found that gender mainstreaming has not been particularly effective due to its being given low priority and a corresponding lack of resources and accountability. It also found insufficient institutionalization of related processes and limited reporting of gender equality results, while new aid modalities have diverted attention away from gender equality.⁴ Similarly, UNICEF's self-assessment exercise found that the gap between policies and their implementation at the country level is due to a lack of financial and technical resources; insufficient capacity and tools within the organization; unclear systems of accountability for gender mainstreaming; and the lack of a clear corporate policy, leading to ad hoc approaches and the inconsistent integration of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive language.

11. UNICEF requested the Evaluation Team to seek evidence to confirm or refute the self-assessment exercise conclusions, the NORAD study, and the additional issues identified during the inception phase of the evaluation. To do this, the Evaluation Team collected evidence via: face to

² The self-assessment exercise took place in five COs and one RO: Barbados, Egypt, Kenya/ESARO, Pakistan and Turkey.

³ ECOSOC, Conclusion 1997/2.

⁴ NORAD, 'Gender and Development – a review of evaluation reports 1997-2004', 2005.

face and telephone interviews with staff at UNICEF Headquarters, ROs and other locations; an Intranet discussion and two institutional surveys; and six in-depth country case studies in Jordan, Moldova, Uganda, Mali, Nicaragua and Nepal. This was complemented by an extensive document review and an institutional analysis from the perspective of organizational commitment, accountability, capacity and funding.

C. UNICEF's 1994 Gender Policy

12. The main issues related directly to UNICEF's Gender Policy as a document are:

- Many UNICEF staff members either have not read the Policy or are not aware that it exists.
- Those who have read the Policy found it fairly inaccessible and poorly presented.
- Although the Policy explicitly states that UNICEF staff should promote women's rights and empowerment, this principle has not been communicated clearly to staff by senior management and many staff report confusion about whether they should focus solely on children's rights, or on both women's and children's rights.
- Some staff do not clearly distinguish between UNICEF's Gender Policy in programming and its staff gender parity policy.

13. UNICEF's Gender Policy needs to be updated. The Policy contains core elements that remain relevant for UNICEF, including the promotion of a gender equality approach, support for the continued need for gender-specific interventions in some contexts, special attention to the girl child and the promotion of women's rights and empowerment. The Policy now needs to:

- Adapt the gender analysis model it promotes to reflect both the needs and the roles of men and boys.
- Be accompanied by an operational framework and gender analysis tools relevant to the different contexts and sectors in which UNICEF works.
- Clarify the links between the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- State the business case for its Gender Policy and highlight the links between increased gender equality and achievement of both its core mandate and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

D. Commitment

14. The evaluation found that UNICEF staff has a strong commitment to social justice and, to some extent, to gender equality. However, the values associated with the latter are not automatically internalized. In general, UNICEF's commitment to gender equality is more individual than institutional. There is also an overall staff perception that the level of commitment to gender equality shown by UNICEF's senior management is not strong enough. They repeatedly stated that they felt that this institutional executive commitment was both essential and currently missing. In particular, they noted that gender equality is not clearly integrated into any of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) focus areas (except education), which limits how effectively they can promote gender equality at the CO level. The MTSP, however, does include several key performance indicators related to gender equality and annual reports indicate that, at times, field offices have also been slow to make the changes implicit in these indicators.

15. Ten years ago UNICEF was seen as a leader in the promotion of gender equality within the UN system. However, there has been considerable slippage in this leadership over the past decade. For example, while UNICEF is still active in promoting gender equality in some inter-agency task forces, there are now significantly less resources allocated to gender staffing. Also, the shift of the Gender Equality and Human Rights Unit (GEHRU) to Policy from Programmes has weakened its link to programme staff at the CO level, almost to the point that GEHRU is invisible at the field level. GEHRU itself is significantly under-resourced. In the words of one Regional Advisor, "...gender has been mainstreamed into invisibility."

E. Challenges of Applying a Gender Mainstreaming Approach

16. Gender mainstreaming is not an easy strategy to implement. To ensure its systematic implementation, UNICEF needs to reiterate frequently its commitment to gender mainstreaming. Otherwise, the strategy readily gets lost among competing priorities.

17. Effective gender mainstreaming requires a systematic analysis of complex social and economic relations at multiple levels of society – an analysis that goes well beyond counting male and female participants. This takes time, expertise and money. The time allocated for this within UNICEF is limited or non-existent, and the number of specialized gender positions within the agency can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

18. Another challenge is that the analytical process required in gender analysis often leads to an examination of one's own personal values and relationships from a gender lens. Some staff find this either threatening or an uncomfortable and difficult process. The promotion of gender equality also challenges the existing power relationships and asks staff to actively develop a means of changing them. Some staff also see the promotion of increased gender equality as a form of cultural interference, while others regard gender analysis as a luxury to be undertaken only after other programme priorities have been addressed. Many see gender as a term associated solely with 'women and girls' and do not see the connection with the situation of men and boys. Some staff also reported that they felt stigmatized when they actively promoted gender equality.

F. UNICEF Capacity

19. Currently, competence in gender equality is rarely considered in recruitment. This may be one of the reasons why there are relatively few cases of UNICEF staff taking a strategic approach to gender equality issues. In general, UNICEF's capacity in gender equality programming is limited. UNICEF programme staff lack access to institutional gender specialists and do not have a good understanding of how to integrate gender equality into programming. This latter point is particularly significant as gender mainstreaming relies on **all** staff integrating gender equality into their work.

20. Only half of UNICEF staff has had any gender training and only a small minority of this group feels that they have adequate skills and knowledge to be able to apply gender equality principles within a regular programming context. Staff are also struggling to effectively integrate gender equality into UNICEF's other programming approaches, especially the human rights-based approach and results-based management. Staff recognize these challenges and are generally quite open to learning more about how to integrate gender equality into programming.

21. UNICEF's programme documentation, particularly those components related to results

statements and key performance indicators, tends to aggregate ‘children’, ‘adolescents’, ‘community members’, etc. instead of disaggregating each of these categories by sex. Without this differentiation, UNICEF staff cannot measure the impact of the programmes it supports on specific groups of men, women, girls and boys. Those interviewed pleaded for practical tools that would enable them to conduct sector-focused gender analysis, develop qualitative, gender-sensitive monitoring indicators, etc.

22. However, UNICEF staff is overstretched by the organization’s process-heavy mode of operation and many fear that integrating gender equality into programming more systematically will further increase their workload. Currently, UNICEF also tends to rely on its Gender Focal Points (GFPs) to provide gender expertise at both the RO and CO levels. However, most GFPs do not have the requisite gender background to effectively serve in this role and most fulfil these duties in addition to an already full workload.

23. To sufficiently develop staff capacity so they are able to effectively integrate gender equality into programming, UNICEF needs to develop a systematic staff training and capacity-building programme at all levels so that staff are able to, at a minimum:

- conduct a basic gender analysis in their sectors of responsibility;
- recognize when they need to call upon more in-depth gender expertise for support;
- identify strategic entry points for gender analysis and inputs;
- develop genuinely gender-sensitive results statements and performance indicators; and
- advocate effectively for gender equality approaches with national partners.

24. In addition, UNICEF needs to ensure that staff has ready access to specialized gender expertise, and it should hire additional internal gender experts, at a **minimum** at the HQ and regional levels.

G. Accountability

25. There is a general lack of accountability for implementing UNICEF’s Gender Policy. Managers at all levels do not consistently enforce or provide support for the integration of gender equality into programming. UNICEF generally does not define responsibilities to support gender equality clearly, even for its GFPs. Many GFPs are in relatively junior positions and do not have the authority to hold their colleagues accountable for integrating gender equality into programming. For these reasons, UNICEF urgently needs to address the accountability issue at all levels and should ensure that its senior managers send a clear message that all staff will be held accountable for integrating gender equality into their particular areas of responsibility. UNICEF also needs to start holding its national partners accountable for integrating gender equality into UNICEF-supported programming.

H. Funding

26. The evaluation found that it was not possible to track spending on gender equality initiatives within UNICEF’s existing financial tracking systems. Staff reported that funding allocated to social and attitudinal change and/or advocacy initiatives, including gender equality initiatives, is sometimes vulnerable to reallocation to other budget lines, in part because these are long-term processes requiring sustained long-term funding commitments. At the CO level, in general,

adequate funding is available for gender equality in programming. The dearth of gender equality expertise within UNICEF staff is currently a more critical constraint than programme funding.

I. Programming Processes in Development

27. UNICEF has an important role to play in the integration of gender equality into the Common Country Assessments (CCAs). One challenge is that in cases where the gender content of CCAs is more descriptive than analytical, the same weakness tends to pass through to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The Team also found that where Situation Analyses (SitAn) have been implemented, this has contributed to a better gender analysis at the country level, although there was still room for more in-depth analysis. The recent revision of Situation Analysis guidelines therefore offers a strategic opportunity to strengthen gender analysis at country levels early in the programming process.

28. The CCA and UNDAF processes provide a good opportunity for UNICEF to promote the inclusion of priority gender equality inputs in United Nations-supported programming. Amongst other initiatives, UNICEF could advocate for increased consultations among national and United Nations partners and civil society organizations that have a good understanding of gender equality issues in the country concerned.

29. The evaluation found that gender equality issues are insufficiently addressed in Country Programme Documents (CPDs) and Country Programme Action Plans. Additionally, gender equality inputs in annual work plans and in monitoring and evaluation documents tend to be even weaker, while gender equality results are reported on inconsistently. In particular, annual reports tend to report mainly on the participation levels of boys and girls or women and men as opposed to qualitative changes in gender equality. Specific programmes show little analysis of whether programme activities would affect girls and boys and men and women differently, and there is limited analysis of the underlying causes of gender inequality and how these should be addressed.

J. Programming Processes in Emergency Contexts

30. The integration of gender equality into UNICEF's emergency work is weak in terms of institutional commitment, staff capacity, accountability and the allocation of dedicated human and financial resources, especially at the field level. Staff capacity issues include a poor understanding of the related gender equality issues within each cluster, as well as of the relationship of these issues to programme success and priorities; some UNICEF staff perceive integrating gender equality into emergencies to be a luxury, since they think their primary focus should be on 'saving lives'. UNICEF staff also tends to see women, boys and girls more as vulnerable groups that require services rather than as actors in the emergency response. Many emergency preparedness plans are not informed by a prior gender analysis and consequently, there is a risk that gender equality issues will not be addressed in emergencies, particularly in rapid onset emergency contexts.

31. At the field level, UNICEF staff do not feel empowered or able to address the gaps in integrating gender equality into an emergency context, particularly when working with other main service providers in humanitarian assistance that face similar gaps. UNICEF could take a much stronger lead in this area. UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) has been proactive in addressing the many challenges UNICEF staff encounter in integrating gender equality into emergency programming. UNICEF supported the development of the 1999 Inter-Agency

Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Policy and the recently published handbook on gender in emergencies, and EMOPS allocated an HQ-based staff member to document good practices in gender equality in an emergency context. However, sufficient gaps and weaknesses remain for UNICEF to consider a separate in-depth assessment to provide guidance on how to strengthen the integration of gender equality into emergency programming.

K. Partnerships

32. In general, UNICEF has established a good relationship with its national, United Nations and donor partners. Indeed, one of UNICEF's key strengths has been its ability to foster these relationships and to act as a convenor among the multiple stakeholders involved. However, UNICEF still tends to limit accountability of its national partners on gender equality to reporting on male/female participation.

33. There is also a general lack of clarity among the different United Nations partners about their respective points of overlap in gender equality programming. In some countries, this is especially acute for United Nations agencies interacting with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), as the different agencies are not always clear on who is 'in charge' of the gender agenda for the United Nations at the national level.

34. To help address this 'mandate overlap', the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNIFEM and UNICEF recently prepared a 'complementarities' paper on cooperation in gender equality and presented it to their executive boards to accompany their draft strategic plans. The four agencies are now developing common gender training materials. Building on promising experience in some countries, UNICEF could make further use of the United Nations country team's United Nations Gender Theme Group (UNGTG) to agree on a division of labour and develop specific joint programming initiatives based on their mutual strengths.

L. Good Practices

35. Despite the institutional weaknesses identified, UNICEF has generated many good practices in gender equality programming. However, these tend to be the result of individual efforts and there is no system in place to ensure that they are shared throughout the organization or scaled-up beyond a national level. This lack of sharing of good practices was a generic weakness of UNICEF highlighted by the 2007 organizational review.⁵

36. The evaluation found that the most effective good practices in gender equality were those that: stressed a strategic approach that is inclusive of men and boys; advocated evidence-based policy informed by community-level needs and priorities; and emphasized early gender socialization and adolescent empowerment. Within UNICEF, giving responsibility for gender equality to more than one person within a CO or RO, with senior staff coordinating and holding staff accountable appears to be successful.

37. The evaluation also identified good practices in emergency contexts, particularly with regard to gender-based violence. Many of these date from the 1990s and have not been documented or

⁵ Giving Works, 'UNICEF Organizational Review – Synthesis Report: Findings and Summary Recommendations', 2007.

used to inform UNICEF practice. A summary analysis of good practices in both development and emergency programming identified during the evaluation is provided in the Appendix to the main report.

M. Conclusions

38. UNICEF faces specific challenges in implementing a gender mainstreaming approach:

- A perception on the part of UNICEF staff that there is a lack of clear political will at senior management levels to support increased gender equality.
- Staff is not held systematically accountable for integrating gender into programming in either a development or emergency context.
- Many gender integration inputs into programming processes are either inadequate to the task required, or are not systematically applied by staff where the existing guidelines or procedures are adequate and clearly stated.
- There is limited staff capacity in gender equality, particularly gender analysis.
- Staff has limited access to specialized gender expertise.
- The institutional rewards for promoting gender equality in programming are limited.
- There is a lack of communication within the institution about UNICEF's position on the promotion of women's rights within the context of a child-focused organization.
- There is a lack of clarity regarding the role of GFPs at all levels.
- There is a lack of clarity within United Nations organizations regarding which organizations should be responsible for what type of programming related to women's rights and empowerment, and where UNICEF fits in this spectrum.

39. The root causes of these challenges include:

- The overall complexity of implementing gender mainstreaming strategies, which to work effectively, call for a significant transformation in the way an institution works and a major allocation of human and financial resources.
- The difficulty in maintaining the momentum and interest generated by the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing for more than 10 years.
- Low levels of training of UNICEF staff in gender analysis.
- A system-wide tendency to reward administrative efficiency over innovative and substantive programme content.
- The fact that each programme requires an individual, customized solution to promote increased gender equality within the specific sectoral and cultural context.
- The fact that gender equality programming often needs a long-term view and funding commitment, while many funders of UNICEF programming only provide funding for three- to five-year periods of time.
- The fact that gender equality programming, since it explicitly seeks to change cultural values and power relationships, often encounters more resistance than economic development programming (even when the latter has a similar effect).

40. On the plus side, the evaluation concluded that UNICEF has a much stronger base on which to build more effective gender equality programming than many other multilateral and bilateral institutions. This is due to:

- High credibility among partners, public and donors, and a strong relationship with civil society organizations.
- A strong field presence, the collection of sex-disaggregated data and an understanding of local conditions that inform the gender equality programming inputs needed.
- High staff commitment to promoting social justice in programming, with many staff being open to working more actively to promote increased gender equality.
- UNICEF's life cycle and right-based approaches that could be readily adapted to be more inclusive of gender equality issues.
- A strategic approach to programming, which can lead to innovative programming that addresses some of the underlying causes of gender disparities.
- A critical mass of individual leaders and managers who promote the integration of gender equality into programming.

41. It is important to understand that it is not possible to tackle the problems facing children without understanding and addressing the primary gender equality issues confronting their parents and the gender-based power relationships within each country in which UNICEF operates. If mothers are perceived to have fewer rights than the fathers and sons in the family, both sexes of the next generation grow up internalizing that this is an acceptable way to treat women and girls and that it is normal for boys and men to dominate both at the household and societal level. Men and boys also pay a price for this imbalance in terms of higher levels of stress-related diseases due to the pressures on them to serve as the family breadwinners. To address these core issues, UNICEF must find effective ways to incorporate gender analysis processes into its programming systems and ensure that programming decisions take the results of these gender analyses into account.

42. UNICEF is in an unusual, perhaps unique, position in that it **has to** address gender equality issues to fulfil the organization's mandate. However, to take advantage of its strengths and to truly integrate gender equality into its programming, UNICEF should shift its approach to gender equality to one where it is a genuine priority focus that underpins the organization's success in carrying out its core mandate.

43. The following recommendations are designed to support this transformation and in particular, to feed into the forthcoming planning process for strengthening gender integration.

N. Recommendations

44. The challenge that lies ahead is how to harness the tremendous work being done by a talented group of individuals within UNICEF to promote gender equality, and how to find ways to ensure that this becomes part of the normal operating standards and ethos of the organization for which all staff are held accountable. To do this, UNICEF needs to seriously consider the following recommendations:

Policy

45. It is recommended that:

UNICEF retain the core elements of its 1994 Gender Policy (promotion of gender equality, continued support for selected gender-specific programmes, special attention to the girl child), but update the Policy to also reflect:

- a. a clear rationale and business case for UNICEF's continued promotion of gender equality in its programmes;
 - b. a reiteration of UNICEF's position on the promotion of women's rights and empowerment;
 - c. the need to include gender issues affecting men and boys;
 - d. a conceptual framework that clearly outlines and analyses the complementarity with the Human Rights-based Approach to Programming, results-based management and gender equality, including the interface between CRC, CEDAW and gender equality;
 - e. UNICEF's position on integrating gender equality within emergency contexts; and
 - f. a requirement for an annual report-back mechanism to the Executive Board.
46. To help operationalize the Policy, UNICEF also needs to:
- g. translate the Policy into all of the United Nations official languages;
 - h. provide operational guidance, by sector;
 - i. provide operational guidance on gender equality issues within both the development programming sectors and in emergency contexts;
 - j. include an updated approach to gender analysis in programming that is rights-based, inclusive of men and boys, and takes a life cycle and settings approach; and
 - k. produce two versions of the Policy: (i) a short version that states core principles and serves as a fundamental platform statement; and (ii) a longer version that explains the Policy in more detail to capture the complexity and importance of UNICEF's gender equality work.

47. UNICEF seriously considers adopting new language and terminology that reflect exactly what the organization is trying to achieve with its gender equality policy. For example, UNICEF should speak about increased equality between women and men and boys and girls in specific contexts as opposed to using the more generic term 'gender equality'.

Strategy

48. UNICEF's Executive Director restates UNICEF's commitment to promoting increased gender equality and communicates this message clearly to UNICEF staff, particularly senior management. The Executive Director also establishes a senior-level Gender Policy Revitalization Task Force with the authority to make significant changes as needed, accompanied by adequate funding and human resources.

49. UNICEF's Executive Board ensures that gender equality is visibly and explicitly integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the MTSP in all focus areas and relevant indicators as a part of the 2008 mid-term review process.

50. The Executive Board agenda includes gender equality as a regular agenda item on which different UNICEF actors are required to report regularly.

Accountability

51. UNICEF builds in significantly stronger accountability systems at all levels for integrating gender equality into its programming and for the achievement of gender equality results, including potentially a mandatory gender equality review and sign-off system for the approval of programme documents and funding.

52. UNICEF instructs its managers to ensure that the Performance Evaluation Reports of each person they supervise include gender equality programme skills development and key assignments related to gender equality integration as appropriate for the specific position and that senior management holds its managers accountable for doing so.

Staffing and Gender Expertise

53. UNICEF appoints a full time Regional Gender Equality Advisor in each RO and ensures that they have at least some expertise and awareness of gender in emergencies. UNICEF also reinstates the biannual regional GFP meetings and builds the capacity of all Regional Advisors to provide feedback to the COs on gender equality issues for their sector of responsibility.

54. UNICEF adds at least three senior gender specialist positions to GEHRU, including one with particular expertise in gender and emergencies, and upgrades the position of the head of GEHRU to the D-1 level.

55. UNICEF substantially strengthens gender capacity in an emergency context within EMOPS HQ/RO and COs, by appointing a Senior Gender Advisor (P-5) and by embedding gender capacity in the different clusters.

56. UNICEF revises its generic job descriptions to explicitly include responsibility for gender equality in programming; ensures that recruitment processes include questions about candidates' understanding of and experience in gender equality; and makes staff performance on gender equality a factor to be considered in decisions about promotions.

57. UNICEF develops a roster of male and female regional and national gender specialists with gender expertise in specific areas (for example, gender and emergencies, gender and water and sanitation, gender and nutrition, gender and education, etc.) who could be called upon to support the ROs, COs and national partners.

58. UNICEF strengthens its GFP system by developing a clear set of Terms of Reference that focus on the GFP's role in disseminating gender-related information to their colleagues; additionally, both ROs and COs adopt a gender task force model that calls for a GFP in each programme area who would report to a lead GFP at the Deputy Representative or Deputy Regional Director level.

Capacity Building and Training

59. UNICEF develops a comprehensive gender equality capacity building programme for its staff at all levels, including mandatory online training on gender analysis and gender in emergencies for all programme staff and managers; reinstitutes an introductory corporate gender training

programme; and revises training for senior managers to ensure that it includes relevant gender equality components.

60. UNICEF revises its existing gender tools and checklists for integrating gender equality into development and emergency programming and where there are gaps, develops easy-to-use sector-based guidance, tools, checklists and performance indicators on gender equality in programming and distributes these to staff at all levels.

61. UNICEF captures, validates and shares lessons learned, good practices and experience in gender equality programming in both development and emergency contexts by setting up diverse knowledge management systems. For example, conducting exit interviews with outgoing staff to ensure that corporate memory related to good practices in gender equality is not lost; establishing an active Intranet peer self-help discussion group (possibly in collaboration with the UNDP); working closely with other UN agencies to exchange good practices and strategies; and asking GEHRU and EMOPS to disseminate this information regularly to the Executive Board, member states, ROs and COs.

Development Programming

62. UNICEF makes gender analysis a mandatory element to inform both development and emergency programme planning processes.

63. UNICEF undertakes a review and revision of the Policies, Programmes and Procedures Manual, SitAns, and mid-term reviews to ensure that the gender equality guidelines are effective tools to guide the integration of gender equality into all programming processes and documents.

64. UNICEF assesses key gender disparities affecting men and boys within the context of its mandate and ensures that country programmes address these issues as needed.

65. The ROs work with COs to develop regional and sub-regional gender equality strategies and action plans, and each CPD contains an explicit and funded strategy for gender equality, which is part of UNICEF's approach to development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Integrating Gender within an Emergency Context

66. UNICEF undertakes a more in-depth evaluation of the organization's work in integrating gender into emergency programming to serve as a comprehensive diagnostic of the gaps and challenges and provide the foundation for the formulation of a forward-looking strategy focused on UNICEF's specific needs in this area.

67. UNICEF reviews and revises the Core Commitment for Children in Emergencies and the *Emergency Field Handbook: a Guide for UNICEF Staff* to ensure they provide effective guidance on integrating gender into the different phases and types of emergencies, especially with regard to how to: conduct gender analysis to support emergency preparedness and assessment processes; consider gender equality issues in the cluster approach; and explicitly identify vulnerable groups by sex and age groups within diverse emergency contexts.

68. UNICEF decides to act as an advocate for integrating gender equality into the different types and phases of emergencies with its inter-agency partners and provides its field staff with clear directions on how they can play a leadership role in the coordination process required for this to be effective, for example, by holding stakeholder consultations on the recently released IASC *Gender Handbook on Humanitarian Action*.

Financing Gender Mainstreaming

69. UNICEF ensures there is a dedicated core resource budget allocation to bolster its gender mainstreaming processes and to demonstrate its commitment to this process by limiting external funding to no more than 50 per cent of the total. Given the scope of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting strategy and the serious weaknesses in UNICEF staff capacity in this area, UNICEF should consider developing a major capacity-building initiative for gender equality similar in scale to the *DFID-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation to Strengthen UNICEF Humanitarian Response Capacity*.

United Nations Coherence

70. UNICEF works more actively at the United Nations Country Team level to develop a common approach to gender equality, including increased support for joint initiatives such as the country-based UNGTGs. For example, UNICEF could commit more significant and stable human and financial resources to UNGTGs to support the implementation of an annual work plan that goes beyond organizing International Women's Day activities to include tasks such as monitoring gender equality inputs in the CCA and UNDAF.

Engagement with Partners

71. UNICEF reviews the track record of its partners and their expertise in gender equality and identifies potential new 'gender' partners to involve in UNICEF's planning and programming processes at the global, regional and national levels.

72. UNICEF considers working with donor and United Nations partners to use its DevInfo and other field-based data collection systems to help monitor the gender equality impact of direct budget support as one means of reversing the trend of the new aid architecture's shift away from gender equality issues.
