

UNICEF
Zero Draft Gender Action Plan Annotated Outline
21 January 2014

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A.** To achieve UNICEF's desired results and fulfil its mandate, it is essential to address one of the most fundamental inequities that exist in all societies – gender inequality.
1. Gender equality is a foundational principle for UNICEF and integral to the equity focus of its work.
 - Poverty, geographic residence, and gender are three of the strongest factors determining disparities in child well-being and rights.
 - UNICEF is the only UN agency with the rights of children as its mandate, and gender equitable child outcomes are catalysts to longer term, sustainable change by redefining gender roles and power relations for tomorrow's men and women.
 2. UNICEF's gender equality mandate is grounded in the CRC and CEDAW, and in the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In carrying out its work, UNICEF adheres to the standards set forth for the UN system in promoting gender equality through the QCPR and the UN-SWAP.
 3. UNICEF programmes are aligned to support countries in achieving the gender goals and targets in the MDGs, and UNICEF is advocating for the inclusion of girls' empowerment and gender equality goals in the post-2015 framework.
- B.** The Gender Action Plan (GAP) will promote gender equality across all of UNICEF's work at global, regional and country levels. It will be operationalized in conjunction with the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The GAP elaborates further on:
- The programmatic results across the seven result areas that require a gender focus along with the relevant indicators for measuring success.
 - The specific steps UNICEF is undertaking at institutional effectiveness in implementing the programmatic work on gender, through commitment of resources and strengthening of staffing, capacity and systems.

II. PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS

- A.** A focus on gender equality is necessary for achieving UNICEF's results in two ways:
1. **There is gender disparity in important child outcomes:** for example, girls are less likely to complete secondary schooling in a number of countries, and it is mostly girls who are at risk of being married as children.

2. **Gender inequality creates bottlenecks and barriers that prevent the achievement of desired outcomes for all children.** For example:
- Lack of maternity protection inhibits mothers' ability to breastfeed both boys and girls.
 - Mothers' lack of control over resources can undermine investment in the schooling of both sons and daughters; girls may be left out more often because the perceived benefit of schooling may be less than it is for boys.

B. There is significant evidence that successful integration of gender in organizational operations requires both targeted efforts and gender mainstreaming. Over the next four years, UNICEF will utilize both routes in its work on gender.

1. Targeted Gender Initiatives: UNICEF will prioritize three cross-sectoral gender issues that consolidate and highlight important gender issues across all seven result areas in the Strategic Plan, and where UNICEF as an organization is well-placed to make a transformative contribution:

- ***Girls' secondary education***
- ***Child marriage; and***
- ***Gender and adolescent health.***

The issues encompassed in the Targeted Gender Initiatives

- Are central to UNICEF's mandate and affect the lives of millions of children in a large number of UNICEF countries.
- Span UNICEF's core areas of work across Health, HIV/AIDS, Nutrition, WASH, Education, Child Protection, and Social Protection.
- Are issue areas where evidence and expertise from the field of gender and development bring added insight on viable and innovative solutions.
- Are complex and require cross-sectoral solutions since the most effective programme strategies may well reside outside the issue's sectoral "home."
- Are inherently interconnected, so that the gender focus can create synergies and efficiencies that simultaneously improve more than one outcome.

2. Gender Mainstreaming: Throughout its seven results areas, across the country programme cycle, and in regional and global activities, UNICEF will:

- ***Address the gender dimension of outcomes for children where relevant:*** Gender-based violence; sex differences in child survival; gender parity in primary schooling and learning outcomes; household access to water and sanitation; and girls' access to social protection benefits.
- ***Identify and address the most important gendered bottlenecks and barriers that prevent the achievement of results for women and children:*** women's and girls' relative lack of mobility, safety, decision-making, resources, information and technology access; their excessive time burden; masculine and feminine social expectations and ideals of behaviour.

III. PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS

A. Targeted Gender Initiatives: The issue areas of girls' secondary education, child marriage, and gender and adolescent health define UNICEF's corporate priorities on gender during the 2014-2017 period. Country offices will choose 1-2 of these initiatives as relevant for their local context and overall country programme. UNICEF will expend maximum effort to coordinate global, regional, and country strategies and aggregation of demonstrable results on these areas of work on gender, including incorporation of relevant indicators in the Strategic Plan results framework.

Girls' Secondary Education

1. There is overwhelming evidence that girls' education – secondary education in particular – can be a powerful transformative force, not just for girls themselves, but for entire societies.
 - Girls' education is the one consistent factor that can positively influence not only girls' lives, but practically every desired development outcome: from reducing child and maternal mortality, to ending poverty and achieving equitable growth, and changing social norms.
 - And yet, the transformative potential of girls' education has not been realized in many parts of the world. In too many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, MENA and South Asia, gender gaps for girls worsen at the secondary level.
2. Secondary level education is key to healthy transitions to adulthood for girls.
 - Girls with secondary schooling are up to six times less likely to marry as children, compared to girls with little to no education.
 - Secondary schooling is an important platform for delivering essential information and services to adolescent girls as they transition into puberty, including, information and services related to menstrual hygiene management, physiological changes, reproductive health and pregnancy, HIV or HPV risk, and nutrition.
 - Education is a critical factor in socializing both boys and girls around more positive norms and expectations around masculinity and femininity.
3. UNICEF will prioritize support to countries in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East where girls are especially disadvantaged in access, learning, and empowerment outcomes related to secondary schooling. Efforts will focus on the development and scale up of more innovative approaches and strengthening of measurement rigor, especially with regard to secondary schooling as a means to empowering girls.

Child Marriage

1. Nearly one in every four adolescent girls aged 15–19 in the developing world (excluding China) is currently married or in union. The South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa regions have the greatest proportion of girls aged 15–19 married or in union. Child marriage results in early and unwanted pregnancies, posing life-threatening risks for girls. Girls with low levels of schooling are more likely to be married early, and child marriage has been shown to virtually end a girl's education. Preventing child marriage protects girls' rights and can help reduce their risks of violence, early pregnancy, HIV infection, and maternal death and disability.
2. UNICEF will work to support 8-10 high prevalence countries, strengthening national capacity of governments and partners to take to scale 1-2 of the most promising of five evidence-based cross-sectoral intervention strategies: girls' education; cash and incentive schemes; communications campaigns; community mobilization; and legislative and policy shifts around minimum age at marriage.
3. Collaborating with key partners such as WHO, UNFPA, UN Women, GirlsNotBrides and other civil society organizations, UNICEF will also advocate for a child marriage indicator to be incorporated within the gender goal in the post-2015 development framework.
4. In addition, in line with the organization's mandate to coordinate data on child marriage, UNICEF will take leadership in the development of intermediate measures of success in addressing this issue. Resources will also be mobilized for work on this issue globally and at the country level.

Gender and Adolescent Health

1. Gender disparities in health status and outcomes become more evident in adolescence as girls and boys undergo puberty and experience greater diversification in life transitions.
 - Boys become more vulnerable to road traffic injuries and violence, and maternal causes become prominent in health risks for girls. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death of adolescent girls. Data from 21 developing countries show more than one third of all girls aged 15 to 19 suffer from anaemia. In addition, 60 per cent of the almost 2.2 million adolescents living with HIV are girls.
2. UNICEF's cross-sectoral mandate provides it with a unique advantage in addressing diverse adolescent health concerns through shared service platforms, not just in the health delivery system, but also through education, child and social protection systems. A gender lens allows UNICEF to work with partners to develop more focused, coherent, and streamlined approaches to addressing nutritional, pregnancy, HIV, HPV, puberty, and menstrual hygiene concerns.
 - Service platforms such as ART treatment, HPV vaccine delivery and community based maternal and newborn care, and life skills programmes

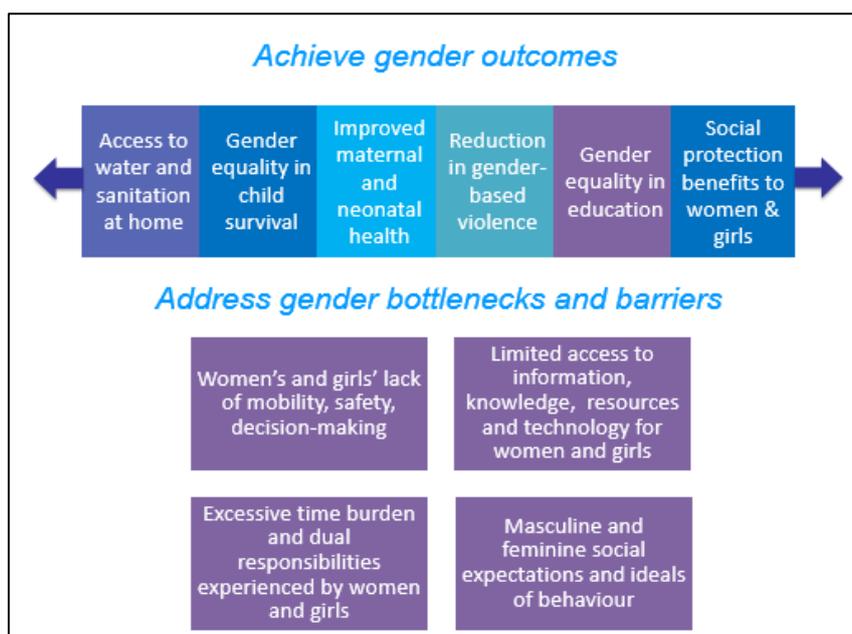
provide UNICEF with an opportunity to deliver other services to enhance nutritional outcomes or pregnancy prevention for adolescent girls, and less risky health behaviors among boys.

- In addition, over the next four years, UNICEF will focus on strengthening data collection, disaggregation and analysis on related adolescent health issues with a gender perspective, enhancing the existing evidence base and better informing programme planning and monitoring of national responses.

B. Gender Mainstreaming: UNICEF's approach to gender mainstreaming will be to emphasize quality over quantity: rather than addressing gender on *everything*, the focus will be on addressing it *well* for a limited number of strategic priorities in all country, regional, and headquarters locations.

1. Thus, in addition to the Targeted Gender Initiatives, and as part of the gender mainstreaming process, country offices will have the option to select a small number of issues within their overall programme where a gender lens can bring significant added value.

- Some of the key issues for gender mainstreaming include reducing gender-based violence, especially in humanitarian crises; improving access to water and sanitation at home; promoting gender equality in child survival and improving maternal and neo-natal health; promoting gender equality in education; and advocating for social protection benefits for girls and women.
- In addition to working to achieve these important gender outcomes, efforts will focus on addressing key gendered bottlenecks and barriers, including women's and girls' lack of mobility, safety, decision-making; limited access to information, knowledge, resources and technology of women and girls; the excessive time burden and dual responsibilities experienced by women and girls; and masculine and feminine social expectations and ideals of behaviour that inhibit gender equality and the realization of girls and boys of rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities.



2. In order to mainstream, gender will be integrated across UNICEF's country programme cycle through a number of important steps.
 - The current "Core Package" on gender reviews will be further refined to highlight the programmatic component and to emphasize not just the gender analysis, but action on that analysis through incorporation into Sitans, CPD's and MTRs.
 - Operational guidance for result areas will be realigned to reflect changes in strategies and implementation in response to the new Strategic Plan.
 - MoRES guidance and indicators will be developed on the most frequent gender bottlenecks and barriers, along with capacity building of field staff for their optimal utilization to shape intervention strategies.
3. Equally important will be a focus on innovation and evidence building, including:
 - Testing, documenting, and scaling up innovative approaches for addressing gender barriers to achieve results for children.
 - Supporting the development of a more robust evidence base on gender equitable results, including the development of measurable indicators on important cross-sectoral issues.

C. Results Framework

The indicators for tracking progress on the programming priorities for the Targeted Gender Initiatives and for Gender Mainstreaming are either already integrated or are in the process of being integrated within UNICEF's Results Framework as defined under the Strategic Plan.

Select Gender Indicators Under Review for the Results Framework

Targeted initiatives	Indicators
Girls' secondary education	Gender parity in secondary education enrolment, transition from primary education
	Indicator on gender parity in secondary school completion incorporated in post-2015 development framework
Child marriage	Reduction in child marriage rates
	Child marriage prevalence indicator incorporated in Post-2015 framework
Gender and adolescent health	Reduction in anaemia, teen pregnancy, FGM/C
	Increased ART and condom use, and access to WASH/MHM in schools
Gender mainstreaming	Indicators
Gender-based violence	Reduction in 15-18 year-old girls and boys who have ever experienced sexual violence
	Support services delivered to children experiencing GBV in humanitarian situations
Maternal and neonatal health	Increased live births attended by a skilled health personnel
WASH	Women's participation in WASH decision-making processes
Education	Proportion of primary-school-aged girls out of school
Nutrition	Ratification of Maternal Protection in accordance with ILO convention

IV. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The scope of the programme of work specified above is practical but ambitious, and UNICEF will commit resources and invest in the required staffing, capacity and systems strengthening for its implementation.

A. Resources

UNICEF is taking important steps to increase programming resources for its work on gender. These include:

1. Setting a financial benchmark targeting that by 2017, 15% of programme expenditures are on programming specifically aimed to advance gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.
2. Increasing regular and other resources allocated annually to strengthen staffing, capacity & systems to support its work on gender equality by approximately 4 million.

3. Instituting the Gender Thematic Fund to support innovation and evidence building on cross-sectoral gender priorities and to catalyze and leverage regular and other resources for gender programming. In mobilizing resources for sectoral and humanitarian work, UNICEF will also systematically budget for gender priorities.

C. Gender Architecture

1. UNICEF is strengthening the core gender architecture of the organization and is considering different options for an expanded staff of specialists who have dedicated responsibility on gender and cross-sectoral collaboration.
 - a. The gender team at headquarters will be the anchor for GAP implementation, working closely with dedicated gender advisors in regional offices.
 - b. UNICEF is discussing different ways of strengthening country level staffing to support the implementation of GAP across UNICEF.
 - c. UNICEF is planning to formalize and strengthen the role of gender focal points in countries with at least 25% time dedicated to work on gender.
2. Additionally, UNICEF will build a cadre of sectoral gender specialists responsible for specific result areas. UNICEF will focus on identifying and training gender experts who can communicate effectively with sectoral counterparts and who can support sustainable gender mainstreaming over the long term.

C. Capacity and Systems Strengthening

During the previous Strategic Priority Action Plan on Gender (SPAP 2010-2013), UNICEF laid the foundation for a number of processes and systems for mainstreaming gender across the organization. The emphasis in the GAP years 2014-2017 will be to further enhance these systems and to undertake activities that will improve the quality and effectiveness of the work on gender that UNICEF undertakes at all levels. UNICEF will emphasize:

1. Expanding the skills and capacity of staff, especially in the areas of data, indicators, evidence building, innovation, and cross-sectoral solutions on gender.
2. Strengthening of guidance and tools, knowledge management, communications, and resource mobilization efforts to reflect the Gender Action Plan priorities.
3. Enhancement of monitoring systems to more systematically track gender results and key benchmarks on institutional progress on gender mainstreaming. This includes more frequent analysis of the Gender Marker in conjunction with actual rather than projected activities.

V. PARTNERSHIPS AND COHERENCE

- UNICEF will continue to strengthen its partnerships with governments, UN agencies, research institutes, civil society, and the private sector in order to advance its work on gender equality.

- UNICEF will continue to engage in UN interagency processes such as IANWGE, the UNDG Gender Task Team, IASC, the Gender Thematic Groups, Beijing Plus 20, and the Post 2015 discussions on gender equality.

VI. ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

A steering committee led by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, will ensure institute-wide accountability on the implementation of the GAP. In addition to assessing regular progress on the achievement of gender results, UNICEF will track its performance on the effective implementation of the GAP through progress on following five benchmarks:

1. Financial target on programme expenditures on gender
2. Gender staffing and capacity at HQ, RO, CO levels
3. Country Programme Annual Plans that meet established gender criteria
4. Programme Evaluations that meet established gender criteria
5. Functioning and effective systems of knowledge management and sharing on gender.