GLOSSARY: DEFINITIONS A-Z

Common Country Assessment (CCA): In 1997, the Secretary-General launched a programme for reform with the aim of preparing the United Nations for the challenges of the 21st century. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was charged with the elaboration of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), intended to bring greater coherence to the United Nations programmes of assistance at the country level. In response, the UNDAF developed guidelines known as the Common Country Assessment (CCA). The CCA is a country-based process for reviewing and analysing the national development situation and identifying key issues as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue and preparation of the UNDAF.

Delivering as One: ‘Delivering as One: Report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel’, released in 2006, puts forward a series of recommendations to overcome the fragmentation of the United Nations so that the system can deliver as one, in true partnership with and serving the needs of all countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.” A more unified system is seen as being more responsive, stronger and more effective, and recommendations focus on a unified and coherent UN structure at the country level.

Discrimination against Women and Girls (Gender discrimination): “Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” [United Nations, 1979. ‘Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women’. Article 1]

Discrimination can stem from both law (de jure) or from practice (de facto). The CEDAW Convention recognises and addresses both forms of discrimination, whether contained in laws, policies, procedures or practice.

- **De jure discrimination**
  E.g. In some countries, the law states that women (citizens) who marry foreign men lose their citizenship and/or property rights. On the other hand, men (citizens) married to foreigners do not lose their citizenship and/or property rights.

- **De facto discrimination**
  E.g. The practice of many immigration officials in various countries is to find a woman traveling alone with her minor children "suspicious" while men traveling with their children are seldom questioned.

Duty bearer: Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most commonly used to refer to State actors, but non-State actors can also be considered duty bearers. An obvious example is private armed forces or rebel groups, which under international law have a negative obligation to refrain from human rights violations. Depending on the context, individuals (e.g. parents), local organizations, private companies, aid donors and international institutions can also be duty-bearers.

Empowerment: Refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. Empowerment of women and girls concerns women and girls gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.
The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a person to control their own destiny. This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions).

**Gender**: is a social and cultural construct, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women. Gender-based roles and other attributes, therefore, change over time and vary with different cultural contexts. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). This concept is also useful in analyzing how commonly shared practices legitimize discrepancies between sexes.

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

A gender analysis should be integrated into the humanitarian needs assessment and in all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by humanitarian interventions, and that where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.

**Gender and Development (GAD)**: GAD came into being as a response to the perceived shortcomings of women in development (WID) programmes. GAD-centered approaches are essentially based on three premises:

1) Gender relations are fundamentally power relations.
2) Gender is a socio-cultural construction rather than a biological given.
3) Structural changes in gender roles and relations are possible.

Central to GAD is the belief that transforming unequal power relations between men and women is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable improvements in women’s lives. The onus is on women and men to address and re-shape the problematic aspects of gender relations. The conceptual shift from “women” to “gender” created an opportunity to include a focus on men and boys.

**Gender Balance** is a human resource issue. It is about the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work (international and national staff at all levels, including at senior positions) and in programmes that agencies initiate or support (e.g. food distribution programmes). Achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce improves the overall effectiveness of our policies and programmes, and will enhance agencies’ capacity to better serve the entire population.

**Gender-based Violence (GBV)**: GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance.

**Gender Blindness**: is the failure to recognize that the roles and responsibilities of men/boys and women/ girls are given to them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts and backgrounds. Projects, programmes, policies and attitudes which are gender blind do not take into account these different roles and diverse needs, maintain status quo, and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations.

**Gender Development Index (GDI)**: Developed by the UN system in 1995, it is a tool to use in developing and applying gender equality indicators in your programmes. It is annually updated. GDI provides a trends tracking mechanism for comparison between countries as well as for one country.
over time. The gender in development index calculates a comparative figure for men and women based on 1) life expectancy, 2) education and 3) estimated earned income at purchasing power parity in US dollars.

**Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM):** Developed by the UN system in 1995, GEM is a tool to use in developing and applying gender equality indicators in your programmes. It is annually updated. It provides a trends-tracking mechanism for comparison between countries as well as for one country over time.

GEM uses a three-step calculation process:

1. Percentages for females and males are calculated in each of three areas:
   - Area 1 – number of parliamentary seats
   - Area 2A – legislators, senior officials and managers
   - Area 2B – professional and technical positions
   - Area 3 – estimated earned income (at purchasing power parity US $)

2. For each area, the pair of percentages is combined into an “Equally Distributed Equivalent Percentage (EDEP)”, the mean of the two components, as a means to “reward gender equality and penalize inequality”.

3. The GEM is the unweighted average of the three EDEPS.

**Gender Equality:** means that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community and society.

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men and girls and boys are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups and that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and prejudices about gender roles. Gender equality is a matter of human rights and is seen as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

**Gender Equity:** is the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls and is about equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes.

It is a means to ensure that women and men, girls and boys have an equal chance not only at the starting point but also when reaching the finishing line. It is about the fair and just treatment of both sexes that takes into account the different needs of the men and women, cultural barriers and (past) discrimination of the specific group.

**Gender Equality Programming** is an umbrella term encompassing all strategies to achieve gender equality. Important examples include gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBA) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), promotion and protection of human rights, empowerment of women and girls, and gender balance in the workplace.

**Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming (GE) is a strategy to accelerate progress on women’s rights and equality; integrating attention to equality and rights. This is the chosen approach of the United Nations system and international community toward realizing progress on women’s and girls’ rights, as a sub-set of human rights to which the United Nations dedicates itself. It is a strategy for implementing greater equality for women and girls in relation to men and boys. Gender equality is the goal.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for girls and boys/ men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes. It is a strategy for making girls’ and women’s, as well as boy’s and men’s, concerns and experiences an integral
dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that girls and boys / women and men benefit equality, and inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender Neutral:** refers to anything – a concept, an entity, a style of language – that is unassociated with either the male or female gender. The nature of systemic and embedded or internalized bias is such that, unfortunately often, what is perceived to be gender neutral is in fact gender blind.

**Gender Norms:** Gender norms are the accepted attributes and characteristics of male and female gendered identity at a particular point in time for a specific society or community. They are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time. Gender norms are ideas about how men and women should be and act. Internalized early in life, gender norms can establish a life cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping.

**Gender Parity:** is a numerical concept. Gender parity concerns relative equality in terms of numbers and proportions of men and women, girls and boys. Gender parity addresses the ratio of female-to-male values (or males-to-females, in certain cases) of a given indicator.

**Gender Relations:** Gender relations are the specific sub-set of social relations uniting men and women as social groups in a particular community. Gender relations intersect with all other influences on social relations – age, ethnicity, race, religion – to determine the position and identity of people in a social group. Since gender relations are a social construct, they can be changed.

**Gender-responsive Budget (GRB):** Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfillment of women's rights. It entails identifying and reflecting needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets. GRB also aims to analyze the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of domestic resources and Official Development Assistance.

**Gender Roles:** are social and behavioral norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. These often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to men, women, boys and girls. Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions.

**Gender Theme Groups (GTG):** Each UN Country Team is charged with establishing a gender theme group. The GTG is the main mechanism for increasing collaboration, partnership and coherence within a unified UN approach to supporting progress and capacity of national partners. The work of the majority of thematic groups on gender is to: facilitate dialogue on gender issues and encourage gender mainstreaming among partners; undertake activities supporting women’s human rights and empowerment in general and providing support for national policies and action plans; focus on training, production of gender briefing kits, and inputting into the CCA/UNDAF processes, as well as work involving the MDGs and PRSPs.

**Human rights-based approach (HRBA):** A human rights-based approach entails consciously and systematically paying attention to human rights in all aspects of programme development. A HRBA is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

The objective of the HRBA is to empower people (rights-holders) to realize their rights and strengthen the State (duty-bearers) to comply with their human rights obligations and duties. States’ obligations to human rights require them to respect, protect and fulfill women’s and girls’ rights, along with the rights of men and boys. When they fail to do so, the United Nations has a responsibility to work with partners to strengthen capacity to more effectively realize that duty.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** People forced to flee their homes but who, unlike refugees, remain within their country’s borders. At the end of 2006, estimates of the world IDP population rose
to 24.5 million in some 52 countries. The region with the largest IDP population is Africa, with some 11.8 million in 21 countries.

**Joint Programming:** Joint programming is the collective effort through which UN organizations and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the activities aimed at effectively and efficiently achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments arising from UN conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments. Through joint programming, common results and the modalities for supporting programme implementation are identified.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** Set for the year 2015, the MDGs are an agreed set of goals that can be achieved if all actors work together and do their part. Poor countries have pledged to govern better, and invest in their people through health care and education. Rich countries have pledged to support them, through aid, debt relief, and fairer trade.

The MDGs represent a global partnership that has grown from the commitments and targets established at the world summits of the 1990s. Responding to the world’s main development challenges and to the calls of civil society, the MDGs promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health and gender equality and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS and other diseases.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) / Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP):** A PRSP describes the macroeconomic, structural, and social policies and programs that a country will pursue over several years to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as external financing needs and the associated sources of financing. They are prepared by governments in low-income countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders and external development partners.

**Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR):** The quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) is an important instrument for monitoring and assessing UN operational activities. The QCPR is done by the UN General Assembly. The QCPR reviews the UN system policies and mechanisms that enable its operational activities to play their assigned role, and assesses how the system at the country level is positioned.

The QCPR gives member states an opportunity to consider the role of UN development assistance from a long-term and integrated perspective, in light of the MDGs, the review of internationally agreed development goals, and other UN conferences and summits, at the country level.

**Reproductive Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health:** Reproductive rights include the rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children, and to have the information and means to do so. Further, decisions concerning reproduction should be made free from discrimination, coercion and violence. These services are essential for all people, married and unmarried, including adolescents and youth. For people to realize their reproductive rights, they need access to reproductive and sexual health care in the context of primary health care. This should include a range of family planning; obstetrical and gynecological care; prevention, care and treatment of STIs and HIV/AIDS; education and counselling on human sexuality and reproductive health, prevention and surveillance of violence against women and elimination of traditional harmful practices.

**Rights holders:** Rights-holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty-bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights-holders under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular contexts, there are often specific social groups whose human rights are not fully realized, respected or protected. More often than not, these groups tend to include women/girls, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and youth, for example. A human rights-based approach does not only recognize that the entitlements of rights-holders needs to be respected, protected and fulfilled, it also considers rights-holders as active agents in the realization of human rights and development – both directly and through organizations representing their interests.

**Sector-wide Approaches (SWAPs):** SWAp is an approach that brings together governments, donors and other stakeholders within any sector. It is characterized by a set of operating principles and involves government leadership in policy dialogue, developing a single sector policy and
common realistic expenditure program, which include monitoring arrangements and coordinated procedures for funding and procurement. In essence, a SWAp calls for a partnership in which government and development agencies interact more together in the formulation of policy, and less on the details of its implementation. SWAps are a relatively new approach to aid and development and are growing in number, particularly in more aid-dependent country contexts. SWApS offer particular opportunities and challenges to gender mainstreaming.

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

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

**Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**: Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) can be understood as the right for all, whether young or old, women, men or transgender, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, HIV positive or negative, to make choices regarding their own sexuality and reproduction, providing they respect the rights of others to bodily integrity. This definition also includes the right to access information and services needed to support these choices and optimise health.

**Substantive Equality**: Substantive equality focuses on the outcomes and impacts of laws and policies. Substantive equality goes far beyond creating formal legal equality for women (where all are equal under the law) and means that governments are responsible for the impact of laws. This requires governments to tailor legislation to respond to the realities of women’s lives. Striving for substantive equality also places a responsibility on governments to implement laws, through gender-responsive governance and functioning justice systems that meet women’s needs.

Substantive equality is a concept expressed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It recognizes that as a result of historic discrimination, women do not start on an equal footing to men.

**UN Country Teams (UNCT)**: The UNCT encompasses all organizations of the United Nations system dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of their formal presence in the country. Headed by the UN Resident Coordinator, the UNCT brings together the different UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country level. At the country level, UN Country Teams are the main forum for UN system coordination with national partners. Within the UN Country Teams are theme groups, including gender theme groups (GTGs).

**UNCT Gender scorecard**: The **UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality (Scorecard)** establishes an accountability framework for assessing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by the UN Country Team’s (UNCT).

The Scorecard is focused on the performance of the UNCT, rather than the performance of any one UN organization. It intends to provide an assessment of what the UN as a whole contributes to gender mainstreaming and consequently to the promotion of gender equality. It is intended to complement existing accountability frameworks. The main focus of the Scorecard is on strategies and processes – that is gender mainstreaming - rather than development results. Achievement of development results on gender equality and women’s empowerment must be led by national partners, with support from the UNCT.

**Women in Development (WID)**: A WID approach to development is based on the concept that women are marginalized in development-oriented interventions, with the result that women are often excluded from the benefits of development. Hence, the overall objective is to ensure that resources and interventions for development are used to improve the condition and position of women. The WID approach, however, does not necessarily result in changing male-female hierarchal gender relations. Rather, it intends to support women-specific practical needs, such as women’s skills development for income generation.
The fact that WID approaches do not analyze and address power differentials in the relationship between women and men is seen as a major shortcoming of this approach. WID-oriented programmes are often contrasted to Gender and Development (GAD)-oriented programmes.