

The global accountability framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Background

A UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in October 2006, as a means of furthering the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) within the policies and programmes of the UN system, and implementing the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2.¹ In response to the CEB Policy, UN Women has been developing a comprehensive accountability framework to assist the UN system to:

- Develop a common understanding in the UN system entities of minimum performance standards relevant to their work in GEEW at the corporate level (UN-SWAP) and at the UN Country Team Level (UNCT - Scorecard);
- Ensure that, using the UN SWAP and UNCT Scorecard senior managers across the UN system are able to systematically and simultaneously both assess and map where they are and have clear aspirational direction for where they might go
- To facilitate senior manager leadership on GEWE through regular and formal reporting systems until the standards are reached and exceeded.

It is envisaged that through a phased approach to development and implementation, the global accountability framework will eventually consist of three inter-connecting and aligned mechanisms. Two of these mechanisms – the UNCT Scorecard and the UN-SWAP, have been developed and are in force. The third, an accountability framework for development results is to be developed following the full establishment and functioning of the UN-SWAP.

The purposes of, and differences between, the mechanisms are explained below.

1. The UN System-wide Action Plan²

Introduced: April 2012, following approval by the Central Executive Board (CEB) in its Spring 2012 session. Implementation is to be reported on to ECOSOC starting 2013. Standards are expected to be met for all entities by the year 2017 and for specialized technical entities by 2019.

Focus: corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the individual entity level.

Content: 15 Performance Indicators focusing on the central strategic planning document and articulated corporate policy for GEEW; results based management; gender architecture and organizational culture as well as tracking and allocating human

¹ CEB/2006/2: *United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women: focusing on results and impact.*

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm/UN_system_wide_P_S_CEB_Statement_2006.pdf

² <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/UN-SWAP.pdf>

and financial resources; evaluation, audit and oversight including reporting; gender capacity development and, knowledge sharing and coherence. While many of the standards apply mostly to the HQ operations, several may carry implications also for the global operations of any entity systems. These include, for example, resource allocation and tracking for GEEW; performance appraisal; organizational culture; and capacity development.

Reporting: internal reporting is the responsibility of the entity HQ, drawing on Regional and Country input as relevant. Reporting is yearly to UN Women who will report to ECOSOC as required by it in its Resolution of June 2012.

Main audience and use: the main audiences are the CEB, entity HQs, and inter-agency bodies. The main uses are: feeding into the annual Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the UN system; and development of Individual entity plans of action for meeting the UN SWAP Performance Indicators.

2. The United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women³

Introduced: 2008.

Focus: joint processes and institutional arrangements within the UNCT.

Content: 22 Performance Indicators focusing on joint processes at country level: the CCA; development, content and quality control of the UNDAF; joint programming and programmes; partnerships; UNCT support to national priorities, programme based and aid effectiveness processes; UNCT decision making; capacity development through the UNCT; UNCT resource allocation and tracking; and monitoring and evaluation.

Reporting: responsibility of the UNCT, preferably using a consultant to conduct the review. Reporting is preferably twice during the five year UNDAF cycle.

Main audience and use: the main audience is the UNCT, and the main use is for improved strategic planning for GEWE through the UNDAF cycle.

3. Accountability for GEWE development results at country and normative levels – to be developed

This mechanism will focus on actual development results to which the UN system contributes at country and normative levels. While the UN SWAP document provides further details on developing this third mechanism, its full development will constitute the next phase of development of the accountability framework and is expected after the roll out of the UN-SWAP is well established.

³ <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=222>