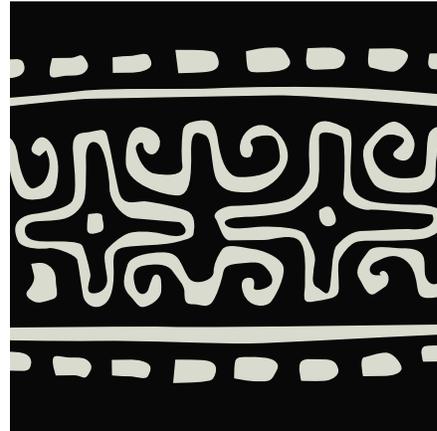
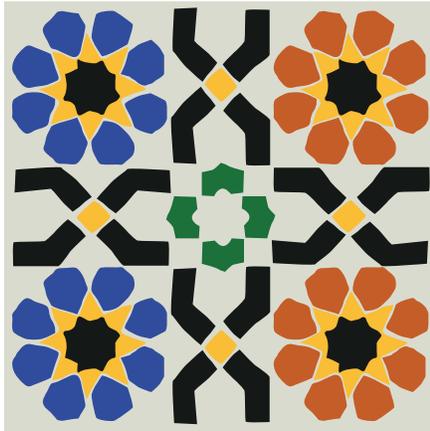


Evaluation Report



UNIFEM's Partnerships with Regional Organizations to Advance Gender Equality



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Evaluation Report

UNIFEM's Partnerships with Regional Organizations to Advance Gender Equality



Evaluation Team:

Universalia Management Group

- Geraldine Cooney - Team Leader/ Africa Expert
- Katrina Rojas - Senior Evaluator/ Latin America and the Caribbean Expert
- Anette Wenderoth - Conceptual Advisor
- Silvia Grandi - Intermediate Evaluator
- Elisabetta Micaro - Research Assistant
- Emilie Peters - Research Assistant
- Alexa Khan - Evaluation Expert based in the Caribbean

Evaluation Task Manager: Shravanti Reddy, Evaluation Unit

Disclaimer: The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. This is an independent publication prepared for UNIFEM and reflects the views of its authors.



Foreword

This report presents the results of the first cross-regional evaluation of *UNIFEM's Partnerships with Regional Organizations to Advance Gender Equality*. The evaluation responded to the need identified by UNIFEM and its Consultative Committee to assess and learn about the ways in which such important partnerships contribute to UNIFEM's development effectiveness in support of gender equality and women's empowerment in the framework of the organization's Strategic Plan, and to identify key strengths, areas for improvement and lessons learned by UNIFEM and its regional intergovernmental organization partners through this engagement.

The important role that regional intergovernmental organizations play in achieving progress on international, regional and national level goals for gender equality and women's empowerment make them valuable partners for UNIFEM's work. At the international level, regional organizations have been given an important role in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome document of the 23rd Session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5) and international human rights conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). At the regional level, they help to establish consensus on gender equality issues among member states and are capable of introducing regional norms and standards on gender equality and women's rights issues and monitoring their realization. Their role in supporting research on gender issues and in collecting regional data and statistics on gender equality is also very relevant, especially in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. At the national level, they are involved in legislative reviews and amendment processes of their Member States' compliance with international and regional gender equality standards.

For more than a decade, UNIFEM has partnered with regional organizations in its work towards achieving its goal of implementation of national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in stable and fragile states. In 2008, it had 28 such partnerships at different stages of development and partnered with four types of regional organizations: multidimensional regional organizations, multidimensional subregional organizations, regional bodies within the UN system, and regional development banks.

The evaluation was an in-depth assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of these partnerships as a means of strengthening UNIFEM's effectiveness. Its main objectives were to better understand the context and parameters of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations; to assess the extent to which UNIFEM's strategies for partnering with regional organizations are contributing to institutional change and progress towards results on gender equality; to provide useful information for developing a more systematic and effective approach for UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations; and to identify opportunities, challenges, good practices and lessons learned that will be useful for strengthening, enhancing and expanding UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations.

The evaluation process took place between October 2008 and November 2009. It was managed by UNIFEM's Evaluation Unit, and externally conducted by a team of evaluation experts. It benefited from the continuous inputs of both an external reference group composed of ten members of regional organizations (African Union, Southern African Development Community, Economic Community of West African States, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, System of Central American Integration, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Caribbean

Community, Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and an internal reference group constituted of staff from key UNIFEM offices in Headquarters and in the regions, particularly from Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Evaluation Unit would like to thank these reference groups for their constructive engagement without which this evaluation would not have been successfully completed. It would also like to acknowledge the contributions and valuable time given by UNIFEM programme staff and partners in the field who agreed to participate in the interviews, focus groups and survey for this evaluation. Special thanks for the dedication and hard work of the Universalia evaluation team: Geraldine Cooney, team leader, and team members Katrina Rojas, Anette Wenderoth, Silvia Grandi, Elisabetta Micaro, Emilie Peter and Alexa Khan. The evaluation was ably managed by Shravanti Reddy in the Evaluation Unit. Finally, thanks to our UNIFEM colleagues – Tacko Ndiaye and Laura Gonzalez for their review of the translations, to Rhonda de Freitas and Isabel Suarez in the Evaluation Unit who coordinated the publication process of this report and to Sonila Aliaj who handled administrative support.

As expressed in the report, the evaluation identified nine key findings related to the evaluation criteria, which state the relevance of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations to advance gender equality at the regional and country levels; the positive short and midterm changes at the institutional level and the potential for longer term change at the country level; and the need for a more articulated approach for establishing these partnerships and for tracking development change processes. It provides three sets of recommendations to address these issues on which UNIFEM's management has responded and developed action points to address them.

We hope that this evaluation report contributes to systematizing and building knowledge on the important role of institutional partnerships for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and that it can provide a basis for further research on the most effective approaches to influence change at the national level.



Belen Sanz

Evaluation Advisor, UNIFEM

December 2009



Executive Summary¹

Background

This evaluation examines UNIFEM's partnerships with a variety of regional intergovernmental organizations. In 2008, it had more than 28 such partnerships at different stages of development. While UNIFEM has been working with regional organizations (ROs) for about a decade,² the importance of developing partnerships with ROs was first articulated at the corporate level in the Strategic Results Framework of UNIFEM's Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) 2004 – 2007. It underlines the importance of strategic partnerships in general and explicitly mentions ROs (in the corporate outcomes and related indicators) as one of several important types of development partners UNIFEM is planning to engage with.

The importance of expanding and strengthening UNIFEM's work with ROs has also been underscored

by its Consultative Committee and is highlighted in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008 – 2011). Partnerships with ROs are seen as potentially instrumental in fostering the achievement of UNIFEM's overarching goal – to support the implementation of national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in stable and fragile states.

Given the increased emphasis on ROs in both the UN and UNIFEM in recent years, UNIFEM commissioned this external evaluation of its experience with ROs in late 2008. Until this evaluation, UNIFEM had engaged in very few formal stocktaking processes or cross-regional learning exercises concerning these partnerships.⁴ The evaluation objectives are shown in the sidebar.

Evaluation Objectives³

Describe and analyse UNIFEM's experience with regional organizations (ROs) to date in terms of the types, purposes and expected results and strategies of these partnerships and in relation to the main characteristics of ROs it has partnered with.

Identify the key strengths, areas for improvement and lessons learned by UNIFEM and the ROs it has partnered with on the promotion of gender equality, with particular attention to:

- The (intended and actual) results and benefits of these partnerships for UNIFEM and for the regional organizations;

- The sustainability of these partnerships and their results;
- Variations across regions.

Develop a framework that can be used by UNIFEM to categorize, make decisions about and assess UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs in the future.

Provide UNIFEM with recommendations on policies and/or practices that could guide its engagement with ROs in the future.

¹ Additional information from the body of the main report was integrated into this Executive Summary by UNIFEM's Evaluation Unit to enhance the information provided on the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

² In a few cases such as CARICOM and SADC, UNIFEM partnerships date back to the late 1990s.

³ The evaluation objectives outlined in the ToR were refined by the evaluation team during the inception stage and approved by UNIFEM.

⁴ To date, UNIFEM has evaluated its partnerships with IGAD (2005) and SADC (1999).

With input from UNIFEM, the Evaluation Team developed a detailed methodology for the evaluation that was approved by UNIFEM. The evaluation focused on the time frame 2004 – 2009, which included the MYFF period from 2004 to 2007 as well as more recent developments up to March 2009. The Evaluation Team examined UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs in all geographic areas in which UNIFEM works and conducted in-depth studies of partnerships with selected ROs from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Africa.

The evaluation was managed by the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, and data collection and analysis were carried out by the Universalia Evaluation Team in close consultation with UNIFEM between November 2008 and July 2009. The Evaluation Team's overall approach to the assignment was consultative, participatory and utilization-focused and was designed in alignment with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and the ethical code of conduct of UNEG.

More than 170 stakeholders were consulted for the evaluation. The Evaluation Team reviewed and analysed UNIFEM and RO reports and documents as well as relevant literature related to regional organizations, UNIFEM and their respective regional and global contexts. The team conducted one visit to UNIFEM Headquarters in New York, visits to four ROs in Africa (AU, ECOWAS, ICGLR, SADC) and one visit in the Caribbean (CARICOM).⁵

Some limitations related to design, data and planning contributed to a considerable amount of unbudgeted "process time" for both UNIFEM and the Universalia Evaluation Team.

Context

In the current global context, ROs are gaining relevance as players in both economic and social development. They are also seen as catalysts to promote GE and WHR in their regions and Member States. There is a distinct push within the UN, and among donors and many country governments, for development partners to engage with ROs. At the same time, agencies such as UNIFEM are still in the process of finding the most appropriate and effective ways of working with ROs and of enhancing alignment and harmonization among themselves.

There is wide agreement among consulted stakeholders that ROs are important players with the potential to significantly influence policies, agendas and practices in respect to GE and WHR—not only at the regional level, but also at the national level.

As a UN organization, UNIFEM is committed to work with ROs. Beyond this, UNIFEM's implicit assumptions about why partnering with ROs is important and relevant appear to be widely shared among stakeholders (including among other UN agencies working with the same ROs) and are seen to be plausible. However, these assumptions have yet to be proven valid.

UNIFEM has partnered with regional organizations for more than a decade, and in 2008, it had 28 such partnerships at different stages of development. At present, UNIFEM is partnering with four types of regional organizations (i.e. regionally focused IGOs): multidimensional regional organizations, multidimensional subregional organizations, regional bodies within the UN system and regional development banks.

⁵ An additional site visit was planned in Central America to SICA/COMMCA, but due to various logistical issues this visit was cancelled and the informants were contacted by telephone and e-mail instead.

The number and characteristics of UNIFEM's current partnerships with ROs differ considerably by region. For example, partnering with ROs appears to be a relatively well-established⁶ practice among UNIFEM offices in Africa and LAC and to a lesser extent in Asia. In other regions, the development of relationships with ROs is incipient (e.g., Arab States, the Pacific, CIS and Europe, with the exception of the EU). This is due to a multitude of factors including variations in: i) the existence and roles of ROs in different regions, ii) the maturity and capacity of ROs, as well as iii) the history, number and type of partnerships that UNIFEM already has in the region with other organizations (such as national women's machinery, civil society organizations and government institutions).

Despite their differences, most ROs share a common focus, which is to influence change at the national level within their member countries, in particular in terms of policies, laws, decisions and practices to foster the advancement of regional common goals. UNIFEM field offices have developed different types of relationships with ROs, which have ranged in terms of their purpose, scope, expected results, arrangements and activities. While each partnership between UNIFEM and a regional organization is unique, the evaluation data indicate that UNIFEM's current and recent partnerships focus on two main areas: institutional development and policy development and advocacy. Within these foci, UNIFEM utilizes several operational approaches⁷:

Institutional development

- UNIFEM provides support for: the creation and development of RO gender units and gender management structures, the placement of gender advisors inside the RO, the development of RO internal gender policies, the mainstreaming of guidelines and manuals and gender audits. It provides technical backstopping and advice in gender-focused committees/working groups and assists with capacity-building for RO gender units and other RO staff.
- UNIFEM works to improve ROs' attitudes and capacity to include gender advocates' (NWMs, parliamentarians, CSOs) views, knowledge and expertise in their work on GE/ WHR. This includes supporting the participation of gender advocates (in particular CSOs and women activists) in RO events and initiatives and organizing and convening women's forums that act as RO consultative bodies.

Policy development and advocacy

- UNIFEM supports ROs in developing regional gender policies/frameworks and/or agreements.
- UNIFEM provides support for the revision of existing agreements and model laws and for the review of the implementation of specific conventions.
- UNIFEM works with RO sectoral divisions to engender specific sectoral policies.
- UNIFEM works with RO stakeholders such as regional and national CSOs to help them gain better access to ROs and influence RO policymaking processes.
- UNIFEM supports, participates and co-organizes with partner ROs' high-level regional meetings that provide space for advocacy.

⁶ In this context, the term "well-established" encompasses several aspects (the duration of partnerships, the number of partnerships in the region, and the number of joint activities/initiatives) but does not imply a judgment on the quality of the partnerships.

⁷ Please see Exhibit 2.1 for specific examples.

While partnerships with ROs vary based on contextual factors, most ROs share some key characteristics that define their common potential as well as common limitations. One key characteristic is that ROs typically act as catalysts that can positively influence the enabling environment for change, but that cannot steer or control change at the national level. ROs and UNIFEM are thus in very similar situations in this regard: Both can act as facilitators and catalysts and can support, further, speed up, or even trigger change, but they cannot be solely responsible for creating such change in RO member countries. Further, their contribution to long-term changes at the national level (i.e., development impacts such as changes in policies, practices and behaviours regarding GE and WHR) is difficult to measure. For UNIFEM, this raises the question of how it can reasonably determine and track the success/value of its support to and collaboration with ROs: how to measure the impact of one catalyst on another, beyond the immediate results within the respective RO? Other partners (including other UN agencies) are facing the same problem.

UNIFEM has an established corporate strategic plan that guides all of its activities, but it has not yet developed an operational framework for partnerships that specifies the Fund's expectations of what constitutes a successful (i.e., relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable) partnership with regional (or other) organizations.⁸ UNIFEM's corporate strategic plan does not specify the assumptions and expectations underlying the activities and interactions that UNIFEM actually engages in and does not specify what types of (lower level) changes UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs are expected to contribute to, how these changes are envisaged to contribute to UNIFEM's corporate outcomes and goal, or how specific strategies or activities that UNIFEM carries out are intended to effect the desired changes.

Based on data gathered, the Evaluation Team constructed two **operational results frameworks** to capture some of the implicit assumptions underlying UNIFEM's work with ROs—one for partnerships in which the RO is a boundary partner and one for partnerships in which the RO acts as UNIFEM's strategic partner.

UNIFEM currently uses the term 'partnership' for a variety of different relationships with stakeholders. For the purposes of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team introduced the terms 'boundary partner' and "strategic partner" to describe two different types of relationships. These terms, derived from IDRC's Outcome Mapping Methodology,⁹ are used in this report to describe the relationships that UNIFEM has with regional organizations, not to make judgments about the nature, relevance, or effectiveness of a particular partnership or RO.

Boundary partners are those individuals, groups, or organizations with which a programme interacts directly and with whom it can anticipate some opportunities for influence (i.e., the partnership is deliberately and directly aiming to initiate and/or support positive changes in the boundary partner's behaviours, relationships, activities, or practices). In the context of this evaluation, the evaluation team has used this term to describe relationships in which UNIFEM is supporting positive short- or midterm changes in terms of GE and WHR within the RO.

Strategic partners are actors that a programme works with but which it does not want to (or is not able to) directly influence or change. The programme may want/need an alliance with strategic partners to achieve particular objectives, but it is not trying to change the behaviour or practices of these partners. In the context of this evaluation, the evaluation team has used this term to describe relationships in which, in order to bring change to or influence external stakeholders such as Member States,

8 The corporate Theory of Change as described in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan implies the relevance of ROs as one type of 'mainstream institution' whose capacity UNIFEM is aiming to strengthen. The SP does not – understandably – go into any detail, however, regarding UNIFEM's approach and strategies for partnering with and supporting different kinds of organizations.

9 Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 41.

UNIFEM and the partner RO commit to contributing to a set of agreed upon objectives based on their respective strengths.

In most of its current partnerships with ROs, UNIFEM relates to the RO as a *boundary partner* (approximately 75 per cent of the reviewed partnerships). In other partnerships (e.g., with some of the UN Regional Economic Commissions), UNIFEM addresses the RO as a *strategic partner*. The two types of partnerships are not mutually exclusive, and some partnerships have elements of both. It is important to note that UNIFEM's relationships with both boundary and strategic partners can be 'strategic' in the everyday sense of the term (i.e., in that they are part of a systematic plan of action designed to achieve a larger objective or goal).

Partnership Performance

Relevance

Finding 1: UNIFEM is highly relevant to all consulted RO representatives.

Consulted RO representatives generally consider their partnership with UNIFEM as highly relevant as they perceived that it addressed regional needs regarding gender equality. Most stakeholders engaged in boundary partner-type relationships with UNIFEM commented that UNIFEM's support (usually moderate financial support combined with considerable technical assistance and ongoing moral support provided by UNIFEM's highly motivated and engaged staff) had been relevant and helpful for their work. Individuals representing strategic partner organizations emphasized UNIFEM's unique strengths that were complementary to those of their own organization. Key positive characteristics that were mentioned as distinguishing UNIFEM from other partners that the ROs are working with are:

- UNIFEM's unique mandate focusing on GE and WHR as well as its related experience and expertise

- UNIFEM's close connection and good working relations with civil society organizations at national and regional levels
- UNIFEM's status as a neutral UN agency, which allows it to establish and facilitate networking among a broad range of diverse players who otherwise might not get together
- UNIFEM's demand-driven approach. UNIFEM staff members ask for, listen to and take into account the needs and priorities of its partners, rather than imposing pre-made plans or approaches.
- UNIFEM staff's knowledge and experience. In most SROs, UNIFEM staff members come from the region and have often been involved in women's organizations or similar entities working in the area of GE and WHR in that region. Consequently, they are not only knowledgeable and aware of the particular issues and challenges in the region, but also have valuable networks and connections, which they bring into their role as UNIFEM officers.

Finding 2: UNIFEM has not explicitly defined the rationale and expected benefits of its partnerships with ROs or established a way to track and report on the relevance of those partnerships.

In a developmental context, questions of relevance generally examine the extent to which the funded initiative makes sense given the needs, priorities and /or policies of those engaged in the initiative. In examining the relevance of a partnership between organizations, this suggests the need to examine the extent to which the partnership is likely to benefit one or both organizations in terms of fulfilling their mandates and/or working towards their organizational priorities. Interview and other data collected from UNIFEM staff indicate that UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations are based on a number of largely implicit assumptions (i.e., not formally stated or corporately agreed upon) about their relevance to UNIFEM.

While there appears to be wide agreement about the reasons for engaging with ROs within UNIFEM, there has been no systematic analysis of the extent to which these reasons and their implied benefits are valid. In our view, despite the commitment to work with ROs, it is still important for UNIFEM to identify how a proposed or existing partnership is expected to be (or is) relevant to UNIFEM and the respective RO. Clearly and explicitly defining the

rationale and expected benefits of its partnerships and establishing a tracking system for related results would allow UNIFEM to report on the continued relevance of these partnerships.

Finding 3: Stakeholders consulted inside and outside UNIFEM agree on the key reasons for and benefits of working in partnership with ROs.

This finding explores the ways in which ROs are seen to be relevant to UNIFEM's work (and vice versa) *beyond* the fact that UN agencies are generally encouraged to partner with ROs. The key reasons identified are:¹⁰

1. **ROs can have a multiplier effect.** Due to their wide membership and relatively high-level government representation, ROs are well positioned to have a multiplier effect (i.e., by addressing only one entity – the RO – many others can be reached).
2. **ROs can provide a particular theme or issue with increased legitimacy at the national level.** The regional nature of an RO can create “peer pressure” among Member States’ national governments: Once an issue is regionally acknowledged as important, it becomes more difficult for individual governments to ignore it at the national level.
3. **ROs can develop and implement regional level policies/agreements that are (more or less) binding for Member States.** Regionally agreed upon policies/agreements can trigger (or at least influence) the development and implementation of national-level policies.
4. **ROs can serve as effective forums for enhancing the influence of UNIFEM's other partners.** ROs can provide a frame and reason for women's organizations and/or national women's machineries to meet, network and collaborate, and, by doing so, enhance their collective capacity and influence at regional and national levels.
5. **ROs have specific knowledge, capacities and resources related to the regional context that might be complementary to UNIFEM's or that UNIFEM might learn from.** ROs can have resources, capacities and strategic relationships and legitimacy to scale up some of UNIFEM's projects or complementary resources to co-implement projects with UNIFEM.

The first four reasons for engaging ROs were the most frequently cited by UNIFEM staff and apply primarily to regional or subregional organizations with broad integration and cooperation mandates and to regional development banks (in particular the third reason). The fifth reason applies mainly, but not exclusively, to UN Regional Economic Commissions.

Stakeholders agree that UNIFEM's key reasons for working with ROs are plausible. The vast majority of consulted stakeholders shared the view that ROs had considerable potential for influencing change at regional and national levels as far as GE and WHR are concerned, in particular through the development of policy/normative frameworks that are agreed upon at the regional level and the ROs' ability to act as catalysts and facilitators of change. The fact that ROs have the ability to push more progressive agendas than their member country governments and to generate peer pressure among their members are also considered very relevant in promoting GE and WHR priorities. However, most of the information elicited from these stakeholders was anecdotal and not backed up with concrete examples of how ROs had influenced change at the national level.

Effectiveness

Finding 4: There is considerable evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have resulted in positive short-term and some midterm changes. While these do not constitute changes at the national level in themselves, they have contributed to strengthening the enabling environment for such changes.

The data gathered through this evaluation provided evidence of a wide range of positive achievements and changes to which the RO–UNIFEM partnerships have particularly contributed:

- Changes in or development of regional policies or agreements on gender equality/women's human rights (with boundary partners);

¹⁰ Please see Exhibit 4.1 and Annex I containing the six partnership profiles for more information.

- Changes in the structures and/or practices of a regional organization favouring gender equality and mainstreaming (with boundary partners);
- The creation of new knowledge and tools in the areas of GE and WHR relevant to RO Member States and stakeholders (with boundary and strategic partners).

Further, there is some evidence of enhanced capacities within the ROs, among RO Member States and among other RO stakeholders—illustrated, for example, in strengthened advocacy processes in the respective regions, involving the RO itself and/or its immediate stakeholders (with boundary and strategic partners).

From UNIFEM's point of view, there is some anecdotal evidence that partnering with ROs has increased UNIFEM's advocacy capacity by providing opportunities to access high-level forums and has created useful new knowledge such as statistical data.¹¹

These results are relevant and meaningful mostly in terms of their potential (future) contribution to further changes within the RO at regional and ultimately national levels.

While there are little reliable data on whether and to what extent these changes have occurred (because these types of changes are long-term changes and because of the lack of monitoring/tracking systems), consulted stakeholders widely agree that the results achieved have the potential to contribute to such longer-term changes. They can thus be described as positive contributions to strengthening the *enabling environment for change* at the regional level and ultimately the national level.

Finding 5: Consulted stakeholders widely agree that the UNIFEM–RO partnerships have the potential to contribute to longer-term impact including at the national level. However, there are no reliable data available to provide objective evidence of this.

To date there are little if any actual data available that provide objective evidence of the assumed linkage between changes achieved through the UNIFEM–RO partnership and subsequent changes at the national level. This does not mean that such linkages do not exist, and it seems plausible that the ROs' work can have an influence at the country level, but there is little documented information as to what this influence consists and to what changes it has contributed.

ROs are making some efforts to monitor the implementation of regional policies at the national level. However, none of these mechanisms is currently conceived to assess systematically the impact of ROs on policies and decisions at the national level.

This raises an issue that is not unique to UNIFEM and its RO partners: Tracking particular contributions to complex, long-term development impacts and attributing such impacts to specific interventions are extremely difficult. Development impacts are rarely accomplished by the work of a single actor, and the complexity of the development process makes it extremely difficult to assess them.¹²

In this light, the absence of solid evidence for UNIFEM–RO partnerships contributing to longer-term changes at the national level is neither surprising nor does it necessarily mark a weakness or gap in the partnership's performance. It highlights the need, however, to make assumed logical relations between expected immediate or midterm results and intended longer-term impacts explicit in order to illustrate and track the relevance of interim results in the broader context of long-term social change.

11 Please see Exhibit 4.2 and Annex I of the report for some indicative examples.

12 Earl, Carden, Smutylo, Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 1.

Sustainability of Results

Finding 6: There is limited evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have contributed to sustainable changes within or outside the respective RO.

In our understanding, ‘sustainability of results’ implies at least two key dimensions: the *continuation* as well as the *dynamic adaptation* of what has been achieved during a project’s or programme’s lifetime. We reviewed the different types of short- and midterm results that were achieved in and through UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs in terms of the likelihood of these being sustained and/or dynamically adapted.

- The creation of dedicated gender units with UNIFEM’s support (and thus the institutionalization of a gender function within the respective RO) is widely seen as a significant success that enhances the likelihood of gender issues being addressed in the organization in a more systematic and coherent way. At the same time, however, most of the reviewed gender units have faced and continue to face severe challenges. In several cases, the data suggest that institutional efforts on GE and WHR slowed down significantly once external support from UNIFEM ended despite the existence of a dedicated gender unit.
- As many of the gender policies, frameworks and agreements developed with UNIFEM’s help are relatively new and their implementation is still in early stages, it is too early to comment on their sustainability.¹³ The dimension of sustainability comes into play only when looking at the use and continued evolution of individual policies against the backdrop of the larger change processes they are contributing to. While there is considerable optimism among consulted stakeholders that recent RO policy changes *can* positively influence change, there is currently no evidence that would allow us to assess the extent to which this has happened, nor do most ROs have mechanisms to collect data on these changes.

- Studies and publications are enabling results that have the potential to influence ongoing gender-related change processes but do not in themselves constitute social change. UNIFEM–RO partnerships have generated knowledge and tools, but beyond their production and publication, we have no information on whether and to what extent UNIFEM and/or its partner organizations have systematically tracked the actual use and effects of particular knowledge products or tools.
- UNIFEM has been and is working with RO staff and stakeholders to establish and/or strengthen regional networks of gender advocates. Many of these initiatives are still in the early stages of development, and it is too early to comment on their sustainability. RO stakeholders provided examples of their enhanced capacities as a result of UNIFEM partnerships. However, it is difficult to determine whether these are sustainable as it is not always clear whether the cited examples were one-time initiatives or part of an ongoing process of applying and developing stakeholder awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment that is likely to continue without further support from UNIFEM.¹⁴ However, in our view they are promising in view of their potential to contribute to relatively sustainable regional capacities as they spread responsibilities and risks among a group of diverse and motivated stakeholders.

Some concerns emerged about the sustainability of results, particularly in terms of institutional capacities. In many cases, the sustainability of achievements appears to be out of UNIFEM’s control. However, UNIFEM’s tendency towards relatively short-term and activity-focused interventions with limited follow-up strategies and resources may also negatively affect the long-term sustainability of the results obtained.

The evaluation further noted that the absence of corporately agreed upon concepts of *capacity* and *capacity development* (individual and institutional) may be a factor that limits UNIFEM’s ability to work towards and track the sustainable results of its partnerships with ROs. It also raises questions about the types of indicators UNIFEM should use to monitor institutional change and commit-

¹³ The AU adopted its gender policy in 2008, SADC in 2007, and ECOWAS in 2004.

¹⁴ This links back to the previously noted uncertainty regarding the concepts and/or comprehensive strategies for Capacity Development underlying UNIFEM’s work.

ment to GE and WHR within ROs in particular and its other partners more generally.¹⁵

Partnership Management

Finding 7: UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs are established and managed individually on a case-by-case basis. Consulted UNIFEM staff in several locations expressed the need for a more corporate approach to managing RO partnerships.

The evaluation found that a variety of different approaches are used to manage partnerships between UNIFEM and ROs, and these vary from SRO to SRO and from partnership to partnership. Differences did not appear to be systematic (e.g., based on the type of partner organization, regional priorities, and/or strategies), and UNIFEM does not have explicit, agreed upon criteria or guidelines for selecting partner organizations, nor does it have criteria in place to determine a partner's potential role in helping UNIFEM meet its subregional priorities and objectives—either before engaging in a partnership or on a periodical basis. Assessment of potential partners is generally a responsibility of individual SROs.

With the exception of some large regional organizations, the key entities for UNIFEM's partnership management on the ground are its 15 SROs. Given the SROs' geographically defined mandates, partnering with subregional organizations is, in most cases, seen to be more effective and efficient than working with broader regional organizations or directly with every member state.¹⁶ Moreover, SROs tend to have in-depth knowledge of the context and of individual stakeholders in their respective subregion, allowing them to identify and follow up on opportunities, and to build and nurture relationships more effectively than HQ could.

While UNIFEM's SROs offer numerous advantages, the reliance on SROs for managing partnerships with ROs has posed some challenges, primarily when the mandate of an SRO does not align with the geographic coverage of a particular RO. In some cases this has resulted in fragmented relationships between the RO and different units in UNIFEM. Regional (as opposed to subregional) organizations also require a coordinated approach between SROs and HQ.

Finding 8: UNIFEM's current partnerships with ROs are managed by activities and outputs rather than for longer-term results.

In the implicit operational results frameworks underlying UNIFEM's choice for working with ROs, partnerships are not seen as ends in themselves, but as a means for working towards broader changes, ultimately at the national level. Our data indicate, however, that the current realities of partnership management do not reflect this theory.

In practice, UNIFEM manages most of its RO partnerships with a focus on outputs/short-term achievements. The longer-term objectives that individual partnerships may contribute to in the future remain implicit, and results are not systematically tracked and documented over time. The focus on short-term results is evident in several aspects of partnership management: partnership agreements, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Managing partnerships by activities and outputs makes it more difficult for UNIFEM to capture higher level results that individual partnerships may contribute to in the longer term. The underlying rationale for engaging with ROs in

¹⁵ Examples of indicators could include changes in financial commitments from the institution's core resources, changes in staffing numbers, development and utilization of internal policies, and so forth. It is expected that UNIFEM's ongoing study on capacity-building may offer suggestions in this regard.

¹⁶ Due to the geographic proximity of the SRO to the respective RO and/or Member States and because of the SROs intimate knowledge of (sub)regional contexts and their connections to key players at national and (sub)regional levels.

the first place is their potential influence on national-level change processes. While we acknowledge the difficulties in tracking such higher level results and attributing them to specific interventions, our findings indicate that current practice of partnership management makes it even more difficult for UNIFEM to look beyond short-term results within or related to the respective RO.

It is important to note, however, some contextual factors that affect UNIFEM's RO partnerships and that are likely to have had considerable influence on how individual partnerships have evolved. These include:

- Limited capacity in many RO partner organizations, in particular related to their ability to engage in long-term strategic planning for their own work and their engagement with different partners (be it due to a lack of experience and skills or due to a constant work overload and lack of time, turnover/vacancies in gender units, etc.).
- High level of donor dependency of most RO gender units that easily results in these units primarily looking for project type funds for specific tasks or events leading to predominantly short-term planning and engagement.
- Individual SROs reported limitations in the duration and amounts of partnership agreements they had the authority to sign, which appears to have contributed to the observed project type/short-term agreements with some partners.

Finding 9: UNIFEM uses a variety of approaches to partner with regional organizations. While formal models may not be required, consulted UNIFEM staff indicated a desire for a more systematic exchange of lessons learned regarding its work with ROs.

Several of the reviewed UNIFEM–RO partnerships have some similarities in one or more of their foci, and UNIFEM's staff sometimes refer to these similarities as a “model.” In our view, however, these similarities in focus do not represent a model of engagement that UNIFEM would use with ROs or other partners.

Over the years, UNIFEM has utilized a variety of different approaches and strategies to partner with ROs, including: strengthening RO institutional capacities for GE/WHR, participating in and supporting RO policy development and advocacy for GE and WHR, and working with selected RO thematic units and RO stakeholders. UNIFEM is in the process of diversifying its approach to working with ROs by moving away from working nearly exclusively with gender units towards a multitiered approach that involves collaborating with thematic sections in ROs, as well as with CSOs and other RO stakeholders. This diversification has the potential to open up broader opportunities for engagement with ROs that are driven by considerations about the particular thematic objectives UNIFEM wants to pursue in the respective region rather than providing quasi ‘default’ support for particular organizational units.

Summative Conclusion

In the current global context, regional organizations are gaining relevance as players in both economic and social development. They are also seen as catalytic and important actors with the potential to significantly influence policies, agendas and practices to promote GE and WHR in their regions and Member States. Agencies such as UNIFEM are still in the process of finding the most appropriate and effective ways of working with ROs and of enhancing alignment and harmonization among themselves.

UNIFEM has an established corporate theory of change that guides all of its activities, but it has not yet developed an operational framework for partnerships that specifies the Fund's expectations of what constitutes a successful i.e., relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable) partnership with regional (or other) organizations.¹⁷ UNIFEM's implicit assumptions, about why partnering with ROs is important and relevant, are widely shared among stakeholders

¹⁷ The corporate Theory of Change as described in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan implies the relevance of ROs as one type of ‘mainstream institution’ whose capacity UNIFEM is aiming to strengthen. The SP does not – understandably – go into any detail, however, regarding UNIFEM's approach and strategies for partnering with and supporting different kinds of organizations.

(including among other UN agencies working with the same ROs) and are seen to be plausible. However, these assumptions have yet to be proven valid.

Consulted RO stakeholders (from both boundary and strategic partner types of relationships) describe UNIFEM as a highly respected and valued partner. UNIFEM is seen as playing (or as having potential to play) a unique role among RO partners due to its focus on gender equality and WHR, its status as a UN agency, and its close links to civil society as well as to a broad range of other partners.

There is considerable evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have contributed to a number of short-term and some midterm results. While there are little reliable data on whether and to what extent changes in ROs at the regional level have contributed to subsequent changes at the national level (because these types of changes are long-term changes and because of the lack of monitoring/tracking systems), consulted stakeholders widely agree that the results achieved have the potential to contribute to such longer-term changes. They can thus be described as positive contributions to strengthening the *enabling environment for change* at the regional level and ultimately the national level.

Some concerns emerged about the sustainability of results, particularly in terms of institutional capacities. In many cases, the sustainability of achievements appears to be out of UNIFEM's control. However, UNIFEM's tendency towards relatively short-term and activity-focused interventions with limited follow-up strategies and resources may also negatively affect the long-term sustainability of the results obtained. The absence of corporately agreed upon concepts of *capacity* and *capacity development* (individual and institutional) may also be a factor that limits UNIFEM's ability to work towards and track the sustainable results of its partnerships with ROs.

UNIFEM's subregional offices are the key entities for managing partnerships with ROs in different parts of the world. Key benefits of this approach are the geographic proximity of SROs to their respective partners, SRO staff's in-depth knowledge of subregional contexts and developments, as well as their professional contacts

and networks. In most if not all cases, good personal relationships between UNIFEM and RO staff have been significant factors for the establishment and continuation of partnerships.

UNIFEM's approach to managing partnerships with ROs is done on a case-by-case basis, rather than corporately or regionally driven. It has tended to respond to emerging opportunities at the field (subregional) level and not as part of UNIFEM's existing explicit subregional or regional strategies.

UNIFEM's current management approach focuses on short-term results linked to specific activities with an RO partner or to products of the respective RO. One important challenge not only for this evaluation but for UNIFEM more generally is how to assess and track the relevance and effectiveness/success of individual partnerships in relation to the broader objectives to which these partnerships are intended to contribute. This is related to two key issues:

- Globally – the absence of reliable data or data-collection systems for obtaining information on the impact of ROs at the national level,
- In UNIFEM – the absence of agreed upon corporate criteria or guidelines for establishing partnerships and monitoring partnership results.

UNIFEM has increasingly moved away from a project- and country-based approach towards a more integrated regional approach. Its current approach to managing partnerships with ROs does not yet reflect these principles. UNIFEM is using a variety of often similar approaches/activities to operationalize partnerships, but it has not yet developed distinct 'models' of partnering with ROs. UNIFEM is in the process of diversifying its approach to working with ROs by moving towards a multitiered approach that involves collaborating with thematic sections in ROs, as well as with CSOs and other RO stakeholders. This diversification has the potential to open up broader opportunities for engagement with ROs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the assumption that the gaps or challenges identified in this report require or warrant action. However, each of the recommendations implies costs for UNIFEM that need to be carefully balanced against the potential benefits; the results of such cost/benefit assessments may differ by geographic region. In some cases, UNIFEM may wish to consider whether a recommendation can/should be addressed only in terms of its RO partnerships, in relation to all types of partnerships, or in a broader corporate context (e.g., some issues, such as the absence of corporately defined concepts of “capacity” and “capacity development”, may warrant a broader response).

Recommendation 1: UNIFEM should make its assumptions and expectations with regard to partnerships more explicit and develop corporate tools to guide and inform UNIFEM decisions on whether and why to enter, continue, or end partnerships.

UNIFEM strategic documents as well as consultations with UNIFEM staff in HQ and field offices indicate that UNIFEM considers effective partnerships as a central aspect of its overall approach. However, it needs to define more explicitly what it means by ‘partnership’, what assumptions and expectations are underlying different types of partnerships and also what criteria UNIFEM staff can use to make decisions about entering, continuing, or terminating partnerships with different organizations.

It would be helpful if UNIFEM developed (at a minimum) a core set of agreed upon concepts and related terminology that accurately describe the characteristics of particular types of partnerships.

Recommendation 2: UNIFEM should develop more effective approaches to tracking and analysing the performance of its partnerships with ROs.

One current challenge for UNIFEM is how to track and document the results of its partnerships with ROs beyond the immediate effects of individual, mostly short-term activities.¹⁸ In terms of accountability, UNIFEM is expected to focus on progress towards development results. This links to the question of what kinds of results UNIFEM can be, wants to be, or is expected to be accountable for: short- and midterm results or also long-term development impacts?

UNIFEM is currently thinking in terms of *contribution* rather than *attribution* when it comes to reflecting upon longer-term development results/impacts. In this light, UNIFEM’s current approach of mostly tracking short- and midterm results of its work with ROs is reasonable. However, what is missing and what is needed to demonstrate contributions to longer-term development goals in a convincing manner is to illustrate how and why it is plausible or likely that achieved interim (short- and midterm) results will contribute to long-term goals. It therefore would be helpful for UNIFEM to articulate at least some of the key *operational results frameworks* that underlie its efforts in a particular thematic area and/or a particular geographic region.

For UNIFEM’s internal learning, systematically collecting, analysing and sharing information about its partnerships with ROs (or indeed other UNIFEM partners) can be a key tool for UNIFEM to continuously improve its work. Developing specific replicable models for engaging with ROs (or other partners) is dependent on UNIFEM’s ability to collect and analyse comparable data from a variety of partnerships over time.

¹⁸ Consultations with UNIFEM staff indicate that the same applies to its partnerships with other types of organizations.

Recommendation 3: UNIFEM (corporately as well as in each geographical section) should review its current approaches to managing relationships with ROs to assess the potential benefits of, and identify feasible ways of creating, more consistency across UNIFEM in how it manages its partnerships with ROs.

While in many respects partnerships with ROs may not differ substantially from UNIFEM's partnerships with other types of organizations (e.g., in terms of the particular strategies used to work with them), ROs are unique given their particular nature as subregional intergovernmental entities. This may warrant a closer look at the potential benefits of further strengthening and harmonizing UNIFEM's learning and approaches to working with these partners.

UNIFEM may want to explore whether the development of one or more actual replicable *models* of engagement with ROs (or related guidelines) would be useful in terms of providing corporate guidance to the SROs responsible for the respective partnership or if UNIFEM staff and RO partners would perceive such guidance as more limiting than helpful given the unique settings each partnership has to respond to.

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AECI	Agencia Española de la Cooperación Internacional
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGEM	Women's Economic Agenda
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APAS	Asia, Pacific and Arab States
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMMCA	Council of Ministers of Women's Affairs of Central America
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDU	Gender and Development Unit
GE	Gender Equality
GEO	Geographic Sections (UNIFEM)
GLR	Great Lakes Region
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Rights

ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAS	League of Arab States
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NAFTA	North-America Free Trade Agreement
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWM	National Women's Machinery
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OM	Outcome Mapping
PANCAP	Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS
PF	Parliamentary Forum
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
RAC	Regional Advisory Committee (CARICOM)
RBM	Results-Based Management
RDB	Regional Development Banks
REM	Specialized Meeting of Women
REMMA	Intergovernmental Network of National Women's Machinery
RO	Regional Organization
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa
SG	Secretary General
SGIB	SAARC Gender Infobase
SICA	System of Central American Integration
SP	Strategic Plan
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SRO	Subregional Office
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa

UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAEMU	Western African Economic and Monetary Unit
WGDD	Women, Gender and Development Directorate (AU)
WHR	Women's Human Rights
WTO	World Trade Organization

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
	1.1 Background	3
	1.2 Methodology	3
	1.3 Evaluation Terminology	6
	1.4 Evaluation Limitations and Lessons Learned	7
	1.5 Organization of the Report	9
2.	UNIFEM's RO Partnerships and the Framework for Assessing Their Results	11
	2.1 Introduction	11
	2.2 Background on Regional Organizations	11
	2.3 UNIFEM's Current Partnerships with ROs	12
	2.4 Types of Partnerships	16
	2.5 Basis for Assessing UNIFEM Partnerships with ROs	19
3.	Context	25
	3.1 Overview	25
	3.2 Global Context	25
	3.3 Regional Contexts	28
	3.4 UN Context	32
	3.5 UNIFEM Context	33
4.	UNIFEM-RO Partnership Performance	35
	4.1 Overview	35
	4.2 Relevance	35
	4.3 Effectiveness	43
	4.4 Sustainability	49
	4.5 Partnership Management	52
5.	Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	63
	5.1 Overview	63
	5.2 Conclusions	63
	5.3 Lessons Learned	66
	5.4 Recommendations	69

Appendices

Appendix I	ToRs	77
Appendix II	Evaluation Framework	87
Appendix III	List of Stakeholders Consulted	93
Appendix IV	List of Reviewed Documents	101
Appendix V	Summary of RO Partnership Agreements	109
Appendix VI	Suggested Questions for Selecting/Reviewing Partnerships	115
Appendix VII	Piloting UNEG Guide to Evaluation from a Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspective	117

Exhibits

Exhibit 1.1	Site Visits	5
Exhibit 2.1	Categories of Regional Organizations Partnered with UNIFEM	13
Exhibit 2.2	Partnership Foci and Approaches	14
Exhibit 2.3	Boundary Partners and Strategic Partners	17
Exhibit 2.4	UNIFEM's Corporate Theory of Change	20
Exhibit 2.5	Operational Results Framework – Boundary Partners	21
Exhibit 2.6	Operational Results Framework – Strategic Partners	22
Exhibit 4.1	Implicit Partnership Rationale and Benefits for UNIFEM	37
Exhibit 4.2	Examples of UNIFEM-RO Partnership Contributions to Short-and Midterm Results	43
Exhibit 5.1	Framework for Exploring the Development of Lessons	67

Annex

Annex 1	Profiles of Six UNIFEM Partnerships with Regional Organizations	121
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Universalia is pleased to present this report on the evaluation of UNIFEM partnerships with Regional Organizations (ROs), one of the corporate evaluations included in UNIFEM's 2008 Evaluation Plan.

Following a competitive and open bidding process, Universalia was engaged by the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit to conduct the evaluation in October 2008. The evaluation was undertaken in two phases: an expanded inception phase (November 2008–January 2009) and an in-depth study phase (January–November 2009).

The evaluation findings and recommendations are intended to support UNIFEM Geo Sections and Subregional Offices (SROs) in the development of more effective partnerships with regional organizations in the implementation of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008–2011) and regional and subregional strategies.

This final report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and includes revisions made on the basis of feedback received from UNIFEM staff, the Evaluation Unit and UNIFEM's Internal Reference Group.¹⁹

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Evaluation Objectives and Framework

Based on consultations with stakeholders inside and outside UNIFEM, the original evaluation objectives outlined in the ToRs (see Appendix I) were refined as follows and approved by the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit:

- Describe and analyse UNIFEM's experience with regional organizations to date in terms of the types, purposes and expected results and strategies of these partnerships, and in relation to the main characteristics of the ROs it has partnered with.

- Identify the key strengths, areas for improvement and lessons learned by UNIFEM and the ROs it has partnered with on the promotion of gender equality, with particular attention to:
 - The (intended and actual) results and benefits of these partnerships for UNIFEM and for the ROs;
 - The sustainability of these partnerships and their results;
 - Variations across regions.

- Develop a framework that can be used by UNIFEM to categorize, make decisions about and assess UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations in the future.

- Provide UNIFEM with recommendations on policies and/or practices that could guide its engagement with ROs in the future.

With input from UNIFEM, Universalia developed a detailed methodology for the evaluation that was outlined in the evaluation inception report and approved by UNIFEM. The evaluation framework, summarizing the major evaluation questions and sub-questions, is included in Appendix II.

1.2.2 Evaluation Scope

Time-frame: The evaluation focused on the time frame 2004–2009, which included the Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) period from 2004 to 2007, as well as more recent developments up to March 2009. The Evaluation Team also considered earlier data when it was deemed important to understand UNIFEM's relationship with a particular organization (e.g. Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]).

¹⁹ UNIFEM's Consultative Committee and an External Reference Group also provided feedback on earlier versions of the report.

Geographic scope: The Evaluation Team examined UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs in all geographic areas in which UNIFEM works and conducted in-depth studies of partnerships with selected ROs from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Africa.

Main evaluation foci: The evaluation focused on the following areas of analysis: international, regional and UNIFEM internal contexts; effectiveness; relevance; sustainability; management; and future directions.

1.2.3 Evaluation Team

The Universalia Evaluation Team consisted of the following members:

- Gerry Cooney – Team Leader/Africa Expert
- Katrina Rojas – Senior Evaluator/Latin America and the Caribbean Expert
- Anette Wenderoth – Conceptual Advisor
- Silvia Grandi – Intermediate Evaluator
- Elisabetta Micaro – Research Assistant
- Emilie Peters – Research Assistant
- Alexa Khan – Evaluation Expert based in the Caribbean

1.2.4 Evaluation Process

The evaluation was managed by the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, and data collection and analysis were carried out by the Universalia Evaluation Team in close consultation with UNIFEM. One member of the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit—the Evaluation Task Manager—participated in and contributed to the field visit to Botswana, South Africa and Ethiopia.

The Evaluation Team’s overall approach to the assignment was consultative, participatory and utilization-focused, and it was designed in alignment with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s (UNEG) Norms and Standards, and the ethical code of conduct of UNEG.²⁰ UNIFEM also established an internal reference group of UNIFEM staff and an external reference group of stakeholders from UNIFEM partner organizations to inform the evaluation process.²¹ Both groups reviewed key evaluation deliverables for accuracy and provided feedback. The Evaluation Team also piloted the draft UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations in the UN system by reviewing the guide, incorporating relevant and feasible aspects of its content into the evaluation and submitting feedback on the content and format of the guide in January 2009. Universalia’s feedback note on this exercise is included as Appendix VII.

20 For UNEG evaluation standards, see http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22

21 The Reference Group comprised the following: Director of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, African Union (AU); Principle Programme Officer/Head of Division, Gender, Youth and Children’s Affairs, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Head of Gender Unit, Southern African Development Community (SADC); Gender Expert, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); Director/OIC, African Centre for Gender and Social Development, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); Deputy Programme Manager, Culture and Community Development and Gender Affairs, Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Gender Advisor, Technical Secretariat of COMMCA, Central American Integration System (SICA); Coordinator, Programme for the Support of Women’s Leadership and Representation, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); Senior Advisor to the Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); and Director of Social Affairs, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Secretariat (SAARC).

1.2.5 Data Sources

There were three major sources of data for this review: people, documents and site visits.

People: More than 170 individuals were consulted for the evaluation. Appendix III lists all stakeholders from whom data were obtained.

Documents: The Evaluation Team reviewed and analysed numerous UNIFEM and RO reports and documents as well as relevant literature related to regional organizations, UNIFEM, and their respective regional and global contexts. A list of written documents and relevant websites reviewed during the course of the evaluation is presented as Appendix IV.

Site visits: As shown in Exhibit 1.1 below, the team conducted one visit to UNIFEM Headquarters in New York, site visits to four ROs in Africa and one visit to the Caribbean. As stipulated in the ToR, a purposeful sample of partner ROs to be visited was identified in Africa and LAC. UNIFEM's decision to conduct site visits in these two regions was due to the larger number and longer tradition of partnerships with ROs in these two regions than in others.

The original plan was to visit a second RO in the LAC region (SIACA/COMMCA). Due to budget, timing and other logistical constraints, UNIFEM and Universalia agreed to replace the site visit with a series of telephone interviews with key stakeholders.

Exhibit 1.1 Site Visits

Countries	Purpose	Team Members	Dates
US (New York)	Initial data collection with Directorate, Thematic Advisors, Geo sections and Consultative Committee members	Katrina Rojas	21 and 25 Nov 2008
	Theory Development Workshop with UNIFEM staff	Katrina Rojas Silvia Grandi Anette Wenderoth	24 Nov 2008
Guyana Barbados	UNIFEM's Partnership with CARICOM	Katrina Rojas Alexa Khan (local consultant)	19-21 Jan 2009 22-23 Jan 2009
Nigeria Senegal	UNIFEM's Partnership with ECOWAS	Gerry Cooney Silvia Grandi	26-28 Jan 2009 29-31 Jan 2009
Burundi Kenya	UNIFEM's Partnership with the ICGLR	Gerry Cooney Silvia Grandi	2-4 Feb 2009 5-6 Feb 2009
Botswana South Africa	UNIFEM's Partnership with SADC	Anette Wenderoth Shravanti Reddy (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit)	29 Jan to 1 Feb 2009 2 Feb 2009
Ethiopia	UNIFEM's Partnership with the African Union (AU)	Anette Wenderoth Shravanti Reddy (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit)	3-6 Feb 2009

Summary reports highlighting key observations of each of the field visits as well as one in-depth study conducted based on phone interviews (SICA/COMMCA) are provided in Annex I – Profiles of Six UNIFEM Partnerships with Regional Organizations.

1.2.6 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Key methods of data collection were document review, semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews, face-to-face group interviews/focus groups, a workshop with UNIFEM staff members in New York, observations during field visits and e-mail correspondence.

In addition, two written surveys were used to contact:

- Representatives of selected ROs that UNIFEM had partnered with but that had not yet been consulted through phone or in-person interviews;
- Representatives of visited RO member country governments, mostly staff members of the respective National Women's Machinery (NWM). (See also sidebar.)

Survey Response Rates

Survey I was sent to 23 representatives of 16 selected ROs that UNIFEM had partnered with; 14 people responded (60 per cent response rate)

Survey II was sent to 22 representatives of 20 RO member country governments; 6 responded (27 per cent response rate)

Given the low response rates, particularly for Survey II, the Evaluation Team has drawn more from qualitative than quantitative data in this report.

The team used descriptive, content and comparative analyses to analyse the data for this study. Validity was ensured through compliance with standard evaluation practices and through data triangulation (i.e., convergence of multiple data sources) when data were available. Based on the analysis, the Evaluation Team developed findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.3 Evaluation Terminology

During the course of this study and throughout this report, the Evaluation Team utilized some terms that have specific meanings in the field of evaluation or that are specific to this study. As these may differ from the everyday meanings of these terms, we have provided the definitions of these terms.

Boundary and Strategic Partners

These two terms are derived from the International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Outcome Mapping Methodology.²²

Boundary Partners are those individuals, groups, or organizations with which a programme interacts directly and with which it can anticipate some opportunities for influence (i.e., the partnership is deliberately and directly aiming to initiate and/or support positive changes in the boundary partner's behaviours, relationships, activities, or practices with a view to achieving common objectives).

Strategic Partners are actors with whom a programme works but with whom it does not want to (or is not able to) directly influence or change. The programme may want/need an alliance with strategic partners to achieve particular objectives, but it is not trying to change the behaviour or practices of these partners.

In this report, the Evaluation Team has used these terms to describe the relationships that UNIFEM has with regional organizations – **not to make judgments about the nature, relevance, or effectiveness of a particular partnership or RO**. In this context, the term *strategic* is used to describe a particular type of relationship where two partners work together to achieve common or similar goals. It is important to note that **UNIFEM's relationships with both boundary and strategic partners can be 'strategic' in the everyday sense of the term** (i.e., in

22 Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 41.

that they are part of a systematic plan of action designed to achieve a larger objective or goal). **The two types of partnerships are not mutually exclusive and some partnerships have elements of both.**

Catalyst

In this evaluation, the term is used to describe an organizational role that applies to both UNIFEM and most of the ROs it works with. In UNIFEM's own terms²³, an organization can act as a **catalyst** by a) enabling changes and change processes that would otherwise not take place, or b) influencing the speed and/or quality of ongoing change processes (e.g. by facilitating parts of the process, by assisting different players, or by helping to structure the process effectively).

Lessons Learned

According to the OECD definition, "Lessons are generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact." A single successful aspect of a project or initiative does not constitute a 'lesson'. Over time, the identification of common insights across multiple initiatives can yield a meaningful lesson.

The evaluation ToR requires the Evaluation Team to summarize lessons learned related to the promotion of gender equality. While the team identified some examples of good practices utilized by UNIFEM in partnerships with ROs, these practices were quite distinct from one another and were not lessons as defined above. In Chapter 5, the report therefore highlights good practices and suggests some potential lessons for UNIFEM's consideration in the future.

Regional Organization

In this report, the term 'regional organization' refers to geographically focused intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and not to non-governmental regional organizations. An IGO is an "association of States established by and based upon a treaty, which pursues common aims and which has its own special organs to fulfill particular functions within the organization."²⁴ Geographically focused IGOs include:

- **Multidimensional regional organizations and subregional organizations:** These organizations are open to members from a particular (sub)region or continent and usually have broad mandates to address integration and cooperation issues in the political, economic and social fields.
- **Regional development banks:** These organizations finance and mobilize resources for development projects in a specific region.
- **Regional bodies within the UN system** (UN Regional Economic Commissions): These institutions play a dual role as the regional arms of the UN (they are ECOSOC subsidiary bodies) and as part of their respective regional institutional landscape. They differ radically from the first type of regional IGOs, in particular in their relationships with other UN organizations, and they are difficult to compare to IGOs. Differences between these two types of ROs are noted throughout the report.

1.4 Evaluation Limitations and Lessons Learned

The Evaluation Team faced a number of limitations related to design, data and planning that contributed to a considerable amount of unbudgeted "process time" for both UNIFEM and Universalia. These are described below, along with some lessons learned that may be useful in future evaluations.

²³ See: UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011, p. 8.
http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UNIFEM_SP_2008-2011_eng.pdf

²⁴ *Encyclopedia of Public International Law.*

Design

Identifying data sources: Two factors that were not recognized or adequately considered by either Universalia or UNIFEM in the design of the evaluation had significant consequences for data collection: 1) RO partnerships are not a distinct element for which any individual or unit at UNIFEM's HQ is responsible, and 2) until this evaluation, RO partnerships had never been the subject of an in-depth study. As a result, there were no obvious or clearly identifiable sources of information (specific people or documents) on RO partnerships.

In hindsight, the context and subject matter of this evaluation were quite different from the more traditional and familiar types of evaluation (of projects or programmes) that UNIFEM commissions,²⁵ and this may have contributed not only to some challenges in finding data, but also to the persistent confusion about the purpose of the evaluation among UNIFEM field staff and stakeholders.

Definition of and objectives of RO partnerships: Perhaps as a result of the two factors noted above, UNIFEM had not defined or distinguished among its various types of partnerships, and it did not have clearly defined objectives or operational strategies for its partnerships with ROs. The Evaluation Team in consultation with UNIFEM developed a working definition of partnership and a set of expectations for RO partnerships that UNIFEM endorsed as the basis for assessing the performance of RO partnerships. These are described in section 2.5 of the report.

Survey strategy: Managing the two electronic surveys sent to representatives of ROs and Member States was a major effort for the Evaluation Team, the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit and the UNIFEM SROs. Given the poor response rate and limited respondent comments, the surveys added little value to the data-collection process. In designing future surveys, UNIFEM should estimate the likely

response rate to a survey to determine the cost-benefit of this data-collection method.

Availability and Utility of Data

Some existing documents required considerable time to locate, and some were never found (e.g., 1999 evaluation of UNIFEM's relationship with SADC and comprehensive financial information about UNIFEM investments in partnerships with ROs). A considerable number of UNIFEM documents were undated, which made it difficult to integrate the information correctly.

For most of the partnerships reviewed, documents provided by UNIFEM and/or the RO provided limited information on the intended and achieved results and the processes utilized in the partnership. As a result, in many cases the Evaluation Team had to rely on anecdotal evidence from UNIFEM staff and RO staff and stakeholders, which was valuable but difficult to validate.

Planning/Scheduling

Lesson: To execute a complex evaluation within the time-frame and budget allocated, it is important in the planning phase to identify evaluation activities that may require extra time and contextual events that may affect the schedule.

- **Scheduling evaluation activities:** Respecting the tight timelines for the evaluation was difficult due to holiday celebrations and common vacation periods.
- **Establishing an External Reference Group:** Due to delays in forming the group, the External Reference Group composed of UNIFEM RO partners was not able to review all evaluation presentations and products as originally intended. While members reviewed the preliminary findings, some feedback was received too late to be analysed and included in the draft report.

²⁵ This evaluation has several of the attributes associated with developmental evaluations that have a different purpose and require different approaches. [The purpose of] *developmental evaluation ... is ongoing learning, internal improvements and program development rather than generating reports and summative judgments for external audiences or accountability.* (Quinn Patton, 2002, p. 180).

- **Pilot Field Visit:** Due to delays in deciding on field visit locations and scheduling problems, there was insufficient time between the pilot field visit to Guyana and the other field visits to share information from the pilot and adapt the data-collection approach accordingly.
-
- **Use of local consultants:** Due to delays in deciding which ROs would be visited for in-depth studies, it was impossible on such short notice to identify qualified and available local consultants to be part of the field mission teams. (The exception was the visit to the Caribbean, where Universalialia had an associate who was familiar with the assignment.)²⁶

1.5 Organization of the Report

The report is organized in five chapters. Following this introduction:

- Chapter 2 provides a profile of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations (ROs);
-
- Chapter 3 explores contextual factors relevant to the evaluation;
-
- Chapter 4 presents the findings of the evaluation on the performance of partnerships between UNIFEM and ROs to date; and
-
- Chapter 5 outlines the key conclusions of the evaluation and provides recommendations to UNIFEM.

A separate Annex to the report (Annex 1) presents the summaries of in-depth studies conducted on selected UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs in Africa (AU, ECOWAS, ICGLR and SADC) and LAC (CARICOM and SICA/COM-MCA).

²⁶ The search for local consultants also raised some general questions about the rationale for including local consultants in this specific assignment (beyond UN mandate to strengthen evaluation capacity at the national level and using existing local expertise), the criteria for selecting such consultants, and appropriate ways of engaging them.



2. UNIFEM's RO Partnerships and the Framework for Assessing Their Results

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background on ROs and describes UNIFEM's current RO partners, the purposes of the partnerships and the types of partnerships that UNIFEM has with different ROs. It also presents the framework agreed upon by the Evaluation Team and UNIFEM for assessing the results of these partnerships.

2.2 Background on Regional Organizations

This evaluation examines UNIFEM's partnerships with a variety of regional intergovernmental organizations. According to the *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, an intergovernmental organization (IGO) is an "association of States established by and based upon a treaty, which pursues common aims and which has its own special organs to fulfill particular functions within the organization." As a legal entity with international legal status, an IGO can enter into agreements with other IGOs or nation states. Most IGOs have a legislative body that can create resolutions or directives that bind the IGO under international law and may have a dispute resolution mechanism to resolve conflicts between Member States.²⁷

While treaties, alliances and multilateral conferences have existed for centuries, the first IGOs were established in the 19th century and became increasingly prominent in the 20th century in facilitating conflict resolution between states and in dealing with intractable conflicts within states. The most well-known IGO is the United Nations, created following World War II. Today, IGOs differ in

function, membership and membership criteria and have various goals and scope. Some IGOs developed to fulfill a need for a neutral forum for debate or negotiation to resolve disputes, whereas others developed to carry out mutual interests in a unified form. The most common types of IGOs include:

- Global IGOs – generally open to nations worldwide so long as certain criteria are met. This category includes the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies and the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Economic IGOs – some of these organizations are dedicated to free trade or the reduction of trade barriers; others are focused on international development. Examples include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as geographically focused regional development banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, etc.
- Regional IGOs – open to members from a particular (sub) region or continent. These include multidimensional regional and subregional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Within the UN system, some organs have a specific regional mandate: the five UN Regional Economic Commissions²⁸ were established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to promote the economic and social development of their Member States and foster intraregional integration. These institutions play a dual role as the regional arms of the UN (they are ECOSOC subsidiary bodies) and as part of their respective regional institutional landscape. For this reason they differ radically from the other types of regional IGOs, in particular in their relationships with other UN organizations.
- Cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, or historical organizations – open to members based on cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, or historical links. Examples include the Commonwealth of Nations and the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

²⁷ The American Society of International Law (www.asil.org)

²⁸ The Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Following the terminology suggested in the evaluation ToRs, in this report we use the term 'regional organization' to refer to geographically focused IGOs (in the list above, these are the regional IGOs, as well as regional development banks and UN Regional Economic Commissions). When required in a specific context, we have distinguished between regional UN organizations, regional development banks, multidimensional regional organizations and subregional organizations. In particular it should be noted that as the UN Regional Economic Commissions belong to the UN system, UNIFEM'S relationships with them are informed by and structured along the internal UN context, frameworks and requirements for collaboration (e.g., One UN).

2.3 UNIFEM's Current Partnerships with ROs

UNIFEM has partnered with regional organizations since the late 1990s²⁹, and in 2008, it had 28 such partnerships at different stages of development (see sidebar).

The number and characteristics of UNIFEM's current partnerships with ROs differ considerably by region. For example, partnering with ROs appears to be a relatively well-established³⁰ practice among UNIFEM offices in Africa and LAC and to a lesser extent in Asia. In other regions, the development of relationships with ROs is incipient (e.g., Arab States, the Pacific, CIS and Europe, with the exception of the EU). This is due to a multitude of factors including variations in the: i) existence and roles of ROs in different regions, ii) maturity and capacity of ROs, as well as iii) history, number and type of partnerships that UNIFEM already has in the region with other organizations (such as national women's machinery, civil society organizations and government institutions).

UNIFEM's existing partnerships with ROs³¹

- **Africa:** African Union (AU), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD),³² Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Development Bank (AfDB), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East Africa Community (EAC), South Africa Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Western African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)
- **LAC:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Organization of American States (CIM/OAS), Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur/REM), System of Central American Integration (SICA/COMMCA), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- **APAS:** South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Island Forum (PIF), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), League of Arab States (LAS), Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- **CEE-CIS:** UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Eurasian Economic Commission (EurAsEC)

29 In a few cases, such as CARICOM and SADC, UNIFEM partnerships date back to the 1990s.

30 In this context, the term "well-established" encompasses several aspects (the duration of partnerships, the number of partnerships in the region, the number of joint activities/initiatives) but does not imply a judgment on the quality of the partnerships.

31 This list includes all ROs with whom UNIFEM has had some type of relationship/partnership. This ranges from formalized long-lasting partnerships to sporadic contacts on specific activities.

32 NEPAD is a programme of the AU. Nevertheless, UNIFEM has also worked to strengthen the capacities of NEPAD Secretariat. For this reason, we consider it as a different partnership than the one with the AU, although they are very closely related.

UNIFEM field offices have developed different types of relationships with ROs that have ranged in terms of their purpose, scope, expected results, arrangements and activities. Until this evaluation, UNIFEM had engaged in very few formal stocktaking processes or cross-regional learning exercises concerning these partnerships.³³

Categories of RO Partners

At present, UNIFEM is partnering with four types of regional organizations (i.e., regionally focused IGOs); key characteristics and examples of these are provided in Exhibit 2.1 below. Despite their differences, most ROs share a common focus, which is to influence change at the national level within their member countries, in particular in terms of policies, laws, decisions and practices to foster the advancement of regional common goals.

Exhibit 2.1 Categories of Regional Organizations Partnered with UNIFEM

Type of Organization	Characteristics	Examples	
Regional IGOs	1. Multidimensional regional organizations	Organizations with broad mandates to address a variety of political, economic and social issues at the regional level, or in the case of OAS, for the American hemisphere. Key aims of these ROs include strengthening cooperation on democratic values, defending common interests and discussing major regional issues. They often have a centralized, comprehensive organizational structure.	AU, OAS, LAS
	2. Subregional organizations	Organizations focusing on aspects of economic and social integration or cooperation at the subregional level. Many of these ROs initially focused exclusively on economic integration but over time have expanded their mandates to include social policy issues, as well as (in some cases) peace and security.	ECOWAS, MERCOSUR, SICA, CARICOM, SAARC, ASEAN, IGAD, PIF, EURASEC
UN system	3. Regional bodies within the UN system.	UN Economic and Social Commissions aim to promote and facilitate concerted action for the economic and social development of the continents or countries they operate in. The Commissions offer convening power, policy prescriptions and technical cooperation. Commissions act within the UN framework and are subject to the general supervision of the Economic and Social Council. Member States of each Commission meet to review and adopt the Commission's programme of work for each biennium.	ECLAC, ECA, ESCAP, ECE, ESCWA
Multilateral Development Banks	4. Regional development banks (RDBs)	Regional development banks finance and mobilize resources for development projects and aim to influence state behaviour through loans and grants rather than through policies. Development banks have both borrowing and non-borrowing Member Countries and often include external, non-regional members/owners.	ADB, AfDB, IDB, CDB

³³ Evaluations have been undertaken of the partnerships with IGAD (2005) and SADC (1999).

Partnership Foci and Approaches

While each partnership between UNIFEM and a regional organization is unique, the evaluation data indicate that UNIFEM's current and recent partnerships focus on two main areas: institutional development and policy development and advocacy. Within these foci, UNIFEM utilizes several operational approaches, as shown in Exhibit 2.2 below. Further analysis of this issue is provided in section 4.5.

Exhibit 2.2 Partnership Foci and Approaches

Partnership foci	Partnership approaches	Examples
Institutional development	<p>UNIFEM provides support for: the creation and development of RO gender units and gender management structures; the placement of gender advisors inside the RO; the development of RO internal gender policies; the mainstreaming of guidelines and manuals; and gender audits. It provides technical backstopping and advice in gender-focused committees/working groups and assists with capacity-building for RO gender units and other RO staff.</p>	<p>UNIFEM supported the AU's Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) by providing funding for: Three consultants to conduct an AU gender audit; A regional knowledge fair on best practices and lessons learned on GE issues; Development of handbook on good practices in gender mainstreaming. More recently, since the establishment of the liaison office, UNIFEM has provided ongoing technical assistance and advice to the WGDD's midterm planning and results orientation.</p> <p>UNIFEM placed a gender advisor within ECOWAS to support the development of a gender policy and management system and to mainstream gender within the institution.</p> <p>UNIFEM supports gender mainstreaming in ICGLR's structures and projects by providing a gender advisor to the Secretariat and technical backstopping and advice.</p> <p>UNIFEM supported CARICOM in an institutional strengthening process that included a gender audit of the organization.</p> <p>UNIFEM provided technical assistance to ASEAN support the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women</p>
	<p>UNIFEM also works to improve RO attitudes and capacity to include gender advocates' (NWMs, Parliamentarians, CSOs) views, knowledge and expertise in their work on GE/WHR. This includes supporting the participation of gender advocates (in particular CSOs and women activists) in RO events and initiatives and organizing and convening women's forums that act as RO consultative bodies.</p>	<p>UNIFEM has supported the Specialized Meeting of Women (REM) in the context of Mercosur, the COMMCA in the context of SICA and the creation of an Intergovernmental Network of NWM (REMMA) in the context of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN).</p> <p>In collaboration with the AU WGDD, UNIFEM has undertaken a mapping of regional and subregional women's rights advocacy networks and organized a strategy development workshop on how the networks can strengthen their partnership with the WGDD and be more effective in engaging the AU.</p> <p>UNIFEM's support to COMMCA has included co-convening meetings with regional women's organizations in order to encourage dialogue between the Ministers and civil society organizations that aim to influence SICA decision-making.</p> <p>In the framework of SAARC Gender InfoBase initiative, UNIFEM supported the creation of a core committee of gender experts including women activists in the region.</p> <p>UNIFEM provides support for civil society participation in the Post-Beijing Regional European Conferences organized by UNECE.</p>

Partnership foci	Partnership approaches	Examples
Policy development and advocacy	UNIFEM supports ROs in developing regional gender policies/frameworks and/or agreements.	<p>UNIFEM has provided technical and financial support for the development of the AU's Gender policy (2008).</p> <p>UNIFEM has provided Financial and technical support to the development of SADC Gender Policy (2007) and of the Gender and Development Protocol for SADC.</p> <p>UNIFEM supported the gender mainstreaming in ICGLR's founding documents and protocols (including the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children).</p>
	UNIFEM provides support for the revision of existing agreements, model laws and for the review of the implementation of specific conventions.	<p>UNIFEM, together with UNICEF, supported the OECS Family Law Reform project</p> <p>UNIFEM reviewed from a human rights perspective the <i>SAARC Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution</i>, 2002 and provided recommendations for the SAARC Secretary General's report.</p>
	UNIFEM works with RO sectoral divisions to engender specific sectoral policies.	UNIFEM is working with specific Sectoral divisions within ECOWAS commission to engender sectoral policies (e.g., Migration, Agriculture).
	UNIFEM works with RO stakeholders such as regional and national CSOs to help them gain better access to ROs and influence RO policy-making processes.	<p>UNIFEM provided support to the Women's Regional Meeting held in Kigali in October 2004. The meeting resulted in the Kigali Declaration, which was later incorporated into the Dar-es- Salaam Declaration, the founding document of ICGLR.</p> <p>UNIFEM provided financial and technical support to Civil Society Organizations and National Women's Machineries to be actively engaged in consultation and advocacy processes related to the SADC Gender Unit's work, in particular around the SADC Gender Policy and the SADC Gender Protocol.</p>
	UNIFEM supports, participates and co-organizes with partner ROs high-level regional meetings that provide space for advocacy.	<p>In collaboration with the WGDD, UNIFEM has convened an experts meeting to develop a framework for multisector implementation of the CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa.</p> <p>UNIFEM in collaboration with ICGLR supported the organization of the Goma High-Level Consultation on Eradicating Sexual Violence. On this occasion, UNIFEM representatives made an address to the audience beyond being one of the signatory of the Goma declaration.</p> <p>UNIFEM supported the SADC Parliamentary Forum in its advocacy work for enhancing women's political representation and their participation in decision-making processes.</p> <p>UNIFEM works with CARICOM Secretariat and with the RAC in order to support planning and advocacy at the ministerial meetings known as Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD).</p> <p>UNIFEM regularly collaborates with UNECLAC and participates as Observer in the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Conference produces important statements of priorities for the region, such as the Declaration of Quito, which highlighted the themes of political participation of women, gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels and the contribution of women to the economy and social protection.</p>

While in many cases UNIFEM provides financial or technical support to the partner RO in order to improve its institutional capacities for GE and WHR and/or develop its own policies on GE and WHR, in other cases UNIFEM and ROs jointly organize and implement events, training and studies related to GE and WHR that are intended primarily for third-party beneficiaries. Some examples include: UNIFEM and ICGLR's joint sponsorship of a regional conference on areas of common interest such as Violence against Women; UNIFEM's collaboration with UNECE and UNECA for the organization of the regional Beijing follow-up conferences; UNIFEM and SAARC's joint work for the development and implementation of the SAARC Gender INFOBASE; joint publications such as *Partnership for Gender Equality: The Role of Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies in Africa* with UNECA and *The Story Behind the Numbers: Women and Employment* with UNECE; and co-organization of training and events for third-party beneficiaries, such as the Gender Responsive Budgeting Training organized by ECOWAS and UNIFEM for NWMs in the ECOWAS region. This is discussed further in section 2.4.

2.4 Types of Partnerships

While UNIFEM's 2004–2007 MYFF and the Strategic Plan 2008–2011 make reference to the importance of 'strategic partnerships', UNIFEM has not defined this term formally, nor is there a corporately shared understanding of how strategic partnerships differ from other kinds of partnerships (or whether all of its partnerships are considered to be strategic).

Interviews with its key stakeholders suggest that the concept of partnership in UNIFEM implies that:

- A partnership is a relationship between or among different entities (individuals or organizations).

- The different entities (partners) are engaged in a relationship (the partnership) with the purpose of achieving a specific goal; the partnership is not a goal or end unto itself.

- Partnerships are expected to contribute to UNIFEM's corporate goal: "*National commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented in stable and fragile states*".

- A partnership should benefit both sides; however, the benefits do not necessarily need to be equally shared by both sides.

- Partnerships can have different levels of formality.

- A partnership can encompass a single specific activity or a broad framework for coordinated actions.

Building on these ideas, the Evaluation Team used the generic definition of partnership provided in the sidebar for the purposes of this study.

Partnership (generic working definition)

- A relationship between individuals or groups characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specific goal.

In our review, we found that UNIFEM uses the term 'partnership' to describe two types of relationships with external stakeholders that differ considerably in terms of their objectives and expected results: One is a support provider/recipient relationship in which UNIFEM seeks to develop the capacity of a partner organization, and the other is a collaborative relationship in which UNIFEM and a partner seek to support change in a third-party target group, organization, or process. One type of relationship does not necessarily exclude the other, and elements of these two types of relationships can coexist in the same partnership, as shown by the examples provided later in this section.

The International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) Outcome Mapping methodology uses the terms 'boundary partners' and 'strategic partners' to distinguish between these two types of partners³⁴ as shown in Exhibit 2.3 below.

Exhibit 2.3 Boundary Partners and Strategic Partners

Characteristics of UNIFEM–RO Partnership	Type of Partner	IDRC Definition
<p>A relationship in which UNIFEM provides support to address an existing need or gap in the resources or capacities of the RO</p> <p>UNIFEM provides technical and/or financial assistance</p> <p>Expected results: changes in the practices, policies and capacities of the RO as they relate to GE and WHR</p>	Boundary partner	Those individuals, groups, or organizations with whom a program interacts directly and with whom it can anticipate some opportunities for influence (i.e., the partnership is deliberately and directly aiming to initiate and/or support positive changes in the boundary partner's behaviours, relationships, activities, or practices).
<p>Complementary relationship in which UNIFEM and a partner organization contribute their respective strengths to support changes in external target groups or processes</p> <p>UNIFEM and the RO both invest in and work together on a joint initiative with common objectives</p> <p>Results (in terms of changes in GE and WHR) are expected to come from the synergies generated by the complementary actions of the partners at the regional and national levels</p>	Strategic Partner	Actors that a program works with but who it does not want to (or is not able to) directly influence or change. The program may want/need an alliance with strategic partners to achieve particular objectives, but it is not trying to change the behaviour or practices of these partners.

34 Adapted from: Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 41.

In this report, the Evaluation Team used these terms to describe the relationships that UNIFEM has with regional organizations—not to make judgments about the nature, relevance, or effectiveness of a particular partnership or regional organization. In this context, the term *strategic* is used to describe a relationship in which two partners work together to achieve common or similar goals. It is important to note that UNIFEM's relationships with both boundary and strategic partners can be 'strategic' in the everyday sense of the term (i.e., in that they are part of a systematic plan of action designed to achieve a larger objective or goal). The two types of partnerships (boundary and strategic) are not mutually exclusive, and some partnerships can have elements of both. Both types of partnerships can be either short-term (e.g., the joint organization of a specific event or one-time support to develop a specific tool or capacity) or mid to long-term (e.g., a longer-term commitment to work together on a specific project, for example, a gender database, or a long-term collaboration framework to develop organizational gender capacity within an RO).

Most of UNIFEM's current RO partners would be characterized as predominantly boundary partners that UNIFEM is supporting in developing or strengthening its capacities and performance (approximately 75 per cent of the reviewed partnerships). In some cases, the RO can be characterized as both a boundary and a strategic partner

as UNIFEM is supporting change in the RO while also working with the RO as an ally on specific issues (e.g., ASEAN, ICGLR, SAARC, CARICOM). For example, the UNIFEM–SAARC partnership is built to support Member States on the SAARC Gender Infobase (SGIB) through the SAARC Secretariat, but it is also envisaged that the process should influence the work within the SAARC Secretariat and enhance the knowledge and understanding of SAARC Secretariat on the issues of women's empowerment and gender equality.

Among the MOUs and agreements reviewed, only four describe partnerships that can be categorized as strategic (as defined by IDRC) or that have elements of a strategic partnership: ASEAN, SAARC, UNECE and UNECA.³⁵ The contribution agreements for these partnerships define common objectives and describe what each of the two partners will contribute to the relationship based on their respective strengths. Consulted stakeholders from these ROs framed the partnership as a relationship "grounded on the complementarity of the respective structural assets." For example, the UNECE–UNIFEM MOU states that its purpose is to "establish a framework for collaboration and coordination between UNECE and UNIFEM based on the comparative advantages of these two agencies." The MOU identifies the partners' responsibilities as shown in the sidebar.

The MOU with ASEAN constitutes a mix of boundary and strategic partner type of arrangements. It includes both an agreement for general collaboration of the two partners on various gender equality issues, in particular through consultation, exchange and dissemination of information and research, advocacy and awareness raising, as well as in selected areas in which UNIFEM will provide technical assistance to ASEAN.

³⁵ UNECE and UNECA, as UN organizations, tend to face fewer capacity challenges than other ROs. This could explain the different type of agreement that UNIFEM has with these organizations.

UNECE–UNIFEM MOU

- Article 3 of the UNECE-UNIFEM MOU describes the responsibilities of ECE and UNIFEM under this agreement based on their respective strengths and mandates. ECE's responsibilities include providing a regional forum for the discussion of policies and best practices, expertise in gender statistics and in analysis of economic trends in the ECE region and expertise in regional legal frameworks including norms and standards.
- UNIFEM is expected to contribute to the partnership by facilitating dialogue between government and civil society and by establishing working contacts at national and subregional levels through the network of UNIFEM staff and partners in the region. UNIFEM is also expected to contribute to national and regional capacity-building in terms of gender mainstreaming in policy formulation and the economy.
- The MOU also outlines how ECE and UNIFEM are expected to collaborate in practical terms. This includes: sharing information and coordinating their activities at the regional and subregional levels; coordinating efforts to secure funding for analytical and operational activities related to the areas of collaboration; carrying out joint projects such as training and advisory services in the agreed areas of collaboration; adapting and/or developing, translating and disseminating training materials, guidelines and other materials related to the agreed areas of collaboration.

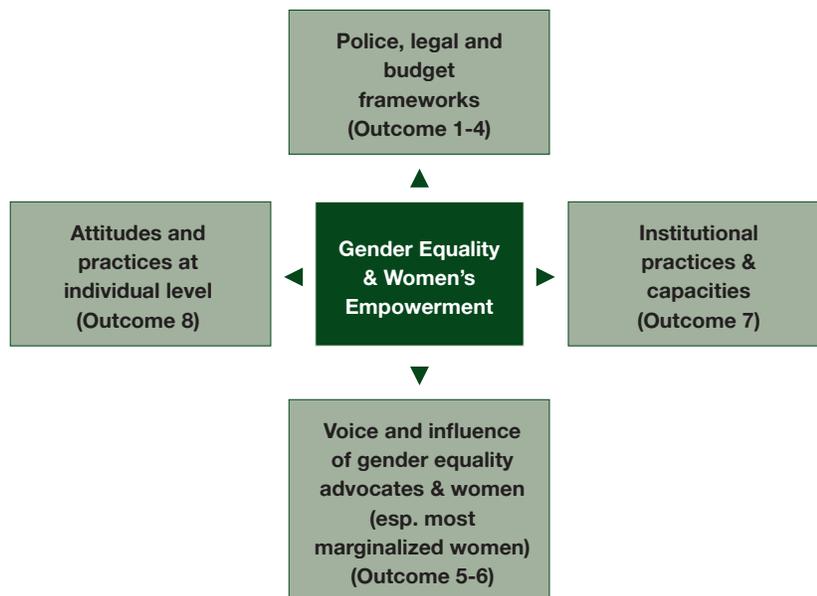
Finally, although there is no MOU for the partnership between UNIFEM and UNECLAC, both partners clearly articulate the assets and complementarities between the two organizations that lead them to continuous planning of joint activities such as the annual Seminar on Gender Statistics and Indicators held in Aguascalientes (Mexico), collaboration on the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (last held in Quito in August 2007) and the establishment of an Observatory on Gender Equality. The Multi-Year Interagency Agreement concerning the preparation of the Regional Gender Observatory reflects this approach.

2.5 Basis for Assessing UNIFEM Partnerships with ROs

A key question for the evaluation was what objectives (explicit or implicit) UNIFEM is aiming to achieve in partnering with regional organizations. One initial challenge in this regard was the absence of an operational strategy with explicit objectives or results that the evaluation could use as the basis for assessment. While UNIFEM has not formally defined an operational strategy for its collaboration with ROs, interviews with UNIFEM staff suggest that such partnerships are implicitly intended to contribute to substantive changes at the national level that promote and protect women human rights and gender equality.

Under its current Strategic Plan, UNIFEM seeks to contribute to the achievement of a single goal: *National commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented.*³⁶ UNIFEM's corporate efforts are guided by a theory of change that involves influencing changes at the macro, meso and micro levels (as depicted in Exhibit 2.4 below).

³⁶ See http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/products/UNIFEM_SP_2008-2011_eng.pdf

Exhibit 2.4 UNIFEM's Corporate Theory of Change³⁷

This theory of change is based on two key assumptions:

i) That there are strong commitments to gender equality at national and international levels that, if implemented, will substantially enhance gender equality; and ii) That the **implementation** of these commitments requires:

1. **At the macrolevel:** the development of strategies and normative frameworks (constitutions, laws, policies, judicial processes and rules and budget processes) that are gender-responsive and in line with national and international commitments.³⁸
2. **At the mesolevel:** i) strengthened capacities of national women's machineries and other gender equality advocates and women's groups for lobbying for and demanding accountability of mainstream institutions to implement the development strategies and normative frameworks;³⁹ and ii) strengthened capacities of the mainstream institutions to implement the gender-responsive development strategies

and normative frameworks as they relate to their respective spheres of responsibility to influence the desired changes.⁴⁰

3. **At the microlevel:** the availability of rigorously evaluated replicable/up-scaleable model pilots that show how these gender-responsive development strategies and normative frameworks, combined with well-positioned and capable gender equality advocates and interlocutors and mainstream institutions with capacities for implementation of these strategies and frameworks, all work together to bring about actual changes in the lives of people towards greater gender equality.⁴¹

UNIFEM's work with ROs is likely to be most relevant in view of the envisaged macrolevel and especially mesolevel changes referring to strengthening the capacities of mainstream institutions.

37 Source: UNIFEM Internal Document, 2009. Please also see UNIFEM Capacity Development Guidance Note.

38 Development Results Framework (DRF) Outcomes 1-4.

39 DRF Outcomes 5 and 6.

40 DRF Outcome 7.

41 DRF Outcome 8.

While this corporate theory of change provides an overarching framework within which UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs can be located, it does not specify the assumptions and expectations underlying the activities and interactions that UNIFEM actually engages in and does not specify what types of (lower level) changes UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs are expected to contribute to, how these changes are envisaged to contribute to UNIFEM's corporate outcomes and goal, or how specific strategies or activities that UNIFEM carries out are intended to positively affect the desired changes.

Two Operational Results Frameworks

Based on consultations with UNIFEM staff and an extensive document review, the Evaluation Team constructed two **operational results frameworks** to capture some of the implicit assumptions underlying UNIFEM's work with ROs: one for partnerships in which the RO is a boundary partner (shown in Exhibit 2.5 below) and one for partnerships in which the RO acts as UNIFEM's strategic partner (shown in Exhibit 2.6 below).

While these results frameworks are not aligned exactly with UNIFEM's overarching theory of change as described in its Strategic Plan, the Evaluation Team adapted the general theory and applied it to the concept of partnerships. The two operational results frameworks outlined below refer to specific programme contexts and try to identify the key building blocks required to bring about long-term change in the particular context. They show the envisaged actions/interventions, changes/results, as well as some of the underlying assumptions about how the individual building blocks will work to achieve the envisaged ultimate goal. The examples for each type of result are not taken from existing UNIFEM partnerships but are intended to show possible patterns of change. The frameworks are oversimplifications of reality and one dimension not captured in the graphics below is the fact that the processes depicted are usually not linear but iterative and complex processes that include learning/feedback components, which reflect back on UNIFEM's thinking and work.

Exhibit 2.5 Operational Results Framework – Boundary Partners

Boundary Partner Type Relationship				
Results Level	Intervention /Input	Short-Term Result	Midterm Results	Long-Term Results
Types of Envisaged Result	UNIFEM support to RO provided as agreed. (RO uses UNIFEM support for agreed upon purposes)	Positive changes in RO practices, knowledge, skills, structures, etc. (enhanced RO capacities)	RO uses strengthened capacities in new contexts to contribute to broader development changes	Positive changes beyond the RO (e.g. in behaviour/ practices of others) at regional and ultimately national levels
Examples	UNIFEM financial and/or technical assistance provided to the R.O. R.O accepts and utilizes assistance as agreed	Development of gender policies or frameworks. Establishment of functional RO Gender Unit	RO gender unit is promoting policies/ frameworks at the regional level that support GE and WHR	RO Member States adopt and implement regional policies/frameworks to affect positive change at the national level

Exhibit 2.6 Operational Results Framework – Strategic Partners

Strategic Partner Type Relationship				
Results Level	Intervention /Input	Short-Term Result	Midterm Results	Long-Term Results
Types of Envisaged Result	UNIFEM provides input according to its particular strengths. RO provides input according to its particular strengths	Completion of event(s), knowledge product(s) or tools suitable for influencing relevant stakeholders' awareness, knowledge and skills re GE/WHR issues.	Enhanced stakeholder awareness/ac-knowledgement and advocacy for GR/WHE issues. Enhanced capacities related to systematic data collection, analysis, and use.	Positive changes at regional and ultimately at national levels
Examples	E.g.: Based on their respective strengths, UNIFEM and RO both provide financial, technical or logistical input to preparation of regional conference on VAW	E.g.: Regional conference(s) on VAW including high level policy/decision makers successfully conducted. E.g. reliable regional database on gender statistics developed and funtional	E.g.: Stakeholders use conference results (e.g. declarations on VAW) and available data for evidence based advocacy at regional level and their respective home countries	E.g.: RO Member States integrate recommendations/ demands/suggestions on ending VAW into national level policy and/or practice changes

The two frameworks are similar in that they are both aimed at ultimately contributing to changes at the national level. The key difference is that in the case of a purely strategic partner, UNIFEM does *not* intend (or is not in a position) to contribute to behaviour/practice changes in the RO itself,⁴² but frames the relationship as two partners who are more or less equal contributors to a common or shared goal. (See sidebar.)

Key characteristics that the two frameworks have in common and illustrate equally are:

- The collaboration with the respective RO is not seen as a goal in itself, but is located in the broader context of complex, non-linear and long-term change processes that UNIFEM (and the RO) are hoping to contribute to.

- The ultimate objective that both UNIFEM and most ROs are concerned about is to contribute to changes at the national level (i.e., changes outside the RO). This focus on supporting national-level change corresponds with UNIFEM's corporate goal as outlined in its current Strategic Plan.⁴³

- The results chain from UNIFEM's direct interactions with ROs to the intended long-term changes at the national level is long and often non-linear. Although it is possible to identify contributions to long-term change, it is difficult to directly attribute long-term change to any particular intervention.

The Evaluation Team used these two operational results frameworks along with the implicit rationale for engaging with ROs (discussed in section 4.2 on relevance) as a basis for assessing the actual results of UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs.

42 In practical terms this means, for example, that UNIFEM does not (need to) support the respective partners' capacity development efforts.

43 This ultimate objective is not usually articulated in collaboration agreements, but UNIFEM staff members see this as the underlying reason for engaging with ROs.



3. Context

3.1 Overview

The following sections provide an overview of the key contexts within which UNIFEM and its partner regional organizations operate (i.e., global, regional, UN and UNIFEM's internal context) and identify implications in the framework of this evaluation.

3.2 Global Context

New Regionalism

Since the end of the Cold War, intergovernmental regional organizations have increased in number and have expanded the scope and density of their activities. Previously, from the 1950s to the 1970s, most regional organizations tended to focus on political and/or trade issues. It is only since the mid to late 1980s that the agendas of many ROs have, in response to stakeholder demands, evolved to also address regional development issues, including social and environmental concerns. Also, a larger number of organizations have started to address issues of peace and security in their respective region.

Globally, regional cooperation and integration have become more accepted and common tools sought by national governments to further progress at the country level. ROs are increasingly affirming themselves as important and relatively autonomous actors with regard to global and regional challenges. In this context, various regional organizations established in earlier decades have been revitalized or expanded (such as ASEAN, ECOWAS, COMESA, EAC and Pacific Island Forum) while other new organizations and initiatives have been created

(including IGAD, WAEMU, MERCOSUR, NAFTA, SADC, SAARC, SICA and OECS). Many of them have entered into new kinds of initiatives with different actors (state and non-state) at the regional level and with various levels of formality, including informal relationships between different types of regional stakeholders, semi-formalized networks of governmental and non-governmental actors and formalized partnerships with regional and international stakeholders. There is a growing belief that regional integration is a beneficial tool for bringing more stability and prosperity to a region. In doing so, the debate on the contribution of regional integration and growth (and poverty reduction) echoes the broader debate on (free) trade and growth in the context of globalization.⁴⁴

While RO mandates have expanded considerably over time, this has often not been matched with the resources required to realize stakeholders' increased expectations, and some ROs have not been able to fully meet their envisaged function and results.⁴⁵ Key factors that affect the performance of most ROs include:

- Severe limitations in financial and human capacities, which limits their ability to implement programmes and their authority to hold Member States accountable. In the context of a threatening global recession, it is likely that resource limitations will continue to be, and/or become, a significant challenge.
- Overlapping mandates and multiple memberships by Member States in different ROs, which tends to limit a country's commitment to each individual RO.
- Varied capacity of RO Member States. Given the system of rotating the chairs or presidencies in many ROs, the organization may go through alternating periods of dynamism and relative inactivity.

⁴⁴ See Luk Van Langenhove and Philippe de Lombaerde. 2007. 'Regional Integration, Poverty and Social Policy', *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 7; Sage Publication.

⁴⁵ See ACBF, *A survey of Capacity needs of Africa's Regional Economic Communities*, June 2006.

- Limited binding power over Member States of most of ROs decisions. Most ROs are not in a position to enforce decisions made by their Member States at the regional level. Only a few of them actually monitor the implementation of such decisions at the national level.

-
- Regional conflicts and political tensions.

In addition to these factors, according to many interviewed stakeholders, most ROs have experienced challenges in measuring and thus demonstrating their effectiveness at the national level (i.e., in their Member States). To date, there has been little or no systematic tracking of the impacts of regional agendas, policies, or agreements in individual member countries.

ROs as Catalysts

The main goal/focus of most ROs is national-level change within their member countries. However, as noted above, most ROs have limited power to bind their members to normative acts and to effect change at the national level. (The exception is the EU, and to some extent ROs such as the AU and ECOWAS. Also, RDBs might have some binding power through conditionalities to their loans.) In most contexts, ROs act primarily as facilitators and catalysts: They serve as forums for advocacy, discussion and agreement; they encourage, facilitate and support change at the national level. (See sidebar.)

An organization can act as a catalyst by:

- Enabling changes and change processes that would otherwise not take place.
- Influencing the speed and/or quality of ongoing change processes (e.g., by facilitating parts of the process, assisting different players, or helping to structure the process effectively).⁴⁶

Implications: When entering into new relationships and partnerships, organizations that want to partner with ROs need to be cognizant of the common challenges and limitations faced by ROs. In the context of this evaluation, it is important to note that most of the ROs reviewed face considerable capacity issues and challenges in realizing their mandates – not only in the area of gender equality and women’s human rights.

ROs and Gender Equality

For most ROs, gender equality (GE) and women’s human rights (WHR), like other social development topics, were not among the initial concerns the ROs set out to address when they were established. However, with their increasing focus on broader development concerns (as well as on political and/or economic issues), most ROs have begun to acknowledge and address GE and WHR issues.

In addressing gender equality, ROs face a twofold task:

- a) to mainstream gender within the RO structures and practices (e.g., by establishing gender focal points in thematic departments and by developing and implementing gender guidelines and policies to guide RO programming and/or workplace policies);
- b) to support/encourage the adoption and implementation of gender policies and agreements at the national level in its Member States.

⁴⁶ See UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011, p. 8.
http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UNIFEM_SP_2008-2011_eng.pdf

This trend has been influenced by the increased global recognition of the importance of GE and WHR, in particular through international conventions and declarations (e.g., CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action).

Over the last 10 years, often with support from UNIFEM, gender units have been established in many ROs and various regional gender policies, frameworks, declarations and agreements have been developed, in some cases in an attempt to translate global commitments to the regional level (e.g., AU, ASEAN). In addition, some ROs have established formal intergovernmental bodies that bring together the National Women's Machinery (NWM) and are specifically focused on WHR and GE (e.g., COM-MCA for SICA and the Specialized Meeting of Women [REM] for the Southern Common Market Mercosur). In the Arab States region, although a Women's Committee and a Women's Department already existed in the League of Arab States (LAS), in 2002, the Arab Women Organization was created under the umbrella of the LAS to address the issue of women's empowerment.

Survey Results

The majority of RO representatives who responded to Survey 1 (8 out of 14) said that there are fewer than three people in their organizations whose primary focus of work is gender equality.

Evaluation data indicate that progress and achievements in the area of GE and WHR vary from one RO to another. At the same time, RO gender units – where they exist – appear to face similar challenges and limitations⁴⁷ (akin to those faced by national government women's machineries), including: limited human and financial resources, high donor dependency, relatively low institutional status, scarce senior-level gender sensitivity and buy-in (beyond the politically correct) and very limited influence on decision-making and planning processes at the institu-

tional level. The formal bodies made up of governmental delegates from the NWM face similar issues. Another common challenge for the promotion of GE and WHR at the regional level is that member countries are usually represented in the ROs through their Ministries of Foreign Affairs. It is difficult for NWM to be heard and to influence ROs and their member state representatives. This is also due to the fact that NWM are usually less well-established and have fewer resources and capacities than other line ministries. Another difficulty is related to the fact that the gender equality language and intent (e.g., the concept of "gender mainstreaming") is difficult for policy makers to grasp and see as something tangible.

Despite these challenges, consulted stakeholders also noted that considerable progress has been made. In Africa, for example, the African Union and Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) have increasingly and explicitly put gender on their agendas and they have developed a number of important policies, declarations and agreements that are seen as opening up new spaces for furthering GE and WHR issues. Many of these regional declarations directly link to and are intended to further the implementation of international agreements, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. However, the impact of these developments at regional or national levels has not been studied or documented systematically by ROs or others.

Implications: UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs have taken place and continue to do so against a dynamic backdrop in terms of RO interest in and commitment to social development issues including GE and WHR. Positive developments and efforts in this regard continue to be counterbalanced by ongoing challenges and limitations. For this evaluation, it is particularly important to note that to date there has been no systematic tracking or assessment of the mid to longer-term effects that GE/WHR-related changes in RO structures, practices, or policies have had at regional, national, or community levels in terms of GE/WHR policies, practices and behaviours.

⁴⁷ It appears that the UN Economic Commissions do not face the same capacity issues: Usually their internal capacity in gender mainstreaming is well established, although resources are often limited.

3.3 Regional Contexts

As noted above, regional organizations in different parts of the world differ considerably in terms of their number, history, size, mandate, influence and relevance in their particular regional context and in relation to GE and WHR. While there are important differences between individual ROs within the same region, there are also some broad tendencies and trends that appear to characterize the current role of ROs in each of the regions that UNIFEM works in, in particular in relation to the promotion of GE/WHR. These are likely to impact on the (perceived and actual) relevance and effectiveness of partnerships between UNIFEM and ROs in particular regions.

Africa

Regional integration in Africa is largely institution-led and top-down, with low institutional capacities. This has affected the way UNIFEM is engaging with ROs in this region and in particular its focus on institutional strengthening (see section 4.5, finding 9).

Our data indicate that at the moment, Africa may provide the most conducive and dynamic context for regional integration, with a strong movement towards further strengthening existing efforts for integration both at regional (continent) and subregional levels. Regional integration has been part of Africa's strategy for economic (and to a lesser extent political and social) transformation for more than four decades, but since the 1990s, regional integration in Africa has shown a strong revitalization.

Africa is characterized by a double level of integration: regional and subregional. At the regional level, the main actors are the AU (also through NEPAD), AfDB and ECA (as a body that provides technical support to other regional/subregional entities). At the subregional level, Africa has seen a proliferation of integration initiatives in the last decades, in particular in the form of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In 2004, 14 RECs existed in Africa. With the advent of the AU, RECs have been recognized as implementers of AU policies at the subregional level;

however, over the past few years, the need for greater consolidation of the RECs has been widely recognized and discussed. As illustrated during the last AU summit in February 2009, political commitment is increasing among African states for further regional integration and strengthening linkages between the AU and the RECs. The AU Authority, replacing the Commission, is expected to have an increased coordination role in regard to RECs. Development partners are also increasingly considering African ROs and regional initiatives as key interlocutors, in particular within the AU-NEPAD framework (see section 3.4) and the creation of AU Liaison Offices. Regional integration in Africa is seen to have an important role in development and conflict resolution, peace processes and peacekeeping operations. These areas are very important from a GE/WHR perspective.

The AU has been very committed and progressive as far as gender is concerned in policy and norm setting since the beginning. The principles of equality and non-discrimination between men and women are enshrined in the founding legal instrument of the African Union (Constitutive act, art 4(1)) and also in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The AU Heads of State and Government have adopted two instruments specifically to address gender issues: the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (adopted in 2003 in Maputo and came into effect in 2005) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa adopted in Addis Ababa in July 2004, which requires Member States to respect normative standards on women's human rights. Member States also agreed to establish a peer review mechanism on their progress in implementing their commitments on gender equality. Currently, this mechanism is used mostly to examine quantitative data (e.g., women's participation in elections) and less for substantive political changes or social development issues such as gender equality.

At the subregional level, the RECs and other subregional organizations such as the IOC have adopted gender policies, declarations and guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. Many of them have established, or are in the process of establish-

ing, gender units. Nevertheless, these initiatives face several challenges in achieving their objectives (e.g., scarce capacities and resources, overlapping mandates and memberships, inadequate tracking and monitoring systems and weak binding power over Member States).

UNIFEM has a long history of engaging with ROs in Africa, since it developed its first relationship with SADC in 1992. Today, UNIFEM has more or less active relationships with twelve (12) African ROs.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin America and the Caribbean region also has a long history of cooperation and integration. Within the region, the OAS is the region's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and concerted action; its inter-American human rights system provides an important recourse for WHR and includes, among other institutions, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS). Regionalization has not been easy in a context in which forces of common heritage and culture coexist with strong nationalism and, often, a lack of political will to advance agendas that put the common good ahead of national interests. Nonetheless, the region has become increasingly subregionalized over the past decades, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s with the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and CARICOM in the late 1960s and 1970s. As in Africa, the decade of the 1990s witnessed a wave of new or reactivated regional integration initiatives (MERCOSUR, SICA, as well as many separate trade and customs agreements). In Latin America, the "New Regionalism," of which ECLAC was a firm proponent, reflected a shift from the inward-oriented policies of prominent economic development strategies of earlier decades. However, these initiatives have met with varying degrees of success, and progress has often been slower than hoped for due to many of the same challenges noted for Africa. Despite disappoint-

ment with progress to date, there are continuing efforts to strengthen existing regional integration processes. Other factors in the context also influence RO integration of GE and WHR: the role played by civil society in influencing integration processes and the relative strength of the NWM in the region.

Civil society and the women's movement in Latin America and the Caribbean has had mixed success in influencing trade and integration agendas at a regional level. For MERCOSUR, on the one hand, there is evidence of how the union movements, NGOs and the influence of the women's movement have worked together to affect MERCOSUR's policies with a view to enhancing WHR and GE. The integration of the voice of civil society in SICA and CARICOM is in more incipient stages despite efforts to create specific bodies to help institutionalize that participation.⁴⁸

National Women's Machineries (NWM) in Latin America were established in the late 1980s and 1990s. Although the NWMs have formally committed themselves to mainstream gender equality, their power in government varies in each country. In regions such as Central America, NWMs of relatively recent creation face an unstable political environment and the risk of disappearing with a change in government. The access to and influence of NWMs in regional intergovernmental bodies has been limited or non-existent for many years. However, some NWMs have proven to be important drivers for change in the LAC region. Some ROs have established formal intergovernmental bodies that bring together the NWMs and are specifically focused on WHR and GE (e.g., COMMCA for SICA and the Specialized Meeting of Women [REM] for the Southern Common Market MERCOSUR).

These contextual factors also influence UNIFEM's entry points to partnerships with ROs. At present, UNIFEM

48 MERCOSUR is described in Espino, A., *Impacting MERCOSUR's Gender Policies: Experiences, Lessons Learned and the Ongoing Work of Civil Society in Latin America*, Forum International de Montréal, 2008. An analysis of SICA is provided in Santos Carrillo, Francisco, *El Rol de la Sociedad Civil in los Procesos de Integración Regional: Virtualidad y Aspiración. Análisis Comparativo Comité Económico y Social Europeo/ Comité Consultivo del Sistema de Integración Centroamericano*, 2008.

has partnerships with eight (8) regional organizations in the LAC region, including ECLAC and OAS/CIM as well as subregional organizations. The LAC ROs are listed in section 2.2. (See sidebar.)

Asia, Pacific and Arab States

SAARC was created in 1985 “to accelerate the process of economic and social development in Member States”. The SAARC Social Charter, adopted in 2004, opens up a regional space for action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights beyond existing national plans of action. It embodies a broad range of targets, including the empowerment of women, to be achieved across the region. SAARC-prioritized themes are feminization of poverty, health and violence against women. In recent years, the organization has actively operated to eliminate violence against women by focusing, in particular, on sexual trafficking of women and forced migration. In 2002, the regional Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution was adopted, and a Regional Task Force was established to review the progress made in the implementation of the convention. The SAARC Development Fund, which has a social window to address the needs of women, also represents an important opportunity to make progress towards gender equality.

UNIFEM’s geographic section dedicated to Asia, Pacific and Arab States groups together three subregions that are very different culturally, geographically, politically and economically. In the context of this evaluation, however, the three subregions share a number of characteristics with regard to the role and relevance of ROs that distinguish them from Africa or the LAC region. In all three subregions, ROs still appear to play a limited role in influencing member countries agendas, although some such as ASEAN and LAS have been in place for several decades. Especially in Asia and the Arab States, subregional conflicts and political and economic tensions between countries have posed ongoing barriers to effective and committed regional collaboration. Considerable linguistic and cultural diversity within each subregion (especially in Asia and the Pacific region) and the absence of an agreed upon common language in Asia pose further challenges to regional integration. At the same time (e.g., in Asia), there appears to be increasing awareness and acknowledgement by country governments that a number

of problems such as HIV/AIDS and trafficking can only be addressed effectively by taking a cross-border approach. UNIFEM is partnering with six ROs in this region.

South Asia and South-East Asia subregion

Created in 1967, **ASEAN** aims to improve South-East Asian nations’ economic integration and political cooperation. In the field of gender equality, ASEAN, through its Committee on Women, has been promoting the implementation of international declarations and conventions such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at the subregional level. These two instruments were adapted to the South-East Asia region through the ASEAN’s Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women adopted in 2004. ASEAN’s work on violence against women has targeted in particular the themes of the relations between gender-based (domestic) violence and HIV and the relations between women’s labour migration and exploitation. While a series of conventions, joint statements and declarations have followed since the adoption of the 2004 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region, important gaps persist in the actual implementation of these commitments both at the level of translating regional commitments into national laws and strengthening the implementation and monitoring of existing national laws.

Regional integration in South and South-East Asia is hindered by several factors. The subregion is characterized by political tensions among some countries. Regional cooperation is also made more difficult by the variety of languages spoken and the absence of an international agreed-upon language. Several countries in South Asia and South-East Asia are experiencing significant economic growth, which is contributing to widespread improvement in social well-being and to changes in the way of life. Women have entered strongly into the paid labour force and have migrated to find job opportunities. At the same time, however, the economic growth of some countries encourages cross-border movement for work and education in the subregion. The related problems of trafficking and epidemics have caused some tensions in the subregion. These problems, which have very strong impacts on women in the region, call for transnational solutions.

Despite traditional difficulties in subregional cooperation, the two main ROs in the region, the SAARC and the ASEAN, are taking steps to address these issues. UNIFEM has established MOUs with both ASEAN and SAARC. The attitudes of the countries in the region towards the promotion of human rights and dialogue with civil society vary significantly. Differences in political contexts and democratic processes also make it difficult to push human rights agendas at the national level. In the subregion, the work at the RO level provides an additional framework to put women's human rights (WHR) on the agenda.

Pacific subregion

The geographic characteristics of this subregion make intergovernmental cooperation very difficult. In addition to distance, linguistic diversity and the competition for limited resources represent additional barriers to dialogue among countries.

However, there have been some attempts to address gender equality issues at the regional level. The Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC) has a gender adviser and manages a triennial process to monitor implementation of the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) – the regional version of the Beijing Action Plan. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) has made some efforts, with Commonwealth and UNIFEM support, to mainstream gender equality. However, its gender capacities remain low, and the organizational culture is not yet conducive to improvements and ownership of gender mainstreaming efforts.

Arab States subregion

Conflicts and political crises make the Arab States region unstable, which undermines regional cooperation as well as human and women's development in much of the Arab world. The League of Arab States (LAS) was established in 1945, but its effectiveness and ability to represent and influence Member States has been severely hindered by conflicts and political crises.

In recent years, however, in part due to a dynamic women's movement and international support, governments in the region have given increased attention to women rights and gender equality. Examples of the main improvements reached in recent years in the Arab States region include: the promulgation of new legislation for the benefit of women, the establishment of mechanisms concerned with women's issues, the attainment of political rights for women in some countries, the allocation of quotas to women in the parliaments of some countries and the ratification of CEDAW by 17 countries. The LAS has also taken a more active role in promoting women's empowerment since 2002 with the creation of the Arab Women's Organization.

CEE/CIS

In the CEE/CIS region, regional integration dynamics are influenced, directly or indirectly, by the European Union (EU) while other regional integration initiatives are still embryonic. To date, gender equality issues in the region tend to be given relatively low priority. UNIFEM is partnering with two organizations in CEE/CIS: the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EurAsEC).⁴⁹

CEE subregion

The situation in CEE is characterized by the strong presence and influence of the EU: Half of CEE countries are members of the EU, while the remaining ones are or are hoping to become candidates for membership. This potentially weakens the relevance and influence of other specific subregional organizations.

With the recent enlargement of the EU, economic stability is a priority in Eastern Europe, and since September 11, 2001, security has also become a priority issue on the EU agenda. The region has suffered from recent political crises such as the dispute on gas issues between the

⁴⁹ UNIFEM also partners with the EU. However, this partnership was not included in the scope of this study because of its very different nature (the European Commission is among UNIFEM's financial contributors).

Russian and the Ukrainian governments in 2006, territorial sovereignty issues between the Russian and Georgian governments in 2008 and the Kosovo situation since 1999. In this context, gender equality issues are given relatively low priority.

Despite improvements in the region related to implementation of the Beijing Action Plan and the regional economic situation, the situation of women has worsened in many countries, particularly in the employability and social protection spheres; human trafficking remains a significant concern.

CIS subregion

The CIS subregion is characterized by a high level of poverty and severe problems in the areas of employment and social and health sectors. There appears to be increasing recognition among country governments that regional collaboration is important in the fragile CIS context given that all countries are dependent on each other with regard to basic needs such as energy, food and water. Countries in the region are slowly becoming more aware of GE issues. UNIFEM established a presence in the region relatively recently (1999). UNIFEM approached EurAsEC for the first time in 2004 and has worked with EurAsEC mainly on issues of labour migration.

Implications: The number, history, size and mandate of regional organizations and their respective influence on Member States, effects on integration and relevance differ considerably between geographic regions. This is likely to have affected not only UNIFEM's ability to partner with ROs in the respective regions, but also to have influenced the potential relevance of such partnerships: ROs are less likely to be influential partners in regions with weak regional institutions and where national governments have less interest in and commitment to regional coordination and collaboration.

3.4 UN Context

Since 1997, the ongoing UN reform process has worked to move the UN system toward greater harmonization and coordination in order to strengthen the UN's effectiveness and support at the country level. Currently, the UN is working on a model of enhanced collaboration in eight pilot countries.⁵⁰ Also, efforts for coordination and joint programming are being made in a large number of UN Country Teams (UNCTs). This includes the agreement to consistently apply a human rights-based approach to common UN programming processes at global and regional levels.⁵¹

Acknowledging the growing trend of partner countries to strive for regional integration, UN agencies have also been strongly encouraged to work with and support the work of various regional organizations. Since its 1992 "Agenda for Peace" the UN has held regular biennial consultations with a number of regional and subregional organizations. During the World Summit at UN Headquarters in New York in 2005, the UN explicitly mentioned the utility and need for more capable regional organizations. This resulted in Security Council Resolution 1631 (2005), which called for greater cooperation between the UN and ROs and greater efforts to build the capacity of regional organizations.⁵² (See sidebar.)

In Africa, when the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) came into being in 2001, the UN General Assembly issued three resolutions obliging UN agencies to align their programming with the AU and NEPAD. The UN subsequently organized its work in thematic clusters corresponding with the AU/NEPAD structures.

In this context, UN agencies are increasing their efforts to coordinate their work with ROs through Regional Director Teams and Regional Coordination Mechanism under

⁵⁰ Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Vietnam.

⁵¹ For more information on the ongoing UN reform, see the United Nations Development Group's (UNDG) website <http://www.undg.org/?P=7>.

⁵² See Vasu Vaitla (2006): *Regionalism and Regional Organizations: An option for more effective and more democratic global governance*. UN Institute for Training and Research.

the SG. From a thematic point of view, beyond UNIFEM, other UN agencies are engaging with ROs worldwide to promote GE and WHR, in particular UNICEF and UNFPA.

Another relevant factor in this context is the Paris Declaration (2005) and its commitment to donors more effectively aligning with their partners' chosen strategies and priorities. In a context where many national governments put increasing emphasis on regional integration and collaboration, development partners cannot (or should not) simply ignore this trend and continue to work on a purely bilateral basis. The Paris Declaration also emphasizes the need for increased donor harmonization (i.e., for the increased use of common arrangements or procedures and more effective sharing of information and analysis).

Implications: Seeking partnerships with regional organizations is not unique to UNIFEM but is part of a broader trend within the UN, as well as in the wider donor/development partner community. UNIFEM is operating in a context with increasingly clear and widespread expectations regarding the involvement with regional organizations. These new expectations require some rethinking concerning the types of relationships that development partners can build with ROs and the rules to govern them. They also require increased coordination efforts among development partners with respect to their work with ROs in the same region.

3.5 UNIFEM Context

Partnership decisions as “resource allocation choices”

UNIFEM's limited corporate resources, which have been noted in the past (e.g., in the 2007 MYFF evaluation), have resulted in challenges for UNIFEM with regard to establishing and maintaining a field presence in a significant number of locations and in having sufficient human resources to not only plan and implement programming activities, but also to monitor and assess their results and impacts.

Any partnership UNIFEM engages in implies a certain amount of resources – either financial or in the time and energy of UNIFEM staff. Each partnership requires a choice: Given the Fund's resource limitations, resources allocated to a particular partnership also means fewer resources are available for other partnerships and initiatives. (See sidebar.)

While the general question of whether UNIFEM should engage with an RO may already have been decided (in the sense that as a UN organization it is expected or even mandated to work with ROs), the ‘how’ of each individual partnership (i.e., the scope and quality of interaction) still needs to be determined in each case and leaves considerable room for choices and decisions. Considerations about the continued relevance and effectiveness of the respective partnership may enter into these decisions.

Implications: One important question for the evaluation is on what basis UNIFEM makes partnership (and thus resource allocation) choices and what, if any, criteria it uses to assess the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of individual partnerships. While this evaluation focuses on UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs, the question of criteria for selecting and monitoring or assessing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of partnerships is equally relevant to all types of partnerships that UNIFEM engages in. Another important question in a context of resource limitations is how UNIFEM can harmonize and create synergies among partnerships at the regional and national levels.

UNIFEM efforts to improve its development effectiveness

In its 2004–2007 MYFF, UNIFEM committed to further improving its development effectiveness. For this purpose, the organization embarked on a number of change processes aiming to further improve its organizational performance.⁵³ Relevant in the current context are the following:

⁵³ See also MYFF evaluation (2007), Finding 4.

Corporate, Regional and Subregional Plans

Since the 2004–2007 MYFF, UNIFEM has made considerable efforts to establish a system of corporate planning and reporting that on the one hand allows for coherence of UNIFEM's global programming efforts, while at the same time providing its regional and subregional offices with the required flexibility to respond to and address the specific needs and contexts they are working in. In the most recent planning cycle, each geographic section was asked to develop a regional plan that would be based on and feed into UNIFEM's overarching corporate Strategic Plan 2008–2011. Further, each subregion developed its own strategy 'translating' corporate and regional priorities into specific foci and strategies for the particular subregion.

- UNIFEM has shifted its programming toward larger national and regional programmes and away from its previous focus on multiple small-scale projects, thus trying to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its resources.

- UNIFEM embarked on a decentralization/realignment process to reorganize its internal structure at the global level and provide more decision-making power to regional and subregional offices. (See sidebar.)

- UNIFEM has placed increased emphasis on the application of results-based management (RBM) and on strengthening its evaluation function.

- The Fund has made efforts to broaden the base of different partners that UNIFEM works with at national and regional levels. In addition to its traditional partners such as National Women Machineries, women's NGOs, CSOs, other UN agencies and bilateral donors, UNIFEM has increasingly aimed to build relationships with a broader range of partners, including line ministries and ministries of finance and planning in various countries, private sector partners and religious organizations.

Implications: This evaluation is part of UNIFEM's ongoing reflections on its past performance in partnering with ROs and how it can improve in the future. The analysis of UNIFEM's RO partnership performance in section 4 should be considered in that light.



4. UNIFEM–RO Partnership Performance

4.1 Overview

This section examines UNIFEM–RO partnerships from the following perspectives: relevance, effectiveness, sustainability of results and partnership management.

4.2 Relevance

Finding 1: UNIFEM is highly relevant to all consulted RO representatives.

Consulted RO representatives generally consider their partnership with UNIFEM as highly relevant as they perceived that it addressed regional needs regarding gender equality. Most stakeholders engaged in boundary partner-type relationships with UNIFEM commented that UNIFEM’s support (usually moderate financial support combined with considerable technical assistance and ongoing moral support provided by UNIFEM’s highly motivated and engaged staff) had been relevant and helpful for their work. Individuals representing strategic partner organizations emphasized UNIFEM’s unique strengths that were complementary to those of their own organization.

Key positive characteristics that were mentioned as distinguishing UNIFEM from other partners that the ROs are working with are:

- UNIFEM’s unique mandate focusing on GE and WHR as well as its related experience and expertise
- UNIFEM’s close connection and good working relations with civil society organizations at national and regional levels
- UNIFEM’s status as a neutral UN agency, which allows it to establish and facilitate networking among a broad range of diverse players who otherwise might not get together
- UNIFEM’s demand-driven approach: UNIFEM staff members ask for, listen to and take into account the needs and priorities of its partners rather than imposing pre-made plans or approaches

- UNIFEM staff’s knowledge and experience: In most SROs, UNIFEM staff members come from the region and have often been involved in women’s organizations or similar entities working in the area of GE and WHR in that region. Consequently, they are not only knowledgeable and aware of the particular issues and challenges in the region, but also have valuable networks and connections, which they bring into their role as UNIFEM officers.

Consulted RO representatives repeatedly highlighted their appreciation for UNIFEM’s ongoing moral and technical support. While the Fund’s financial contributions were usually described as relatively modest, RO partners stressed the helpfulness of UNIFEM’s presence, experience-based advice and ongoing encouragement. At present, UNIFEM does not pay attention in its corporate frameworks to partner satisfaction with its services likely because it is so integral to its culture and approach and/or that it may appear as self-aggrandizing. However, partner satisfaction is considered a very relevant indicator of performance in various circles. While satisfaction alone is not sufficient to assess UNIFEM’s performance, UNIFEM should not overlook such an indicator as it is clearly important to its partners.

Finding 2: UNIFEM has not explicitly defined the rationale and expected benefits of its partnerships with ROs or established a way to track and report on the relevance of those partnerships.

In a developmental context, questions of relevance generally examine the extent to which the funded initiative makes sense given the needs, priorities and /or policies of those engaged in the initiative. In examining the relevance of a partnership between organizations, this suggests the need to examine the extent to which the partnership is likely to benefit one or both organizations in terms of fulfilling their mandates and/or working towards their organizational priorities.

In reviewing UNIFEM’s corporate relationships with ROs as a particular type of partner organization, our initial question was, “What makes ROs in general important partners for UNIFEM?” Interview and other data collected from UNIFEM staff indicate that UNIFEM’s partnerships with regional organizations are based on a number of largely implicit assumptions (i.e., not formally stated or corporately agreed upon) about their relevance to UNIFEM. The exploration of these implicit assumptions was the starting point for the development of operational results frameworks, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Consultations with UNIFEM staff indicated that as a UN agency UNIFEM is expected and mandated to work with ROs. While this may make the question of “Why engage with ROs?” irrelevant on a pragmatic level, it does not suffice to answer the evaluation question of the potential and actual *relevance* of ROs as a particular type of partner that UNIFEM engages with. While there appears to be wide agreement about the reasons for engaging with ROs within UNIFEM (discussed below), there has been no systematic analysis of the extent to which these reasons and their implied benefits are valid. In our view, it is still important for UNIFEM to identify how a proposed or existing partnership is expected to be (or is) relevant to UNIFEM and the respective RO. Clearly and explicitly defining the rationale and expected benefits of its partnerships and establishing a tracking system for related results would allow UNIFEM to report on the continued relevance of these partnerships.

Finding 3: Stakeholders consulted inside and outside UNIFEM agree on the key reasons for and benefits of working in partnership with ROs.

This finding explores the ways in which ROs are seen to be relevant to UNIFEM’s work (and vice versa) *beyond* the fact that UN agencies are generally encouraged to partner with ROs. The key reasons and benefits cited by UNIFEM staff for engagement with ROs are presented in Exhibit 4.1 along with a summary of observations derived from our review of actual partnerships and the six in-depth studies and relevant examples. The first four reasons for engaging ROs were the most frequently cited by UNIFEM staff and apply primarily to regional or subregional organizations with broad integration and cooperation mandates and to regional development banks (in particular the third reason). The fifth reason applies mainly, but not exclusively, to UN Regional Economic Commissions.

Stakeholders outside UNIFEM (e.g., representatives of national governments, CSOs and other UN agencies) who were consulted for the evaluation agree that UNIFEM’s key reasons for working with ROs are plausible. The vast majority of consulted stakeholders shared the view that ROs had considerable potential for influencing change at regional and national levels as far as GE and WHR are concerned, in particular through the development of policy/normative frameworks that are agreed upon at the regional level and the ROs’ ability to act as catalysts and facilitators of change. The fact that ROs have the ability to push more progressive agendas than their member country governments and to generate peer pressure among their members are also considered very relevant in promoting GE and WHR priorities. However, most of the information elicited from these stakeholders was anecdotal and not backed up with concrete examples of how ROs had influenced change at the national level.

Exhibit 4.1 Implicit Partnership Rationale and Benefits for UNIFEM

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
<p>1. ROs can have a multiplier effect.</p> <p>Due to their wide membership and relatively high-level government representation, ROs are well positioned to have a multiplier effect (i.e., by addressing only one entity – the RO – many others can be reached).</p> <p>ROs tend to have access to (be covered by) a wider range of media, thus transcending national boundaries.</p> <p><u>Implied benefits for UNIFEM</u></p> <p>Working with ROs can be a cost-effective way of working towards UNIFEM's mandate and goal as UNIFEM does not have offices in each country or subregion. ROs' potential multiplier effect is, for example, important in terms of knowledge dissemination and sensitization on gender equality.</p>	<p>RO partnerships appear to allow UNIFEM enhanced access and exposure to a wide range of national government representatives including from countries where UNIFEM has no field presence. This exposure enhances the likelihood of these representatives approaching UNIFEM for advice or support regarding issues in their country.</p> <p>To date there is no evidence to suggest that working with ROs would be an <i>alternative</i> or <i>substitute</i> for having a field presence in a particular country (i.e., there is no evidence that working with an RO allows UNIFEM to influence changes in countries where it does not have presence as there is no or very limited tracking of changes by ROs at the country level). This does not exclude the possibility that work with ROs might indirectly influence changes at the national level.</p>	<p>ICGLR: Consulted UNIFEM staff commented that working with ICGLR is seen as an opportunity for UNIFEM to learn and gain information on peace and security situations in countries where it does not have field presence.</p> <p>ECOWAS: The work with ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development, in particular the support to the annual Meeting of the Ministries of Women Affairs, has provided UNIFEM with the opportunity to establish a direct contact with the Ministries of Women Affairs of all Member States, which is considered strategic by UNIFEM staff in order to be able to push advocacy and policy dialogue agendas with these Ministries.</p> <p>SAARC: Consulted UNIFEM and SAARC staff stated that the work done in partnership around the SAARC Gender InfoBase (SGIB) was a sensitizing and learning exercise for all Member States. The SGIB has evolved into a driving force for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, under the umbrella of this initiative, SGIB desks and national committees were created in all Member States to facilitate the implementation of the SAARC Gender InfoBase at the national level.</p> <p>CARICOM: Similarly, CARICOM, with UNIFEM's support, provides products and services to their Member States (e.g., Statistics handbook to help strengthen capacity to compile social, gender and environmental statistics). Such products can also represent a cost-effective way of supporting national government capacity.</p>

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
<p>2. ROs can provide a particular theme or issue with increased legitimacy at the national level.</p> <p>The regional nature of an RO can create “peer pressure” among Member States’ national governments: Once an issue is regionally acknowledged as important, it becomes more difficult for individual governments to ignore it at the national level.</p> <p>By tabling an issue in an RO forum, it immediately reaches and may obtain buy-in from relatively high-level government representatives.</p> <p>ROs provide a forum for discussion: Issues that are difficult or sensitive to address at the national level may be introduced at the regional level. This in turn may legitimize further discussion at the national level.</p> <p><u>Implied benefits for UNIFEM</u></p> <p>Working with ROs can enhance the effectiveness of UNIFEM’s and other partners’ national-level advocacy efforts on gender equality.</p> <p>In some cases, ROs can open other/more doors for national-level issues than may be possible working only at the national level.</p>	<p>Consulted stakeholders in the UN and other donor agencies, CSOs and NWM, confirmed that in their experience ROs can create peer pressure among Member States, and this sometimes leads country governments to sign on to agreements that they may otherwise not have supported. This in turn strengthens national-level gender advocates who can point to and use the regional agreement for national advocacy work.</p> <p>Stakeholders further confirmed that if issues were tabled in the RO, they tended to reach different and often higher level country representatives than they would without the RO. Most stakeholders were unable, however, to provide concrete examples of positive effects that the opportunity of accessing higher level representatives has had at the country level.</p>	<p>AU: Several consulted stakeholders stated that in their view gender-related AU decisions, policies and resolutions provided important tools for gender advocates at the country level. In many cases, country leaders might be more willing to agree to something if other leaders have done so. This provides opportunities for NGOs and other gender advocates at the national level who can use these regional agreements to lobby at the national level by reminding the respective leaders of what they had agreed to regionally. Some stakeholders stated that in their view the AU has been instrumental in getting Member States to put gender on the agenda and/or to reconfirm their commitment to international agreements such as CEDAW.</p> <p>SADC: Consulted stakeholders widely agreed that SADC has been key in shaping a (previously non-existing) formalized regional agenda on GE/WHR by providing a comprehensive, agreed upon regional Gender Policy and Gender Protocol. Stakeholders indicated that SADC plays an important role in legitimizing and advancing issues lobbied by national and regional CSOs to the highest political levels.</p> <p>ICGLR: The ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development and its related Protocols include important provisions on women’s participation in peace processes, political participation, the fight against GBV and property rights for returning displaced spouses. These are more advanced than the provisions in the national laws of most of the Member States.</p> <p>UNECE: UNECE does some tracking every 5 years (in relation to the regional follow-up conferences) of the implementation by Member States of Beijing commitments. This allows UNECE to exert some peer pressure on its Member States.</p> <p>COMMCA: The existence of this regional body gives additional weight to the NWM in the national context. Research that provides regional comparisons has proven useful in raising the profile of issues in a country. For example, through its AGEM project, UNIFEM helped to facilitate research on domestic workers, providing evidence based on advocacy in Costa Rica that eventually led to new legislation on the legal work day for domestic workers.</p>

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
<p>3. ROs can develop and implement regional-level policies/agreements that are (more or less) binding for Member States.</p> <p>Regionally agreed upon policies/agreements can trigger (or at least influence) the development and implementation of national-level policies.</p> <p>ROs that have sufficient influence and power in the region can hold member countries accountable for implementing regional and/or international agreements at the national level.</p> <p>Regional development banks can influence Member States indirectly by ensuring that gender analysis is included in country poverty assessments and directly by including gender clauses in loan conditions.</p> <p><u>Implied benefits for UNIFEM</u></p> <p>ROs can be important allies/strategic partners in developing and promoting the implementation of regional/international agreements and commitments at the national level (e.g., CEDAW) and in national policy development, as this is a common goal of UNIFEM and ROs.</p> <p>In most cases, RO decisions represent the agreement or consensus of Member States on a specific issue. This means that within ROs there is constant interaction between the national and regional levels. UNIFEM interventions at the regional and national levels (e.g., advocacy, policy dialogue) thus have the potential of being complementary and reinforcing one another.</p> <p>ROs open an additional policy space in which UNIFEM can work to achieve its objectives, especially when the national level is very weak or resistant to change or UNIFEM does not have field presence.</p>	<p>There are many examples of ROs which, with UNIFEM's support, have developed regional gender policies, framework, agreements, or similar tools (e.g., ECOWAS and SADC). In other cases, policies have been developed on specific themes/sectors that match UNIFEM's objectives (e.g., ICGLR, ECOWAS). Many consulted stakeholders stated that these policies are important achievements (both as final products and in terms of the process of their development) that held considerable potential for influencing change at regional and national levels.</p> <p>Only a few concrete examples were mentioned during consultations of regional-level policies/frameworks having been used to guide the development of national-level policies (e.g., SADC Gender Policy, CARICOM VAW legislation and OECS Family Law reform).</p> <p>One common challenge across most reviewed ROs is that the implementation and related monitoring of policies and other agreements is still lacking, both within the RO itself but in particular in its Member States. There are few examples (e.g., SAARC, UNECE, AU) in which ROs have developed approaches to monitor the implementation of conventions ratified by its Member States, however these remain limited.</p> <p>According to several consulted stakeholders, the importance of political buy-in at the national level is crucial, and for this reason advocacy and follow up with Member States remain very important. Many stakeholders have pointed out that the work at the regional level does not replace work at the national level, but it can complement it and strengthen it by using both top-down and bottom-up approaches.</p> <p>To some extent, the limited influence that regional policies/agreements have at the national level may also be a matter of time – several policies/frameworks are still relatively new and are located within a very dynamic environment. Stakeholders inside and outside ROs also noted that the RO and Member States (e.g., NWMs) needed considerable support for the future implementation of regional policies and agreements.</p>	<p>AU: Stakeholders commented that while the AU was 'doing well' at the policy level, implementation of policies and commitments both within the AU and in Member States remained an issue. The AU's actual and potential influence at regional and national levels were described as moderate to strong depending on the respective subregion and/or country. They noted that not all decisions taken at the AU level necessarily filter through to the national level.</p> <p>SADC: SADC is a convener, coordinator and catalyst. As such, its recommendations are not binding to Member States. However, SADC policies and tools are widely seen as providing relevant guidance to Member States and SADC studies and reports provide information on best practices and lessons learned. We heard of one Member State that used the SADC gender policy as a model for the development/revision of its national gender policy. The SADC Gender Protocol is meant to be binding for states once it is ratified; however, no countries have ratified it to date.</p> <p>ECOWAS: We found no evidence that ECOWAS has influenced the development of national-level gender policies to date. For example, key informants in Nigeria and Senegal noted that ECOWAS was not involved in the development of their national gender policies (formulated in 2008 and 2005, respectively).</p> <p>CARICOM: In the Caribbean, UNIFEM provided financial support, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNECLAC for a legal audit of the CARICOM model legislation on issues affecting women adopted in 1991. Stakeholders in Guyana indicated that model legislation on VAW had been consulted, along with the legislation of CARICOM countries, in developing Guyana's legislation. Technical input and support for model legislation gives UNIFEM the opportunity to contribute to a common regional reference that incorporates gender equality and WHR.</p> <p>OECS: The OECS Family Law Reform project (implemented over 6 years), supported by UNIFEM and UNICEF, has developed model legislation that is now influencing policy reform in at least seven or eight countries. UN stakeholders interviewed noted the importance of working in this way in the Caribbean region.</p>

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
		<p>ICGLR: In ICGLR, the implementation of regional policies and programmes relies heavily on the National Coordination Mechanisms in every Member State. These mechanisms are still very new, and in several cases they are still in the process of being created. In most cases, they lack resources, capacities, structures and systems to fulfill their mandate.</p> <p>SAARC: Once conventions are ratified and decisions adopted by all the Member States, they become mandatory for the Member States. This makes the decision process very bureaucratic and time-consuming. SAARC has created technical committees in each main area of cooperation with the mandate of assisting and monitoring Member States' implementation of the ratified conventions. As far as GE and WHR are concerned, consulted UNIFEM and SAARC staff acknowledged that the degree of implementation of the <i>SAARC Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution</i> varies from country to country.</p>
<p>4. ROs can serve as effective forums for enhancing the influence of UNIFEM's other partners.</p> <p>ROs can provide a frame and reason for women's organizations and/or national women's machineries to meet, network and collaborate, and, by doing so, enhance their collective capacity and influence at regional and national levels.</p> <p>ROs can also provide a platform for exchange of best practices and experiences at the regional level.</p> <p><u>Implied benefits for UNIFEM</u></p> <p>ROs can be relevant (strategic) partners in strengthening the capacity and influence of UNIFEM's other key partners at the national and regional levels.</p>	<p>Consulted gender advocates in several visited locations confirmed that ROs provided them with broad and high-level forums for advancing their causes, although the degree of engagement varied in different regions and ROs.</p> <p>ROs also provide gender advocates from different countries with a reason and place to come together and jointly plan and implement advocacy strategies.</p> <p>In several cases, there remain considerable challenges with regard to the accessibility of ROs for gender advocates such as CSOs. In several of these settings, UNIFEM is seen as an important facilitator/catalyst due to its close relationship to CSOs/NGOs as well as to government organizations and ROs.</p>	<p>SADC: According to a key informant, "<i>SADC provides us with the opportunity to advance our cause as a block. At SADC meetings we can discuss what is or should be consensus, and we can develop joint lobbying strategies. People can then go back and lobby their respective national governments. Meetings at SADC level are also good because they exercise peer pressure. Otherwise we would probably not know about what other countries are doing. And SADC provides us with access to regional resources – people and information.</i>"</p> <p>AU: Part of the 2005–2008 MOU between UNIFEM and the AU was capacity development for the WGDD. Based on discussions with WGDD, UNIFEM agreed to work on strengthening national and regional women's organizations to be more effective in engaging with the AU, which in turn is hoped to help the WGDD fulfill its mandate. One first step in this regard is a mapping study of women CSOs/NGOs that was conducted with UNIFEM support. One key finding of the study was that many organizations lack basic knowledge about</p>

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
		<p>how the AU operates, and how to access AU planning and decision-making forums. UNIFEM is now discussing with women's organizations possibilities to support creating a permanent NGO/CSO liaison office in Addis Ababa to allow CSOs to have more permanent and continued access to the AU.</p> <p>CARICOM: Consulted NGOs would like to know more about/have more access to CARICOM and its gender equality work. UNIFEM's support for the strengthening of civil society regional actors that can make women's human rights advocacy demands on CARICOM is important; this is one of the roles that UNIFEM has played in the past and other agencies in the UN system are also drawing on UNIFEM success in this area. At the same time, that might require working with CARICOM to clarify the fora where women's human rights and gender equality advocates have opportunities to express their voices on some of the issues.</p> <p>MERCOSUR: UNIFEM supported a number of initial activities in the 1990s that provided women-based NGOs, female unionists and scholars to prepare proposals around gender and regional integration issues emerging from the early stages of MERCOSUR. This evolved into the "Women and Mercosur" Network. The network in turn supported creation of the Specialized Meeting of Women (REM), which has since become the focus of UNIFEM's partnership with MERCOSUR and a key mechanism for bringing WHR and GE issues into the integration agenda. The REM includes the NWM and has expanded to include civil society participation.⁵⁴</p> <p>SAARC: Consulted UNIFEM and SAARC staff stated that UNIFEM's value added is to bring in the voice of the civil society. In the framework of the gender InfoBase initiative, a core committee of gender experts that includes women activists in the region</p>

54 Espino, Alma. *Impacting MERCOSUR's Gender Policies: Experiences, Lessons Learned, and the Ongoing Work of Civil Society in Latin America*, Forum International de Montreal, 2008.

Implicit partnership rationale and benefits for UNIFEM	Observations from the review of actual partnerships and in-depth studies	Examples
		<p>was created with the mandate of guiding the implementation of the Gender InfoBase. However, beyond this committee, the extent to which UNIFEM's partners are effective in influencing SAARC has not been possible to assess as no interviews were held with this category of stakeholders.</p> <p>ICGLR: The consultative process that led to the formation of the ICGLR provided CSOs and women's organization a first opportunity to organize, mobilize and join forces at the regional level on the issue of women's participation in peace processes.</p> <p>UNIFEM is currently supporting the establishment of the ICGLR Women's Regional Forum, a permanent consultative forum on issues of peacebuilding, economic security and political participation.</p>
<p>5. ROs have specific knowledge, capacities and resources related to the regional context that might be complementary to UNIFEM's or that UNIFEM might learn from.</p> <p>ROs can have resources, capacities and strategic relationships and legitimacy to scale up some of UNIFEM's projects.</p> <p>ROs can have complementary resources to co-implement projects with UNIFEM.</p> <p><u>Implied benefits for UNIFEM</u></p> <p>ROs can act as UNIFEM's implementing partners.</p> <p>Partnering with ROs may allow UNIFEM to scale up initiatives and/or undertake initiatives that would not happen otherwise.</p>	<p>There are several examples (UNECA, UNECLAC, UNECE) in which UNIFEM and the respective RO (as well as other partners) worked together to jointly organize and facilitate an event or conduct and publish a study.</p> <p>The particular strengths that different ROs bring into the partnerships include: access to high-level political representatives, a convening role, country presence where UNIFEM does not, financial resources, technical expertise in certain areas and a different set of thematic priorities as outlined in their mandate.</p>	<p>Joint studies and events organized and/or funded in collaboration with UNECA, UNECLAC and UNECE.</p> <p>ICGLR: The partnership is seen as providing UNIFEM with an entry point in countries where UNIFEM is not present. In the specific case of ICGLR: influencing peace processes and learning opportunity for UNIFEM for other peace and security situations.</p> <p>SAARC: According to UNIFEM staff, the partnership with SAARC is instrumental to work with all Member States around cross-border issues (e.g., trafficking of women, HIV/AIDS, migration, etc.).</p>

4.3 Effectiveness

Finding 4: There is considerable evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have resulted in positive short-term and some midterm changes. While these do not constitute changes at the national level in themselves, they have contributed to strengthening the enabling environment for such changes.

Consultations with UNIFEM staff and RO stakeholders, the survey of RO representatives and document review all provided evidence of a wide range of positive achievements and changes that the RO–UNIFEM partnerships have contributed to, in particular:

- Changes in or development of regional policies or agreements on gender equality/women’s human rights (with boundary partners);
- Changes in the structures and/or practices of a regional organization favouring gender equality and mainstreaming (with boundary partners);

- The creation of new knowledge and tools in the areas of GE and WHR relevant to RO Member States and stakeholders (with boundary and strategic partners).

Further, there is some evidence of enhanced capacities within the ROs, among RO Member States and among other RO stakeholders, illustrated, for example, in strengthened advocacy processes in the respective regions, involving the RO itself and/or its immediate stakeholders (with boundary and strategic partners).

From UNIFEM’s point of view, there is some anecdotal evidence that partnering with ROs has increased UNIFEM’s advocacy capacity by providing opportunities to access high-level forums and has created useful new knowledge such as statistical data. Some indicative examples of such results are provided in Exhibit 4.2 below. Additional examples that trace the partnership contributions to results are included in the UNIFEM–RO Partnership Profiles provided in Annex 1.

Exhibit 4.2 Examples of UNIFEM–RO Partnership Contributions to Short- and Midterm Results

Type of Result	Examples of Results/Achievements
Changes in RO policies	<p>Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the AU Women’s Rights Protocol and Gender Policy - Development of the SADC Gender Policy and Gender and Development Protocol - Development of IGAD Gender Policy - Development of the ECOWAS Gender Policy - Provisions to take the gender dimension of migration into consideration were introduced in the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. - With UNIFEM support, ICGLR developed, as part of its Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lake Region, a Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children, providing a common legal framework to Member States on how to define, address, punish and prevent sexual violence. <p>LAC</p> <p>CARICOM has adopted several policy statements and plans of actions, such as “Towards Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Social Justice” (1996) and “Plan of Action to 2005: Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into Key CARICOM Programmes” (2003).</p>
Changes in RO structures and/or practices	<p>Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the SADC Gender Unit - Establishment of the ECOWAS Gender Division and Centre for Gender Development as two distinct entities - Gender mainstreamed in all main ICGLR documents (Declaration, Pact, Protocols, projects) - African Union adopted a 50 per cent quota for women as commissioners - UNIFEM supported IGAD to develop implementation mechanism for a Gender Peer Review Mechanism (2007) - UNIFEM provided support for the establishment of IGAD’s gender unit (2005)

Type of Result	Examples of Results/Achievements
	<p>LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SICA decided to incorporate COMMCA into formal SICA structure (2005) and established its Secretariat in the office of the Secretary General of SICA - Reconvening of CARICOM's Regional Advisory Committee on Gender and Development with development partners in the region - By being a Council member, UNIFEM has actively participated in the definition of IDB PROLEAD Program priority funding areas. - UNIFEM supported the creation of the "Women and MERCOSUR" Network, which in turn supported creation of the Specialized Meeting of Women (REM), which is now the key mechanism for bringing WHR and GE issues into the MERCOSUR integration agenda. <p>APAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAARC and UNIFEM collaborated on the development of the SAARC Gender InfoBase (SGIB). The initiative led to the creation of SGIB desks in ministries, SGIB Nodal Agencies, national committees (mostly composed of representatives from government agencies), research organizations, NGOs and academia in all of SAARC Member States and the identification of SGIB national focal points (mostly from the National Women Machineries)
New knowledge or tools	<p>Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completion of the AU Gender Audit - Study of political party manifestos in SADC region in terms of the extent to which they promote and support the participation of women in political parties - Joint UNIFEM/ ECA publication <i>Partnership for Gender Equality: The Role of Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies in Africa</i> <p>LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-agency report <i>Not One More!!! The Right of Women to Live a Life Free from Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean</i> - Improved gender statistics and indicators for public policy (in cooperation with ECLAC) - Gender analysis of MDGs in Argentina and Paraguay (in cooperation with ECLAC) - Research studies on women domestic workers in Central America carried out by UNIFEM's programme AGEM at the request of COMMCA - Completion of the CARICOM Secretariat Gender Audit. - In collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNECLAC: completion of a legal audit of the CARICOM model legislation on issues affecting women adopted in 1991 - Research on domestic workers and time use (SICA/COMMCA) - Financial resources to complete CARICOM statistics handbook (forthcoming) <i>Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social, Gender and Environmental Statistics: Preparation of a User Manual.</i> <p>APAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAARC Gender InfoBase: online component with web-based data and information entry format for both qualitative and quantitative information and data; standardized thematic and component areas and prioritized indicators for the SAARC Gender Infobase. - At the request of the SAARC Secretariat, review from a human rights perspective of the SAARC Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002. 23 out of 31 recommendations were incorporated in the SAARC Secretary General's report that was presented to the Council of Ministers. - Joint SAARC-UNIFEM publication: Gender initiatives In SAARC: A Primer <p>CEE-CIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The UNECE-UNIFEM joint publication, <i>The Story Behind the Numbers: Women and Employment</i>, examines the deterioration of women's labour market position after the collapse of state socialism.

Type of Result	Examples of Results/Achievements
<p>Enhanced capacities</p>	<p>Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping study of regional women's organizations working with (or planning to do so) with the AU. - SADC Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus partnered with UNIFEM on advocating for a 30 per cent quota for women in politics. - UNIFEM successfully supported the AU Gender Directorate to raise funds from other donors. - With UNIFEM funds, IC/GLR recruited a Gender Advisor attached to the Conference Secretariat. - Women organizations in the Great Lakes Region mobilized and were able to provide input to ICGLR Process. - UNIFEM and IGAD (and others) jointly hosted a Somali Women's Symposium in Uganda bringing together Somali and Ugandan delegates. This contributed significantly to the development of an agreed upon women's agenda for post-conflict reconstruction in Somalia. - UNIFEM and AU worked together to ensure women's participation in peace processes in Darfur, resulting in a Darfur Women's Agenda that was presented during the Abuja Peace talks. In this case, the relation with AU has helped to open a space for women's participation in the process. However, achieving meaningful participation and sustaining this participation required an intense national-level engagement with women's groups, governments and agencies that are active at the national level. <p>LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), hosted by CARICOM, revised the Caribbean Regional Framework on HIV/AIDS with gender-sensitive indicators. - Support for sensitizing staff of the CARICOM Secretariat to the concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming - On-going technical support to COMMCA (in close collaboration with AECI) for Strategic Plan, establishment of Technical Secretariat, COMMA meetings, communications, development of common position papers for the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and dialogue with civil society organizations <p>APAS and CEE-CIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RO survey respondents noted that their relationship with UNIFEM provided access to new contacts and networks (e.g., anti-trafficking NGO contacts in South Asia; information about specialists and consultants on specific issues and access to their networks; contact and access to CSO representatives in the CEE region).

Linking back to the discussion of UNIFEM's operational results frameworks in section 2.5, the documented results fall into the realm of short- or midterm changes. The results are relevant and meaningful mostly in terms of their potential (future) contribution to further changes within the RO at regional and ultimately national levels. For example, the development of a gender policy is a significant achievement primarily in terms of its potential

to contribute to subsequent changes in gender-related national policies and practices. As such, the illustrated short- and midterm results can be described as positive contributions to the *enabling environment* for change at the national level (i.e., while not constituting changes at the national level themselves, it is plausible that the achieved results positively influence the existing conditions for such change).

Finding 5: Consulted stakeholders widely agree that the UNIFEM–RO partnerships have the potential to contribute to longer-term impact including at the national level. However, there are no reliable data available to provide objective evidence of this.

A particular challenge for UNIFEM in tracking the longer-term effects of its partnerships is that the roles and potential of ROs and UNIFEM are very similar when it comes to bringing about change at the national level: Both are catalysts and facilitators of change.

They can encourage, trigger, speed up, strengthen and support national-level change, but they cannot create or control it, nor can they claim sole responsibility for the achievement of such changes.

Thus, for UNIFEM, one question is what happens when one catalyst (UNIFEM) tries to help another (RO) be more effective as a catalyst?

To date there is little if any actual data available that provide objective evidence of the assumed linkage between changes achieved through the UNIFEM–RO partnership and subsequent changes at the national level. This does not mean that such linkages do not exist, and it seems plausible that the ROs' work can have an influence at the country level, but there is little documented information on what this influence consists of and what changes it has contributed to (see Exhibit 4.1, implicit rationale 3). Some examples of anecdotal evidence provided by interviewed stakeholders are presented below.

Attributing national-level change to partnership results – stakeholder comments

Stakeholders reported that one SADC Member State used the SADC gender policy, developed with UNIFEM support, as a model for the development/revision of its national gender policy.

Stakeholders in Guyana indicated that the CARICOM model legislation on VAW had been consulted, along with the legislation of CARICOM countries, in developing Guyana's legislation. UNIFEM participated in a revision of the model legislation.

Interviewees reported that approximately seven OECS countries are currently changing their laws as a result of the regional OECS model Family Law. UNIFEM contributed to its development together with UNICEF. This took approximately 6 years to develop. UNIFEM and UNICEF had a fruitful collaboration in supporting OECS to develop this law, with the aim of affecting legislation in all OECS countries.

AGEM research was presented to COMMCA and provided inputs for advocacy at the national level. Of particular note is the study on Domestic Workers that was used by the Association of Domestic Workers and parliamentarians in Costa Rica in order to argue in favour of a law (expected to be approved in 2009) that regulates an 8-hour work day for domestic workers.

Consulted UNIFEM and SAARC staff stated that the work done in partnership around the SAARC Gender InfoBase (SGIB) was a sensitizing and learning exercise for all Member States. In addition, under the umbrella of this initiative, SGIB desks and national committees were created in all Member States to facilitate the implementation of the SAARC Gender InfoBase at the national level.

Attributing national-level change to partnership results – UNIFEM Reports

“The SADC Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus [...] has partnered with UNIFEM on advocating for a 30 per cent quota for women in politics - today, eight out of 14 SADC members have a quota system” (UNIFEM Corporate Report 2005/2006);

“Intensive advocacy by the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) and women’s organizations through UNIFEM support resulted in the appointment of top leadership: as deputy presidents in Zimbabwe and South Africa and as Prime Minister in Mozambique” (Southern Africa Report, 2005).

Several of the reviewed UNIFEM regional and subregional annual reports make reference to achievements at the country level that are attributed (explicitly or implicitly) to UNIFEM’s work with a particular RO. (See sidebar.) While intuitively plausible, these reports do not actually provide

evidence of the linkages between UNIFEM’s work with the RO and the subsequent national-level changes. Further, they do not distinguish between UNIFEM-RO interventions *contributing* to a positive change and *causing* a change.

Examples of RO mechanisms to monitor the implementation of regional policies at the national level

1) The AU adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGGEA) in 2004, in which heads of state and governments commit to report annually on progress towards gender equality, and the chairperson of the AU Commission is expected to submit an annual report on progress in the implementation of the declaration and the state of gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels.

2) NEPAD’s African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a self-monitoring instrument voluntarily acceded to by Member States of the AU, aimed at fostering the adoption of policies, standards and practices.

3) UNECE (and other UN regional commissions) conducts some tracking every 5 years of the implementation of Beijing Commitments in relation to the preparation of the regional follow-up conferences. According to UNECE stakeholders, this allows them to exert some peer pressure, but not to systematically monitor and follow up the implementation at the national level.

4) In 2002, the regional Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution was adopted by SAARC Member States, and a Regional Task Force was established to review the progress made in the implementation of the convention.

Survey Results

Surveyed RO representatives were asked if the relationship between UNIFEM and their RO had brought positive changes in one or more of their organization’s Member States. Nine out of ten respondents answered “I don’t know.”

To date, no ROs (or any of their other development partners) have developed reliable and systematic approaches or mechanisms to monitor or assess the impact of RO policies, agreements and decisions at the national level, nor are any data available on the factors that need to be in place to enable regional initiatives to have ‘trickle down’ effects at the national level. Consultations with RO staff and representatives from other UN agencies suggest that they are aware of (and struggling with) this issue. ROs are making some efforts to monitor the implementation of regional policies at the national level (as shown in the side bar). However, none of these mechanisms is currently conceived to assess systematically the impact of ROs’ policies and decisions at the national level.

Contribution vs. Attribution

“Funders, advocates and evaluators also must shift their thinking and agree that evaluation should seek to demonstrate *contribution*, not *attribution*. [...] ‘Proving’ attribution – exactly who was (or as not) responsible for a final ‘wine’ – rarely helps advocates work better. It shifts the spotlight to far-off, long-term outcomes [...] instead of keeping the focus on the work happening now. Also, since almost every advocacy issue is supported and advanced by a myriad of individuals and organizations [...] pointing to a single ‘straw that broke the camel’s back’ can seem inconsequential – even arrogant or offensive – to an organization’s partners. In contrast, demonstrating *contribution* is relatively easy to accomplish.”⁵⁵

This raises an issue that is not unique to UNIFEM and its RO partners: Tracking particular contributions to complex, long-term development impacts and attributing such impacts to specific interventions are extremely difficult. Development impacts are rarely accomplished by the work of a single actor, and the complexity of the development process makes it extremely difficult to assess them.⁵⁶ This is particularly true for advocacy processes. (See sidebar.)

“By outlining the intended pathway of change, advocates can focus their evaluation efforts on tracking and assessing progress towards shorter-term and interim measures of success. [...] If the articulated pathway of change is believable, an organization’s demonstrated interim progress connects logically to long-term success.”

Speaking for Themselves: Advocates’ Perspectives on Evaluation. p. 16

Some approaches, such as Outcome Mapping, deliberately focus on outcomes⁵⁷ rather than impacts when it comes to accountability. The intended long-term impact is still relevant as a program’s directional beacon and a test of its relevance, but is not the yardstick against which performance is measured.⁵⁸ In this view, the probability and/or likelihood of development outcomes contributing to the achievement of impacts is considered most relevant and the development of an explicit theory of change that includes *progress markers* can help to illustrate this probability.⁵⁹

In this light, the absence of solid evidence for UNIFEM–RO partnerships contributing to longer-term changes at the national level is neither surprising nor does it neces-

55 *Speaking for Themselves. Advocates’ Perspectives on Evaluation*. Innovation Network, commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies, p. 16. Not dated

56 Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 1.

57 In Outcome Mapping, outcomes are defined as the “changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly.”

58 Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 10.

59 See Earl, Carden, Smutylo (2001) and the recommendation section of this report for further elaboration.

sarily mark a weakness or gap in the partnership’s performance. It highlights the need, however, to make assumed logical relations between expected immediate or midterm results and intended longer-term impacts explicit in order to illustrate and track the relevance of interim results in the broader context of long-term social change.

4.4 Sustainability

Finding 6: There is limited evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have contributed to sustainable changes within or outside the respective RO.

UNIFEM has not yet developed a corporate definition of the ‘sustainability’ of results, or criteria or indicators to determine what constitutes and/or contributes to the sustainability of results.⁶⁰

In our understanding, ‘sustainability of results’ implies at least two key dimensions: the *continuation* as well as the *dynamic adaptation* of what has been achieved during a project’s or program’s lifetime.

Based on this understanding of sustainability, we reviewed the different types of short- and midterm results that were achieved in and through UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs in terms of the likelihood of these being sustained and/or dynamically adapted. The types of results used to structure this section mirror the short- and midterm results described above in Exhibit 4.4.

Changes in RO structures and/or practices in terms of GE/WHR and gender mainstreaming: Among the most likely candidates for sustainable change are the various gender units that UNIFEM has helped to establish and

whose work it has often supported over many years. The creation of dedicated gender units with UNIFEM’s support (and thus the institutionalization of a gender function within the respective RO) is widely seen as a significant success that enhances the likelihood of gender issues being addressed in the organization in a more systematic and coherent way. At the same time, however, most of the reviewed gender units (e.g., in ECOWAS, CARICOM, SADC) have faced and continue to face severe challenges, and consulted stakeholders repeatedly expressed sincere doubts about the future of these units. In all visited ROs, the influence of the respective gender unit at the institutional level was limited. For example, there were few indications that these units had significantly affected the organization’s culture, ethos, or its performance with regard to gender in any significant, lasting ways. In several cases, the data suggest that institutional efforts on GE and WHR slowed down significantly once external support from UNIFEM ended despite the existence of a dedicated gender unit. These challenges were evident in each of the ROs visited, where such an approach had been taken.

Given that a considerable part of UNIFEM’s support to ROs has been directed to strengthening gender units, the key question is whether and to what extent its support to these units has been based on comprehensive concepts of *individual and/or institutional capacity and capacity development*, which go beyond discrete activities/interventions.⁶¹ It also raises questions about the types of indicators UNIFEM should use to monitor institutional change and commitment to GE and WHR within ROs in particular, and its other partners more generally.⁶²

⁶⁰ Similar observations were noted in the 2008 evaluation of UNIFEM’s program: *From Post Conflict to Development: Advancing Gender Equality and WHR in Kosovo*.

⁶¹ Individual capacities refer to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Institutional capacities include strategic leadership, organizational structure, human resources, financial management, infrastructure, program and services management, process management, and inter-organizational linkages. Source: Lusthaus, Adrien, Anderson, Carden, Montalvan, *Organizational Assessment. A framework for improving performance*, IDB and IDRC, 2002.

⁶² Examples of indicators could include changes in financial commitments from the institution’s core resources, changes in staffing numbers, development and utilization of internal policies, and so forth. It is expected that UNIFEM’s ongoing study on capacity building may offer suggestions in this regard.

What constitutes sustainable capacity in an RO gender unit?

- UNIFEM has provided financial assistance for hiring short-term consultants to help some RO gender units carry out specific tasks (e.g., SADC, ECOWAS) and is applying a similar strategy with ICGLR Secretariat by providing a gender advisor to support the cross-cutting issues officer and gender mainstreaming. Consulted RO representatives stated that UNIFEM support has been helpful and in several cases has resulted in tangible reports or frameworks that have been used subsequently.

- While the addition of short-term staff is not a sustainable contribution to strengthening the capacity of a gender unit, if

the concept of 'capacity' is understood to include the development of useful tools and/or knowledge, then UNIFEM's support has helped to strengthen the unit's institutional capacity.

- Available data do not provide clear information on whether and to what extent UNIFEM has considered what constitutes an RO gender unit's institutional capacity and suitable approaches to strengthen this capacity – or whether UNIFEM's support was in response to RO requests for specific types of support without discussions about how such support fit into a comprehensive capacity development strategy.⁶³

Changes in RO policies on gender equality: Policy development and policy changes on gender equality can constitute important steps in complex change processes to achieve GE and WHR, but the mere existence of a policy does not constitute sustainable change. The dimension of sustainability comes into play only when looking at the use and continued evolution of individual policies against the backdrop of the larger change processes they are contributing to.

As many of the gender policies, frameworks and agreements developed with UNIFEM's help are relatively new and their implementation is still in the early stages, it is too early to comment on their sustainability.⁶⁴ While there is considerable optimism among consulted stakeholders that recent RO policy changes *can* positively influence change, there is currently no evidence that would allow us to assess the extent to which this has happened, nor do most ROs have mechanisms to collect data on these changes. Some stakeholders also voiced considerable concern about the ability of ROs and Member States to effectively push for the implementation of gender-related policies and frameworks.

New knowledge or tools: Studies and publications are enabling results that have the potential to influence ongoing gender-related change processes but do not in themselves constitute social change. UNIFEM–RO partnerships have generated knowledge and tools, but beyond the facts of their production and publication, we have no information on whether and to what extent UNIFEM and/or its partner organizations have systematically tracked the actual use and effects of particular knowledge products or tools.

Enhanced (stakeholder) capacities in relation to GE and WHR: RO stakeholders provided examples of their enhanced capacities as a result of UNIFEM partnerships (see Exhibit 4.1). However, it is difficult to determine whether these are sustainable, as it is not always clear whether the cited examples were one-time initiatives (e.g., a time-bound advocacy campaign or a specific workshop or training) or part of an ongoing process of applying and developing stakeholder awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment that is likely to continue without further support from UNIFEM.⁶⁵

⁶³ The absence of a corporate definition of capacity development and related terms in UNIFEM has been noted in previous evaluations, including in the 2007 MYFF evaluation. In the spring of 2009, UNIFEM was reviewing and summarizing its experiences in this area with the intent to clarify at a corporate level the concepts of *capacity* and *capacity development*, respectively.

⁶⁴ The AU adopted its gender policy in 2008, SADC in 2007, and ECOWAS in 2004.

⁶⁵ This links back to the previously noted uncertainty regarding the concepts and/or comprehensive strategies for Capacity Development underlying UNIFEM's work.

UNIFEM has been and is working with RO staff and stakeholders to establish and/or strengthen regional networks of gender advocates (e.g., UNIFEM's work with NGOs connected to the AU, SADC and in the Great Lakes Region). In all observed cases, these networks emerged based on the request and interest of the respective stakeholders. Many of these initiatives are still in the early stages of development, and it is too early to comment on their sustainability. However, in our view, they are promising in terms of their potential to contribute to relatively sustainable regional capacities as they spread responsibilities and risks among a group of diverse and motivated stakeholders. Further, several of the observed initiatives are aiming to get rid of systemic obstacles that currently limit or block stakeholder participation in decision-making processes (e.g., difficulties faced by NGOs in finding ways to engage with and gain access to the AU and ICGLR; lack of knowledge of the RO gender directorates about regional NGOs that are working on gender issues).

Factors affecting the potential for sustainability

In examining UNIFEM's current partnerships, it appears that many factors that hinder the likelihood of sustainability of results are beyond UNIFEM's control (e.g., changes in the political and economic contexts of the respective RO, staff and leadership turnover in the RO, changes in member country priorities, etc.).

However, some factors that are within UNIFEM's influence are its relatively short-term and activity-focused intervention strategies (see section 4.5) and the limited extent to which it has mapped out or provided systematic, mid to long-term follow-up and support.

For example, in longstanding partnerships such as CARICOM, it is not clear how individual elements of UNIFEM's short-term support fit together into an overall, long-term strategy of institutional support and/or institutional capacity development. In the case of COMMCA, the partnership has been strongly linked to the implementation of the

AGEM project. This has had several benefits in terms of the substantive and practical contributions that UNIFEM has been able to make to the Ministers, but it also has implications for sustainability because it has not yet been established how UNIFEM and COMMCA will frame their cooperation once the project is over. Similarly, in cases in which UNIFEM has successfully supported ROs in developing gender policies or tools (e.g., ECOWAS, ICGLR), there is no indication that UNIFEM had considered or planned how to subsequently support the RO and its Member States in putting the policy into practice. In several cases, consulted UNIFEM and RO staff indicated that they were only now (i.e., after completion of the policy) starting negotiations on how UNIFEM could support steps related to policy implementation at regional and national levels. The Evaluation Team does not mean to imply that UNIFEM staff or their partners are not aware of the need to assist with the implementation of newly developed policies and similar tools; in fact, consultations with stakeholders clearly indicate the opposite. What the team is pointing out is that most agreements between UNIFEM and ROs (formal or informal) do not go beyond the immediate, short-term support for the development of specific tools such as a gender policy or for specific initiatives.

Another issue related to sustainability is the extent to which UNIFEM and its partners track and document their progress and results. To date there are very limited, if any, systematic data available that document change processes over time (in particular related to capacity development) or that provide at least exemplary indications of the extent to which ROs have been able to use or adapt knowledge products or tools over time to accommodate new needs and contexts (e.g., ability to update training programs so that they remain relevant). While tracking results does not affect the sustainability of results, it is relevant in terms of UNIFEM's ability to plan and report on the sustainability of its RO partnerships and their ongoing relevance (as noted in section 4.2).

4.5 Partnership Management

Finding 7: UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs are established and managed individually on a case-by-case basis. Consulted UNIFEM staff in several locations expressed the need for a more corporate approach to managing RO partnerships.

In reviewing partnerships between UNIFEM and ROs, we found that a variety of different approaches are used to manage partnerships and these vary from SRO to SRO and from partnership to partnership. Differences did not appear to be systematic (e.g., based on the type of partner organization, regional priorities, and/or strategies).

The following sections describe our key observations about partnership management.

Partner Selection and Assessment: UNIFEM does not have explicit, agreed upon criteria or guidelines for selecting partner organizations, with the exception of Private Sector Partners⁶⁶ and Implementing Partners (mainly NGOS).⁶⁷ Most decisions for engaging with partner organizations appear to be based on the knowledge and assessment of individual UNIFEM staff members and on the general assumption that one ‘should’ work with ROs. (See sidebar.)

Consultations with UNIFEM staff in the field and at HQ indicate that UNIFEM, as a UN agency, is expected and mandated to work with ROs. In this context, and since ROs are intergovernmental political entities, many UNIFEM staff believe that there is less of a need to assess or analyse the strengths, weakness, or other characteristics of a particular RO before entering into a partnership.

Assessment of potential partners is generally left up to individual SROs. The only framework in place within UNIFEM to guide an assessment of partner capacity is

the one concerning implementing partners (and more specifically NGOs) mentioned above. However, the criteria in that framework are not currently used to assess ROs, and several stakeholders commented that it would be inappropriate to use such capacity assessment criteria unless they were specifically adapted to ROs to reflect the intergovernmental and political nature of ROs. In addition, UNIFEM does not have criteria in place to determine a partner’s potential role in helping UNIFEM meet its subregional priorities and objectives either before engaging in a partnership or on a periodical basis.

Current partnerships are guided by a broad variety of partnership arrangements. Although UNIFEM uses UN formats for its agreements, there do not seem to be any criteria or guidelines that determine what type of agreement is chosen. (Appendix VI presents an analysis of the different types of formal and informal agreements between UNIFEM and its RO partners.)

- **Types of agreement:** Some partnerships are based on formal agreements, including MOUs and collaboration agreements (e.g., AU, ASEAN, UNECE, ICGLR); others are informal (e.g., with SADC and ECOWAS, there is a general understanding between UNIFEM and the RO that they intend to work together, and joint activities are funded with specific funding arrangements). Still others, as in the case of ECLAC-UNIFEM, are based on Agency mandates and specific agreements are drawn up when there is a transfer of resources for activities.
- **Duration of agreements:** Some agreements cover one-time events (e.g., with ECOWAS, SADC, CDB, CIM/OAS, PIF), some are short-term agreements for up to 1 year (e.g., ICGLR, IGAD), some are midterm agreements for up to 3 years (e.g., with UNECLAC, AU, ASEAN, SAARC), and in one case the agreement has indefinite duration (UNECE). In some cases, consulted UNIFEM staff indicated that their RO partner’s limited capacities in the area of strategic (longer-term) planning made it difficult to engage in longer-term agreements with them. In other cases, UNIFEM officers indicated that they were not allowed to sign agreements spanning more than 1

⁶⁶ According to UNIFEM *Guidelines for Public-Private Partnerships*, UNIFEM should select private sector partners on the basis of the following principles: ethical standards of the company, gender component, mutual benefit, and appropriateness.

⁶⁷ The *UNIFEM Reference Manual – Annex 3-III: Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment Criteria* provides criteria to assess the technical, managerial, administrative, and financial capacity of an implementing partner, but does not include criteria to assess the relevance of a partnership.

year. Overall, the duration of agreements seems to be based on each SRO team’s assessment of the most feasible and appropriate format in the given context.

- **Objectives:** A number of agreements are focused on activities and/or products and spell out specific deliverables to be completed by the RO with UNIFEM support (e.g., 2005 contract with CARICOM to convene a meeting of National Women’s Machineries), while other agreements describe broad and general ambitions of collaboration (e.g., 2001 MOU with UNECE to jointly develop new initiatives aimed at introducing a gender perspective into macroeconomic analyses, policies and practices).

Partnership Objectives

Of the 27 reviewed partnerships, we were able to locate and review formalized agreements between UNIFEM and 11 ROs. Agreements with seven (7) of these ROs focused on specific short-term tasks and deliverables, while agreements with four (4) ROs outlined broader, more general collaboration objectives.

None of the partnership agreements or other partnership documents that we were able to review describe how the partnership links to UNIFEM’s longer-term priorities and objectives, as described in regional and subregional MYFFs or strategic plans and/or to the respective RO’s priorities and objectives.

SROs and Partnership Management: With the exception of some large regional organizations such as the AU and ECLAC (see sidebar), the key entities for UNIFEM’s partnership management on the ground are its 15 SROs.

The SROs are responsible for developing and implementing subregional strategies and for selecting and engaging in partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the subregion. Given the SROs’ geographically defined mandates, partnering with subregional organizations is, in most cases, seen to be more effective and efficient than working with broader regional organizations or directly

with every Member State.⁶⁸ Moreover, SROs tend to have in-depth knowledge of the context and individual stakeholders in their respective subregion, allowing them to identify and follow up on opportunities and to build and nurture relationships more effectively than HQ could.

Corporately Managed RO Partnerships

In the AU, a Liaison Office has been created in Addis Ababa, and the AU liaison officer reports directly to UNIFEM HQ.

In UN economic and social commissions, such as ECLAC: The ECLAC partnership encompasses all of UNIFEM’s SROs in the LAC region and the LAC Geo section in New York. Some components of the relationship are managed by UNIFEM HQ and others by the SROs. ECLAC’s most intense relationship is with the Mexico and Central America SRO – partially due to the annual international meeting on gender and statistics in Aguas Calientes, Mexico.

While UNIFEM’s SROs offer numerous advantages, the reliance on SROs for managing partnerships with ROs has posed some challenges, primarily when the mandate of an SRO does not align with the geographic coverage of a particular RO (i.e., where two or more SROs exist in the region covered by a particular RO). In some cases, this has resulted in fragmented relationships between the RO and different units in UNIFEM (e.g., ICGLR, ECOWAS in particular until the merger of the two West Africa offices). In at least one case (EAC), SRO management appears to have hindered the development of the partnership because of lack of clear leadership. The current setup also limits the ability of SROs and UNIFEM to comprehensively monitor the progress and successes of its corporate relationship with the respective ROs. Regional organizations such as OAS-CIM and ECLAC in LAC, for example, require a coordinated approach between the SROs and HQ. The relationship between ECLAC and UNIFEM illustrates the possibility of effectively managing a relationship

⁶⁸ Due to the geographic proximity of the SRO to the respective RO and/or Member States, and because of the SROs intimate knowledge of (sub)regional contexts and their connections to key players at national and (sub)regional levels.

with one RO from HQ and several SROs as the relationship requires.⁶⁹

Managing RO Partnerships Across Regions

ICGLR's Member States are covered by three different UNIFEM SROs, EAC Member States by two SROs and until 2007, ECOWAS Member States by two SROs.

This has made it difficult to determine which SRO is/should be responsible for each RO partnership. To date this has been decided on the basis of where the headquarters of the RO is located: The UNIFEM SRO with responsibility for that region managed the relationship with the RO. However, UNIFEM has not established any rules that would allow an SRO to spend money in RO Member States outside its geographic area.

There are no established processes or mechanisms for structuring exchange and collaboration between different SROs with regard to their common partnership with a particular RO.

Managing an RO Partnership

"It is not in my TORs but I do it anyway, on a voluntary basis. When I get too busy with my other tasks I have to stop doing it."
UNIFEM field staff member

Roles and Responsibilities: Another related issue is the absence of clear descriptions of roles and responsibilities for RO partnership management among SRO staff members. Given the lack of corporate guidelines and UNIFEM's scarce resources, SROs have to find ad hoc, pragmatic solutions for HR needs in relation to partnerships with ROs. The current setup has posed challenges to UNIFEM staff members with regard to their own time management, responsibilities, reporting and accountability lines and coordination with other SROs. (See sidebar.) This negatively affects UNIFEM's ability to develop, implement and monitor its relationships with ROs in a coordinated, steady and sustainable way.

The UNIFEM/CARICOM Partnership

This partnership has existed for almost 30 years without a formal MOU. One of the reasons suggested for the longevity and quality of the partnership is that, in the initial stages of the partnership, staff of both UNIFEM and the CARICOM Gender and Development Unit (GDU) emerged from the women's movement in the region. The close personal relationships created over time have been instrumental to the effectiveness of the partnership and UNIFEM's grounding in the realities of the Caribbean facilitates interactions with CARICOM.

Importance of Personal Relationships: Most of UNIFEM's RO partnerships have been dependent on and have benefited from personal relationships between UNIFEM staff, in particular Regional Program Directors and representatives of the RO. (See sidebar.) This has offered considerable benefits, and positive personal dynamics have in many cases contributed to the establishment and success of a partnership. On the other hand, consulted stakeholders in several locations cited the strong focus on personal relationships as a concern in terms of partnership sustainability, as staff changes on either side of the partnership can severely impact on the quality and sustainability of the relationship.⁷⁰ The importance of personal relationships in establishing partnerships with ROs might also contribute to some actual or perceived conflicts of interest that might be dangerous for the achievement of UNIFEM institutional objectives.

⁶⁹ This may also be facilitated by the fact that ECLAC is a regional economic commission with a mandate for inter-agency coordination (i.e., a special type of RO).

⁷⁰ UNIFEM staff noted that such changes had negatively affected the relationships with IGAD and ECOWAS.

Resource allocations: To our knowledge, there is no corporate (or regional) guidance with regard to deciding what resource allocations (staff time, money) are considered appropriate for individual partnerships.⁷¹ Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain detailed data on the resources UNIFEM has invested in individual partnerships over time. The information available indicates that there are considerable differences in the budgets and staff time allocated to different partnerships, but these do not seem to be linked to the size or relevance of the particular organization, the type of tasks planned with this RO, or any other identifiable factors. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and are largely influenced by resource availability in a particular region or country. For example, ICGLR, a very new and relatively small initiative, received a significant contribution (more than \$480,000) in one year, while the ECOWAS Secretariat (a more established, long-term partner of UNIFEM) received less than \$50,000 over the past 5 years.

Myth vs. Reality?

In several visited locations, UNIFEM staff members shared their impression that while they were facing some challenges in their own partnerships with ROs, other SROs and their RO partners were ‘doing really well’. The respective ‘other’ SROs, however, had the same impressions of this first office. In all cases, these myths referred to general impressions of different partnerships, rather than to specific examples of actual successes.

Challenges and opportunities of the current approach to RO partnership management:

The current individualized approach to managing partnerships offers opportunities in that the relationship can be tailored to the needs, capacity and contextual realities of the RO and the UNIFEM SRO. The importance of personal relationships is widely perceived as offering a number of benefits and is likely to have contributed to UNIFEM’s reputation as an accessible, responsive and caring organization. However,

the individualization of management approaches also poses a number of challenges and limitations for UNIFEM and ROs:

- As noted above, the reliance on personal contacts can pose some threats to the sustainability of partnerships.
- The diversity and idiosyncrasies of current management approaches make it hard to compare UNIFEM’s partnerships with different ROs and to compare RO partnerships with other types of partnerships. This affects UNIFEM’s ability to systematically collect and analyse information and draw lessons from partnership experiences.
- The lack of explicit linkages of individual partnerships with UNIFEM’s (sub) regional plans poses challenges to the effective monitoring and assessment of partnership contributions to UNIFEM’s broader objectives. Tracking contributions is also made difficult by the fact that most SROs have worked more or less in isolation in managing regional partnerships. To date, exchange between SROs on their experiences with ROs has been limited to sharing information on specific activities or experiences. This has not led to any in-depth analysis of commonalities or factors that have furthered or hindered success, or to the development of distinct and replicable models of intervention. During our field visits, we also discovered some “myths” (see sidebar) about UNIFEM’s partnerships with different ROs, reflecting the lack of learning across partnerships.
- The current management approach can inadvertently contribute to some wastage of valuable and limited UNIFEM resources due to human and/or financial investments in partnerships that may be ineffective but are continued because UNIFEM does not have a way to assess the results of these partnerships nor criteria in place to assist it in deciding when and/or why to end a partnership or change its strategy.

Possible partnership management alternatives:

In evaluation consultations, UNIFEM staff in various geographic locations as well as some consulted RO representatives expressed the wish for stronger corporate or at least regional guidance from UNIFEM with regard to initiating, implementing and monitoring partnerships with ROs. Requests mixed a variety of different issues, including:

⁷¹ ‘Appropriateness’ can refer to the relationship between invested resources and progress/ results, and also between resources utilized in partnerships with ROs and those with other types of partners.

- more structured and systematic coordination among the work of different SROs in a particular region
- clear corporate (or at least Geo-section) guidelines regarding criteria for the selection of and interaction with regional partner organizations
- more systematic exchange of lessons learned/best practices for working with/supporting different types of ROs.

Concrete suggestions provided by UNIFEM staff during our consultations are shown below.

Each of the suggested changes to current approaches to managing partnerships with ROs also implies costs for UNIFEM, either in terms of money or staff time and energy. In each case, these costs would need to be balanced with the potential benefits of the suggested change. This is particularly important for issues that UNIFEM staff (and RO partners) do not see as significant problems in their day-to-day operations. Some of the suggested alternatives may imply major effort and investments while yielding limited benefits.

Partnership management alternatives suggested by consulted UNIFEM staff members

– Develop a multi-year regional strategy for partnerships with ROs in each region, including objectives, expected results, indicators and criteria for partner identification. This strategy would be developed by each GEO section in close collaboration with RPDs and would guide partnership inception, implementation and monitoring.

– Establish a regional partnership office/post in each GEO Section in HQ. This office/person would have the responsibility for developing an overall regional strategy for partnerships with ROs and oversee its implementation through regular contacts with clearly identified staff in the field. In the case of Africa, this Regional Partnership Office might be based in Addis Ababa,

as regional integration in Africa is taking place increasingly within the framework of the AU. This could mean expanding the mandate and resources of the current AU liaison office to an AU - Regional Organizations liaison office.

– Clearly establish roles and responsibilities of field staff in respect to partnerships with ROs. Identify and appoint Focal Points in relevant field offices responsible for day-to-day communication, participation in meetings, monitoring, etc., with clear reporting lines.

– Some stakeholders proposed the creation of liaison offices (on the model of the AU liaison office) for other main partner ROs. Other stakeholders rejected this idea as too cumbersome for UNIFEM and not necessarily effective.

Finding 8: UNIFEM's current partnerships with ROs are managed by activities and outputs rather than for longer-term results.

In the implicit operational results frameworks underlying UNIFEM's choice for working with ROs (see section 2.5), partnerships are not seen as ends in themselves but as means for working towards broader changes, ultimately at the national level. Our data indicate, however, that the

current realities of partnership management do not reflect this theory: In practice, UNIFEM manages most of its RO partnerships with a focus on outputs/short-term achievements. The longer-term objectives that individual partnerships may contribute to in the future remain implicit, and results are not systematically tracked and documented over time.

The focus on short-term results is evident in several aspects of partnership management:

The UNIFEM–AU partnership: the benefits of a longer-term perspective

UNIFEM has established a Liaison Office at the AU. At the time of writing, UNIFEM had a 3-year collaboration agreement with the AU and was engaged in discussions to develop a new collaboration agreement with the AU Commission as a whole.

UNIFEM is working to strengthen core capacities of gender advocates within and outside the AU and is assisting them in developing sustainable solutions rather than one-off initiatives.

UNIFEM's support to AU's Gender Directorate is linked to the Directorate's internal strategic plan, thus linking capacity development interventions to midterm needs and goals identified by the Directorate.

UNIFEM could explore this as a possible useful model for collaboration with other ROs.

Partnership agreements: Most reviewed collaboration agreements or MOUs between UNIFEM and ROs have relatively short-term time-frames and specify a limited number of activities and/or products to be completed under the partnership.⁷² The intended/envisaged contribution to the longer-term development goals (of UNIFEM, the RO, Member States, or others) are usually not made explicit. This latter point also applies to longer-term agreements that outline broader and general objectives for the collaboration.

Implementation: Even in longstanding partnerships such as with CARICOM, UNIFEM's support has been organized in carefully defined compartments, each of which focuses on individual activities or products. In many partnerships, it is difficult to see how the individual contributions 'add up'. While longer-term plans or strategies may underlie the collaboration (e.g., gender mainstreaming), these have not been shaped into an explicit framework of cooperation between UNIFEM and the RO that would help link

longer-term objectives with the actions to be taken over time. With the exception of UNIFEM's partnership with the AU (see sidebar), there is little evidence that individual capacity-building events supported by UNIFEM are linked to broader strategies for individual or institutional capacity development of the respective RO.

Monitoring and reporting: Most references to partnerships with ROs that we found in reviewed UNIFEM reports (subregional, regional and corporate) focused on completed activities (e.g., meetings, round tables) or output-level products (e.g., publications, policies, events). This applied equally to results deriving from partnerships based on short-term and longer-term agreements. Again, the actual or envisaged contribution of these results to UNIFEM's broader objectives in the respective (sub)region largely remained implicit.⁷³

Managing partnerships by activities and outputs rather than for longer-term results makes it more difficult for UNIFEM to capture higher level results that individual partnerships may contribute to in the longer term. The underlying rationale for engaging with ROs in the first place is their potential influence on national-level change processes. While, as outlined earlier in this report, we acknowledge the difficulties in tracking such higher level results and attributing them to specific interventions, our findings indicate that current practice of partnership management makes it even more difficult for UNIFEM to look beyond short-term results within or related to the respective RO.

Besides limiting UNIFEM's ability to demonstrate and account for progress towards its longer-term objectives, it also hampers its ability to make informed decisions about the continued relevance and effectiveness of individual partnerships and the justified use of resources. Further, current management practices put into question to what extent UNIFEM is able to live up to its ideal of partnerships as *means* rather than *ends*.

72 See Appendix VI for an overview of partnership agreements that we were able to obtain and review.

73 In a few cases, UNIFEM reports go to the other extreme and link RO partnerships to impact-level results without providing evidence to support the claim.

It is important to note, however, some contextual factors that affect UNIFEM’s RO partnerships and that are likely to have had considerable influence on how individual partnerships have evolved. These include:

- Limited capacity in many RO partner organizations, in particular related to their ability to engage in long-term strategic planning for their own work and their engagement with different partners (be it due to a lack of experience and skills or a constant work overload and lack of time, turnover/vacancies in gender units, etc.).
- High level of donor dependency of most RO gender units that easily results in these units primarily looking for project type funds for specific tasks or events, again leading to predominantly short-term planning and engagement.
- Individual SROs reported limitations in the duration and amounts of partnership agreements they had the authority to sign, which appears to have contributed to the observed project type/short-term agreements with some partners.

Finding 9: UNIFEM uses a variety of approaches to partner with regional organizations. While formal models may not be required, consulted UNIFEM staff indicated a desire for a more systematic exchange of lessons learned regarding its work with ROs.

As noted in section 2.3, UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs have two main foci: strengthening institutional capacities and supporting policy development and advocacy for GE and WHR (see also Exhibit 2.2). Within these two main foci, UNIFEM has utilized a variety of different approaches over the years to partner with ROs (these are not substantially different from the types of approaches that UNIFEM uses with other partner organizations). Several of the reviewed UNIFEM–RO partnerships have some similarities in one or more of the approaches they use (e.g., helping to strengthen the capacity of RO gender units, assisting with the development of regional policies, and, more recently, assisting RO thematic sections in engendering specific thematic policies or frameworks). UNIFEM staff sometimes refers to these similarities as a “model.” In our view, however, these similarities in focus do not represent a model of engagement that UNIFEM would use with ROs or other partners. (See sidebar.)

What constitutes a ‘model’ for engagement?

A model for engagement is based on the systematic gathering and analysis of information and experiences gained in different partnerships, and the identification of key components and/or success factors that are likely to be transferable to other contexts.

Creating a model also implies positioning a unique act or product (such as the development of a regional policy) in the broader context of what UNIFEM and the RO are trying to achieve and illustrating how a particular type of intervention can or has been shown to contribute to these broader objectives.

UNIFEM’s main approaches to partnerships with ROs

1. Strengthening RO institutional capacities for GE/WHR

UNIFEM works in this area primarily by providing support to gender units (e.g., AU, SADC, ICGLR, ECOWAS, CARICOM). This has included: support for the establishment of gender units, financial support to pay for short-term gender experts, support to gender units or gender officers in the completion of specific tasks such as the development of RO internal gender mainstreaming tools and technical advice to gender-focused working groups or task forces within the RO. This approach appears to be particularly well rooted in Africa. Several consulted UNIFEM staff in HQ and field offices referred to the *SADC model* as one successful approach to engaging with ROs. When asked for details on the “model,” consulted staff stated that it was about supporting the establishment of a gender unit but were not able to provide any other characteristics. They noted that while information on the SADC experiences had been shared with other ROs, the SADC model had never actually been replicated anywhere, as conditions in each RO were unique.⁷⁴

UNIFEM has also utilized another approach to strengthening RO institutional capacity for gender. UNIFEM works to improve ROs’ attitudes and capacity to include gender advocates’ views, knowledge and expertise in their work on GE/WHR. In particular, UNIFEM supports the participation of gender advocates (in particular CSOs and women activists) in ROs’ events and initiatives. Some examples of these types of activities are provided in the sidebar. UNIFEM also works jointly with the partner ROs and the relevant regional gender advocates (e.g., Ministries of Women, women Parliamentarians, CSOs) to organize and convene women’s forums that act as RO consultative bodies. This approach has been used in particular in LAC.

Examples of UNIFEM’s Work with ROs and Gender Advocates.

AU: In collaboration with the AU WGDD, UNIFEM has undertaken a mapping of regional and subregional women’s rights advocacy networks and organized a strategy development workshop on how the networks can strengthen their partnership with the WGDD and be more effective in engaging the AU.

SADC: UNIFEM provided financial and technical support to Civil Society Organizations and National Women’s Machineryes to successfully advocate for the establishment of a SADC Gender Unit.

COMMCA: UNIFEM’s support to COMMCA has included co-convening meetings with regional women’s organizations in order to encourage dialogue between the Ministers and civil society organizations that aim to influence SICA decision-making.

SAARC: In the framework of SAARC Gender InfoBase initiative, UNIFEM supported the creation of a core committee of gender experts including women activists in the region.

UNECE: UNIFEM provides support for civil society participation in the Post-Beijing Regional European Conferences organized by UNECE.

⁷⁴ A report capturing key experiences and lessons learned on UNIFEM’s initial work with SADC was compiled some years ago, but it has not been possible to locate this document due to an office move from Zimbabwe to South Africa.

In LAC, less emphasis has been given to gender units in ROs (with the exception of CARICOM), and more work has been done to establish and support the strengthening and integration of ministerial bodies that aim to coordinate NWM in the region and bring the NWM of Member States into the structure and decision-making of the RO as a way of ensuring that WHR and GE issues are considered in the regional integration process. For example, UNIFEM has supported the Specialized Meeting of Women (REM) in the context of Mercosur (the first example of this nature in LAC), the COMMCA in the context of SICA and more recently, the creation of an Intergovernmental Network of NWM (REMMA) in the context of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). (These are three of the eight partnerships in LAC noted in the sidebar in section 2.2.) In the case of SICA, UNIFEM's collaboration to date has been through the COMMCA (at the political level) and not through the Secretariat of Social Integration, where gender policies, programmes and research are undertaken. In all of these examples, the integration of ministerial bodies into the structure of the RO (e.g., through formal recognition and establishment of technical secretariats in the RO) is at different stages. The only one that has been institutionalized is the Technical Secretariat for COMMCA, which was formally established in 2007 in the office of the SICA Secretary General. The approach of working through ministerial bodies attached to ROs faces some challenges related to the nature of NWM in the region and the changing political contexts in each country. The NWM are at different stages of evolution, have different status in each country (some ministerial level, others not) and varied institutional capacity. These factors affect the partnership with COMMCA, for example.

In the case of SICA/COMMCA, UNIFEM has used a unique approach that links UNIFEM's partnership with SICA/COMMCA to a subregional thematic programme on economics and WHR, entitled the Women's Economic

Agenda (or AGEM, its acronym in Spanish). This has provided UNIFEM with additional capacity (one UNIFEM staff member in each country who interacts with the Minister and the Minister's staff), knowledge (research on topics such as domestic workers), and reinforcement at the country level that has supported COMMCA and its agenda and has helped to facilitate regional-country linkages. COMMCA is a crucial part of the regional component of the AGEM project. (See sidebar.)

COMMCA and the regional component of AGEM

The linkages between regional and national are built into the AGEM project. AGEM research findings are presented at COMMCA and then taken up and acted upon at the national level. The ministers were involved in strategic planning for the regional component of the AGEM and appreciate the comparative and regional dimensions of the research in this project. They take up research findings at the country level, with support from UNIFEM AGEM coordinators.

The effectiveness of the different approaches employed by UNIFEM to strengthen ROs institutional capacities is highly dependent on the context in which these strategies are applied. Thus, the Evaluation Team is not in a position to say if one approach is generally more effective than another.

2. Participating in and supporting RO policy development and advocacy for GE and WHR

UNIFEM provided support to a number of regional gender policies, frameworks and declarations (see section 4.3.2), which in most cases involved a mix of technical and financial assistance. This type of approach has been used in Africa, where most of the partnerships with ROs have resulted in the development of RO gender policies. In the LAC and Asia, UNIFEM has provided support for the revi-

sion of existing agreements, model laws (e.g., Family Law on Domestic Violence Reform Project with OECS), and for the review of the implementation of specific conventions (e.g., SAARC). UNIFEM supports, participates and co-organizes high-level regional meetings with partner ROs that provide space for advocacy for GE and WHR, such as: the most recent African Development Forum (ADF) held in Addis Ababa, which focused on Violence against Women (with UNECA); the Goma High-Level Consultation on Eradicating Sexual Violence (with ICGLR); and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (with UNECLAC).

3. Working with selected RO thematic units and RO stakeholders

More recently, in addition to working with gender units to develop gender or gender-related policies, UNIFEM is also trying to work more systematically with selected sectoral/thematic entities on engendering specific sectoral policies and initiatives (e.g., on land rights, also see sidebar). In addition, UNIFEM is deliberately working with selected RO stakeholders such as regional and national CSOs to help them gain better access to ROs and influence RO policy-making processes. For example, UNIFEM is supporting CSOs' participation in important regional meetings and advocating for the inclusion of CSO ideas in official RO documents. (See sidebar.)

UNIFEM-ECOWAS: Working with RO thematic units on selected priorities

- UNIFEM worked with ECOWAS 'Free Movement Division on engendering ECOWAS Common Approach and Guidelines to Migration'. UNIFEM participated in the expert meeting held in Ghana in May 2007 and provided input for revising a common approach to incorporating gender.

- UNIFEM worked with the Agriculture Division of ECOWAS, in collaboration with the HUB Rural, to engender ECOWAS Common Policy on Agriculture (2006).

Examples of UNIFEM's work to strengthen CSO participation in regional policy development

ICGLR: UNIFEM provided support to the Women's Regional Meeting held in Kigali in October 2004. The meeting resulted in the Kigali Declaration, which was later incorporated into the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration, the founding document of ICGLR. Financial and technical support was provided to women's organizations and national coordination committees and national women's machineries (NWM) to strengthen their capacities to make substantial inputs in the process.

SADC: UNIFEM provided financial and technical support to civil society organizations and national women's machineries to be actively engaged in consultation and advocacy processes related to the SADC Gender Unit's work, in particular around the SADC Gender Policy and the SADC Gender Protocol. UNIFEM provided assistance for coordination and planning meetings that have allowed different CSOs from across the region to come together and develop joint strategies.

Recent trends in UNIFEM approaches to partnerships with ROs

Our consultations with UNIFEM staff at Headquarters and in the field indicated that there have been some internal questions about whether UNIFEM's focus on gender units is the most effective way to engage with ROs or whether this is making only limited use of the existing potential

for collaboration with the respective organizations. As noted above in its work with the AU, ECOWAS, ICGLR and CARICOM, UNIFEM is in the process of diversifying its approach by working more systematically with selected sectoral/thematic entities within the ROs and with selected RO stakeholders such as regional and national CSOs. In LAC, UNIFEM has been working with NWM in a regional perspective.

This diversification of UNIFEM approaches (sometimes referred to as a multitiered approach) appears to be driven by two factors: a lingering concern that working exclusively with RO gender units may mean missing important opportunities for influencing relevant sectoral decision-making processes, and concerns or doubts (in some cases) about the extent to which continued support to RO gender units will contribute to sustainable institutional changes inside and outside the respective RO. It is unclear, however, if the diversification indicates a deliberate and agreed upon corporate/regional shift away from UNIFEM's focus on institutional or individual capacity development towards an approach that is more oriented towards specific thematic issues that UNIFEM wishes to address.⁷⁵ Working with RO thematic units on selected thematic priorities may constitute one among several future models for engaging with ROs. As with the previous examples, this would imply deliberate choices and analysis of intended and actual successes, challenges and commonalities.

The Evaluation Team is not suggesting that UNIFEM necessarily needs to develop or utilize distinct models for its engagement with ROs (or any other type of organization). The team did notice, however, that the term 'model' was used repeatedly in some regions (especially Africa) without staff members actually being able to describe those parts of the respective experience that were unique to the work with ROs and/or considered to be transferable and replicable in other contexts.

While formal models may not be required, consulted UNIFEM staff indicated a desire for a more systematic exchange of lessons learned regarding the work with ROs – lessons that would go beyond the exchange of information on successful activities or outputs. UNIFEM's ability to generate such lessons is limited by the absence of explicit partnership strategies or plans and by its individualized approach to managing partnerships. Working on a set of relatively unconnected activities in the absence of corporate or regional guidelines for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of partnerships makes it hard, if not impossible, to draw lessons about successful approaches that go beyond lessons on activities (see also section 5.3).

Elusive Lessons Learned

- We consider "lessons learned" to be hypotheses based on the findings of one or more studies that can be applied more widely to future programming, beyond a specific context or situation.
- The Evaluation Team had hoped to contribute to the creation of some initial lessons learned on 'what worked well and what didn't' in UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs. However, the partnerships reviewed presented themselves as relatively fragmented collages of individual activities rather than as comprehensive 'approaches' or 'models' of partnership that could be compared and analysed in a meaningful way.
- For this reason, the Evaluation Team was not able to draw or elicit evidence-based lessons that could be relevant in a variety of contexts that UNIFEM works in.
- However, data from the six organizational in-depth studies carried out as part of this evaluation provide some potential lessons drawn from the experiences of specific partnerships between UNIFEM and an RO. They are not, at this stage, generalizable to other contexts. In section 5.3, the Evaluation Team suggests treating such lessons as working hypotheses that UNIFEM may wish to explore more systematically in the future in order to work towards developing relevant and evidence-based lessons.

⁷⁵ Also including a possible increased role of UNIFEM's thematic advisors.



5. Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

5.1 Overview

This chapter summarizes the Evaluation Team's key conclusions and observations, identifies some lessons learned, and outlines a number of recommendations to UNIFEM.

5.2 Conclusions

Context

In the current global context, regional organizations are gaining relevance as players in both economic and social development. They are also seen as catalytic actors to promote GE and WHR in their regions and Member States. There is a distinct push within the UN and among donors and many country governments, for development partners to engage with ROs. At the same time, agencies such as UNIFEM are still in the process of finding the most appropriate and effective ways of working with ROs and of enhancing alignment and harmonization among themselves.

There is wide agreement among consulted stakeholders that ROs are important players with the potential to significantly influence policies, agendas and practices with respect to GE and WHR—not only at the regional level, but also at the national level. UNIFEM's implicit assumptions about why partnering with ROs is important and relevant appear to be widely shared among stakeholders (including among other UN agencies working with the same ROs) and are seen to be plausible. However, these assumptions have yet to be proven valid.

While partnerships with ROs vary based on contextual factors, most if not all ROs share some key characteristics that define their common potential as well as common limitations. One key characteristic is that ROs typically act as catalysts that can positively influence the enabling environment for change, but that cannot steer or control change at the national level. ROs and UNIFEM are thus in very similar situations in this regard: Both can act as facilitators and catalysts and can support, further, speed up, or even trigger change, but they cannot be solely responsible for creating such change in RO member countries. Further, their contribution to long-term changes at the national level (i.e., development impacts such as changes in policies, practices and behaviours regarding GE and WHR) is difficult to measure. For UNIFEM this raises the question of how it can reasonably determine and track the success/value of its support to and collaboration with ROs: how to measure the impact of one catalyst on another, beyond the immediate results within the respective RO? Other partners (including other UN agencies) are facing the same problem.

UNIFEM has an established corporate theory of change that guides all of its activities, but it has not yet developed an operational results framework for partnerships that specifies the Fund's expectations of what constitutes a successful (i.e., relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable) partnership with regional (or other) organizations.⁷⁶ The absence of an agreed upon, formalized basis for assessment of individual partnerships posed a challenge during the evaluation. As noted in section 2.5, the Evaluation Team constructed a set of assumptions and expectations that appeared to underlie UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs. These were shared with UNIFEM and endorsed as the evaluation's basis for assessment.

⁷⁶ The corporate Theory of Change as described in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan implies the relevance of ROs as one type of 'mainstream institution' whose capacity UNIFEM is aiming to strengthen. The SP does not – understandably – go into any detail, however, regarding UNIFEM's approach and strategies for partnering with and supporting different kinds of organizations.

UNIFEM currently uses the term ‘partnership’ for a variety of different relationships with stakeholders. For the purpose of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team introduced the terms ‘boundary partner’ and ‘strategic partner’. In most of its current partnerships with ROs, UNIFEM relates to the RO as a *boundary partner* (i.e., the collaboration is aimed at supporting positive short- or midterm changes within the RO). In other partnerships (e.g., with some of the UN Regional Economic Commissions), UNIFEM addresses the RO as a *strategic partner*. In these relationships, both partners commit to contributing to a set of agreed upon objectives based on their respective strengths in order to bring change to or influence external stakeholders such as Member States. It is important to note that the terms ‘boundary partner’ and ‘strategic partner’ are descriptive and do not constitute an assessment of the relevance or effectiveness of a partnership.

Partnership Performance

Feedback from all consulted RO stakeholders on their partnerships with UNIFEM suggested very high levels of partner satisfaction with the quality and high calibre of technical support provided by UNIFEM. While UNIFEM is aware of and appreciates this, the organization may be doing itself an injustice by not systematically tracking and reporting this information to others.

There is considerable evidence that UNIFEM–RO partnerships have contributed to a number of short-term and some midterm results. Most of the achieved changes have occurred within or are closely linked to the respective RO (e.g., changes in institutional structures, practices, knowledge, or policies) or in the form of specific events or products (e.g., conferences, studies, publications).

While there are little reliable data on whether and to what extent changes in the RO at the regional level have contributed to subsequent changes at the national level (because these types of changes are long-term changes and because of the lack of monitoring/tracking systems), consulted stakeholders widely agree that the results achieved have the potential to contribute to such longer-term changes. They can thus be described as positive

contributions to strengthening the *enabling environment for change* at the regional level and ultimately the national level.

Sustainability of Results

Some concerns emerged about the sustainability of results, particularly in terms of institutional capacities. In many cases, the sustainability of achievements appears to be dependent on factors over which UNIFEM and the ROs have no control. However, UNIFEM’s tendency towards relatively short-term and activity-focused interventions with limited follow-up strategies and resources may also negatively affect the long-term sustainability of the results obtained.

The evaluation further noted that the absence of corporately agreed upon concepts of *capacity* and *capacity development* (individual and institutional) may be a factor that limits UNIFEM’s ability to work towards and track the sustainable results of its partnerships with ROs.

Partnership Management

With the exception of this evaluation, UNIFEM as an organization has engaged in limited formal reflection and data collection on the nature and results of its partnerships with ROs, or in comparing such partnerships with the relationships it has with other types of organizations at regional and national levels (e.g., how does UNIFEM’s work with national women’s machineries link to its partnerships with ROs?).

Consulted RO stakeholders (from both boundary and strategic partner types of relationships) describe UNIFEM as a highly respected and valued partner. UNIFEM is seen as playing (or as having the potential to play) a unique role among RO partners due to its focus on gender equality and WHR, its status as a UN agency and its close links to civil society as well as to a broad range of other partners.

UNIFEM’s subregional offices are the key entities for managing partnerships with ROs in different parts of the world. Key benefits of this approach are the geographic

proximity of SROs to their respective partners, SRO staff's in-depth knowledge of subregional contexts and developments, as well as their professional contacts and networks. In most if not all cases, good personal relationships between UNIFEM and RO staff have been a significant factor in the establishment and continuation of partnerships. In one case (the AU), a dedicated liaison office has been created in Addis Ababa; this provides visibility for UNIFEM as an AU partner and for proximity and continuity in the relationship, but it also requires significant resources.

As a UN organization, UNIFEM is committed to work with ROs and has perhaps viewed that commitment as sufficient rationale for its partnerships with ROs. However, as a result, it has tended to base its support to and joint actions with ROs on implicit assumptions about the ROs' interest in and capacities related to GE and WHR. These assumptions are sometimes valid, sometimes not. This has adversely affected results achievement at output and outcome levels. Moreover, UNIFEM's approach to managing partnerships with ROs is individually driven (i.e., case to case), rather than corporately or regionally driven. It has tended to respond to emerging opportunities at the field (subregional) level and not as part of UNIFEM's existing explicit subregional or regional strategies. This is reflected in how these partnerships have been managed by UNIFEM, for example, in terms of roles and responsibilities, human and financial resources allocation, accountability and reporting.

While partnerships with ROs (as with other organizations) are theoretically intended to be means for achieving longer-term results at the national level, UNIFEM's current management approach focuses on short-term results linked to specific activities with an RO partner or to products of the respective RO. One important challenge, not only for this evaluation but for UNIFEM more generally, is how to assess and track the relevance and effectiveness/success of individual partnerships in relation to the broader objectives to which these partnerships are intended to contribute. This is related to two key issues:

- Globally – the absence of reliable data or data-collection systems for obtaining information on the impact of ROs at the national level,
- In UNIFEM – the absence of agreed upon corporate criteria or guidelines for establishing partnerships and monitoring partnership results.

UNIFEM has increasingly moved away from a project and country-based approach towards a more integrated regional approach. Its current approach to managing partnerships with ROs does not yet reflect these principles. It is not evident that partnerships with ROs are being used systematically across individual SROs as strategic means for furthering the priorities and objectives outlined in UNIFEM's subregional strategies. This limits UNIFEM's ability to learn from and about its partnerships with ROs (or other types of partners).

UNIFEM is using a variety of often similar approaches/activities to operationalize partnerships, but it has not yet developed distinct 'models' of partnering with ROs. Moreover, while a considerable amount of support provided by UNIFEM to RO gender units has been aimed at strengthening the immediate and longer-term capacities of these units, it is not evident what concept(s), understanding(s), or approach(es) to capacity and capacity development UNIFEM has applied.

UNIFEM is in the process of diversifying its approach to working with ROs by moving away from working nearly exclusively with gender units towards a multitiered approach that involves collaborating with thematic sections in ROs, as well as with CSOs and other RO stakeholders. This diversification has the potential to open up broader opportunities for engagement with ROs that are driven by considerations about the particular thematic objectives UNIFEM wants to pursue in the respective region rather than providing quasi 'default' support for particular organizational units.

5.3 Lessons Learned

Lessons learned

OECD definition: “Lessons are generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.”

A single successful aspect of a project or initiative does not constitute a ‘lesson’. Over time, the identification of common insights across multiple initiatives can yield a meaningful lesson.

One key challenge for eliciting lessons learned (see sidebar) is that the currently available information on UNIFEM’s partnerships with ROs tends to be focused on individual, context-specific experiences. To date UNIFEM has not systematically collected or analysed information across RO partnerships that would, for example, allow it to identify the common factors that have supported or hindered results achievement. Based on the available data, the Evaluation Team was not able to draw or elicit evidence-based lessons (i.e., insights that could convincingly claim to be relevant in a variety of contexts that UNIFEM works in).

However, data from the six organizational in-depth studies⁷⁷ carried out as part of this evaluation provide some potential lessons. Each of the potential lessons below was drawn from the experiences related to *one* particular partnership between UNIFEM and an RO and has not been shown to be applicable in other contexts. The Evaluation Team suggests treating them as *working hypotheses* that UNIFEM may wish to explore more systematically in the future in order to work towards *developing* relevant and evidence-based lessons.

Potential lessons about partnership management for GE/WHR

- The absence of an overall partnership framework that identifies clear and specific objectives and expected mutual benefits of the partnership and relates these to the respective partners’ own objectives and strategies can lead to sparse and not always strategic activities. It also leaves the relationship vulnerable to leadership and/or context changes.
- Individual short-term and ad hoc activities aiming to enhance institutional capacity do not guarantee sustainable change within the institution unless they are part of a sufficiently long-term approach, solidly anchored within the institution, owned by its leaders and supported by internal technical capacities.
- Institutional change and capacity-building on gender mainstreaming takes a very long time. When the support of external advisors ends, the likelihood of the results being sustained and institutionalized depends on both internal leadership and ownership as well as on the systems and structures (including incentives) that have been created over time.
- Working at the regional level cannot replace an organization’s work at the country level (e.g., UNIFEM’s relationships with individual NWM is also a key determinant in its ability to fulfill an effective role at the regional level) but is an important complement to it. It provides space for the exchange of ideas, lessons learned, tools and best practices that can enhance the knowledge and skills of gender advocates in each country for the purposes of advocacy and policy work at the national level. In addition, RO-related meetings, forums and publications that share information on progress towards GE targets provide the opportunity for exercising ‘peer pressure’ among Member States.

⁷⁷ Please see Annex I

Potential lessons about partnership strategies activities for GE/WHR

- Bringing together diverse stakeholders from across a geographic region to develop and work on a joint agenda can help to create regional ownership of GE/WHR issues.
- Working together towards a concrete regional goal such as the completion of a regional gender policy can forge alliances between different women advocates and help groups overcome minor differences to focus on their common goals.

The above list is not comprehensive but illustrates the types of potential lessons that have emerged from individual RO partnerships to date. The Evaluation Team expects that different UNIFEM field offices will be able to add other insights and experiences that might be applicable in other contexts.

For its own learning needs, UNIFEM may wish to select a few areas that it feels are most relevant to management and programming and to discuss whether and how to systematically collect and analyse data across partnerships in order to develop a core set of 'true' lessons learned.

Exhibit 5.1 below provides UNIFEM with a framework for discussing and deciding upon areas that it might explore in more depth and across different partnerships in the future. The exhibit has four columns:

- The first column identifies the different aspects of UNIFEM's corporate theory of change as outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- The second column indicates which of UNIFEM's current foci in partnering with ROs 'matches' (addresses) the respective aspect of the theory of change. To illustrate, the exhibit includes three such foci: i) policy development at the regional level, ii) institutional development and iii) initiating/strengthening exchange among gender advocates. (Readers can also refer to section 2.3 on Partnership Foci/Purposes.)
- The third column lists some of the key strategies/approaches that, according to our data, UNIFEM currently uses to address respective issues.
- The fourth column outlines some key questions and issues for each area that UNIFEM may wish to explore further with a view to developing relevant lessons and/or actual models for engagement.

Exhibit 5.1 Framework for Exploring the Development of Lessons

UNIFEM's corporate theory of change ⁷⁸	Documented focus of UNIFEM's work with ROs ⁷⁹	Examples of key strategies/activities currently used by UNIFEM	Suggestions for areas that UNIFEM may wish to explore in more depth in the future
<p>Macrolevel:</p> <p>Development of strategies and normative frameworks (constitutions, laws, policies, judicial processes and rules and budget processes) that are gender-responsive and in line with national and international commitments</p>	<p>Policy development at the regional level</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ROs in developing regional gender policies/frameworks and/or agreements • Support to RO sectoral divisions to engender specific sectoral policies • Development of new knowledge or tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support • Mentoring and advice • Placement of gender advisors and/or technical specialists 	<p>Moving from policy development to implementation often appears to be a major challenge. More systematic data collection and analysis are needed on what factors support/hinder the transition from policy development to implementation.</p> <p>Insights (lessons) on these factors may have implications for how UNIFEM can further support not only policy development but also implementation.</p> <p>Also, systems/approaches are needed for tracking (at least selected examples of) the effect that regional policies have in RO Member States.</p>

78 As per UNIFEM's Strategic Plan 2008-2013

79 See section 2.3 on Partnership Foci

UNIFEM's corporate theory of change ⁷⁸	Documented focus of UNIFEM's work with ROs ⁷⁹	Examples of key strategies/activities currently used by UNIFEM	Suggestions for areas that UNIFEM may wish to explore in more depth in the future
<p>Mesolevel:</p> <p>Strengthened capacities of the mainstream institutions to implement the gender-responsive development strategies and normative frameworks as they relate to their respective spheres of responsibility to influence the desired changes</p>	<p>Institutional development</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the creation of RO gender units and gender management structures • Support for strengthening the capacity of gender-focused RO committees/working groups • Support for capacity development activities for RO gender unit staff • Support for capacity development for other RO staff (e.g., sector specialists) • Support for the development of RO internal gender policies and the mainstreaming of guidelines and manuals • Support for the development of new knowledge or tools • Financial and/or technical support for conducting gender audits within the organization/institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support • Placement of gender advisors and/or technical specialists inside the RO • Ongoing and often informal mentoring and advice/technical backstopping through UNIFEM staff • Advocacy (addressing RO leadership and stakeholders/members) 	<p>More systematic data collection and analysis are needed for developing lessons in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which establishing an RO gender unit and developing its capacity can strengthen the RO's overall (organizational) performance with regard to GE/WHR. • The factors that support/hinder the effective interaction and cooperation between RO gender units and other (thematic) sections within the organization. • The factors that can support/hinder effective and sustainable capacity-building <p>Before being able to develop related 'lessons learned', clarification and agreed upon terminology within UNIFEM are needed with regard to core concepts such as institutional capacity and institutional capacity development. This relates to questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes (institutional) capacity related to GE/WHR? What role do the individual competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation) of staff members play for institutional capacity? What role do the collective capabilities of units/groups within the organization play? What role does the external context play? • What aspects of an RO's institutional capacity can UNIFEM realistically help to improve? How (if at all) do individual short-term changes resulting from targeted capacity development activities 'add up' to changes in the institution's overall capacity? What strategies can be used to institutionalize capacity-building activities (e.g., AU case)?
<p>Mesolevel:</p> <p>Strengthened capacities of national women's machineries and other gender equality advocates and women's groups for lobbying for and demanding accountability of mainstream institutions to implement the development strategies and normative frameworks</p>	<p>Initiating/strengthening exchange among gender advocates</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organization and convening of women's forums that act as RO consultative bodies (e.g., Ministries of Women, women Parliamentarians) • Strengthen and mobilize women CSOs so that they can influence RO decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support • Facilitating CSO participation in important regional meetings • Advocacy for inclusion of CSO ideas in official RO documents 	<p>Before being able to develop related lessons learned, clarification and agreed upon terminology within UNIFEM are needed with regard to the notion of 'capacities' of NWM and other gender equality advocates':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes 'capacity' in each case? • How do capacity development needs of NWM and other organizations/groups differ? • What needs do the groups have in common?

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations respond to UNIFEM's expressed interest in improving its partnerships with ROs on the basis of what has been learned through this evaluation. However, each of the recommendations implies costs for UNIFEM that need to be carefully balanced against the potential benefits; the results of such cost/benefit assessments may differ by geographic region. In some cases, UNIFEM may wish to consider whether a recommendation can/should be addressed only in terms of its RO partnerships, in relation to all types of partnerships, or in a broader corporate context (e.g., some issues, such as the absence of corporately defined concepts of 'capacity' and 'capacity development', may warrant a broader response).

Recommendation 1: UNIFEM should make its assumptions and expectations with regard to partnerships more explicit and develop corporate tools to guide and inform UNIFEM decisions on whether and why to enter, continue, or end partnerships.

UNIFEM strategic documents as well as consultations with UNIFEM staff in HQ and field offices indicate that UNIFEM considers effective *partnerships* as a central aspect of its overall approach. However, this report has outlined some of the challenges deriving from the fact that most of UNIFEM's expectations and assumptions regarding partnerships (not only with ROs) remain implicit and idiosyncratic. It has further highlighted the need for UNIFEM to make deliberate and transparent choices about its partnerships given the Fund's limited resources. If UNIFEM really considers partnerships as a key characteristic of its corporate work, it needs to define more explicitly what it means by 'partnership', what assumptions and expectations are underlying different types of partnerships and also what criteria UNIFEM staff can use to make decisions about entering, continuing, or terminating partnerships with different organizations.

Describing partnerships: At present, UNIFEM uses the generic term 'partnership' to describe different types of relationships it has with external organizations. UNIFEM does not have an agreed upon terminology that allows it to distinguish a "partnership" from other types of relationships it has (be it differences in the rationale for the relationship, the type of expected benefits/results of the relationship, or others). In the context of making decisions about partnerships, making related expectations and assumptions explicit and monitoring partnership progress, it would be helpful if UNIFEM developed (at a minimum) a core set of agreed upon concepts and related terminology that accurately describe the characteristics of particular types of partnerships. Some practical suggestions in this context include:

- UNIFEM may find the concepts of 'boundary partners' and 'strategic partners' helpful in describing differences in existing or envisaged partnerships. UNIFEM may wish to adjust these concepts/labels or develop others that seem more relevant and fitting in its particular context (e.g., that include dimensions such as short-term versus longer-term partnerships, ad hoc versus planned, etc.).
- UNIFEM should review its *current* use of the term 'strategic partners/partnerships'⁸⁰ and clarify what other forms of partnership, if any, these strategic ones are distinguished from.

Making informed and transparent decisions about partnerships requires, at a minimum, the existence of explicit *assumptions* about the *expected benefits* of the partnership (for the RO, for UNIFEM, for others). These assumptions and expectations can later be compared against the actual experiences of both partners in their collaboration and can either be confirmed or adjusted.

One approach that can be helpful for making assumptions and expectations explicit is developing an operational results framework similar to the ones introduced in section 2.5 of this report. Given the large number of partnerships UNIFEM has, it may be neither feasible nor helpful to

⁸⁰ We assume that 'strategic' in this context is used in its everyday sense (i.e., as deliberately chosen and contributing to a larger plan/set of objectives).

develop a detailed results framework for each individual relationship. However, the approach can be used to spell out UNIFEM's expectations, assumptions and experiences with regard to different *types* of (similar) partner organizations and/or types of partnership. This in turn will require appropriate concepts/language that allow UNIFEM to identify and describe both differences and similarities between individual partnerships (see below).

Making choices about partnerships

- Why should UNIFEM work with one partner but not another?
- What are the minimum requirements of UNIFEM partners (in terms of such factors as the RO's priorities, strategic alliances, capacities, track record and so forth)?
- Why should UNIFEM provide very limited support to several partners rather than assisting fewer partners in more substantial ways?
- What are an RO's areas of activity that make sense for UNIFEM to support given its strategy, objectives and other existing partners/stakeholders in a given region?
- What makes a UNIFEM partnership with another organization successful?
- What criteria/indicators can be used by UNIFEM and its partners to assess whether a partnership should be continued in the same way or not?

In addition, Appendix VI suggests a set of guiding *questions* that UNIFEM may find helpful for making key assumptions and expectations more explicit in the initial stages of a partnership and for comparing these assumptions with actual experiences during later periodic reviews. The proposed questions can be helpful in the process of developing an explicit operational results framework but also as a stand-alone tool for making decisions, monitoring and assessing individual partnerships periodically.

Given that partnerships tend to be highly context dependent and dynamic, we suggest these kinds of 'soft' tools rather than a fixed list of performance criteria against which all UNIFEM partnerships would be assessed.

Recommendation 2: UNIFEM should develop more effective approaches to tracking and analysing the performance of its partnerships with ROs.

One current challenge for UNIFEM is how to track and document the results of its partnerships with ROs beyond the immediate effects of individual, mostly short-term activities.⁸¹ In our view, there are at least two types of information need that UNIFEM has to attend to:

- UNIFEM's *accountability* in terms of progress towards results at corporate, regional and subregional levels.
- UNIFEM's internal *learning*.

UNIFEM's accountability

UNIFEM sees partnerships not as ends in themselves but as one among various strategies it uses to work towards its corporate, regional and subregional objectives and its overall goal (national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented). In terms of accountability, UNIFEM is expected to focus on progress towards development *results*. This links to the question of what kinds of results UNIFEM can be, wants to be, or is expected to be accountable for: short- and midterm results or also long-term development impacts? Current annual reports (corporate, regional and subregional) provide examples of short-term achievements (e.g., development of an RO gender policy with UNIFEM support), as well as impact-level results (e.g., number of countries having adopted a quota for women in Parliament due to various advocacy efforts supported by UNIFEM). In the latter case, the issue of attribution (i.e., linking the respective result *causally* to UNIFEM's support to a particular set of stakeholders) is difficult.

In enhancing its current approach to monitoring and reporting on its partnerships with ROs, UNIFEM may find the following suggestions helpful:

- As described in the operational results frameworks developed in section 2.5, the relevance that UNIFEM attributes to RO

⁸¹ Consultations with UNIFEM staff indicate that the same applies to its partnerships with other types of organizations.

partnerships is their potential to contribute to, or be the means of achieving, development *results*. Ideally, in a results-oriented approach, short- or midterm results that derive from a particular RO partnership should clearly link to UNIFEM's envisaged corporate, regional, or subregional objectives. In other words, the relevance of a particular achievement such as the development of a regional gender policy needs to be visibly located in the broader context of what UNIFEM is trying to achieve in the particular subregion or globally. In future reports, UNIFEM should make such linkages more explicit.

- UNIFEM is currently thinking primarily in terms of *contribution* rather than *attribution* when it comes to reflecting upon longer-term development results/impacts. In this light, UNIFEM's current approach of mostly tracking short- and midterm results of its work with ROs is reasonable given the difficulties inherent in measuring its contributions to long-term results without taking attribution into account. What is missing, however and what is needed in order to demonstrate 'contribution' to longer-term development goals in a convincing manner is to illustrate how and why it is plausible or likely that achieved interim (short- and midterm) results will contribute to long-term goals. It therefore would be helpful for UNIFEM to articulate at least some of the key *operational results frameworks* that underlie its efforts in a particular thematic area and/or a particular geographic region (see also previous recommendation).

In Outcome Mapping it is suggested that one boundary partner can include more than one organization if the programme is intending to contribute to the same type of change(s) within these organizations. Thus, the type of organization (e.g., RO, CSO, or NWM) becomes less relevant in planning and monitoring progress than the particular types of changes the partnership is hoping to achieve within these organizations.

For example, if UNIFEM's work with ROs and NWMs in a specific context is aiming to enhance staff and/or unit capacity in the area of gender mainstreaming, then the ROs and NWMs involved might constitute one boundary partner for UNIFEM.⁸²

- Ideally, monitoring and reporting on results would start from the big picture of progress against UNIFEM's broader (corporate, regional, subregional) objectives and then illustrate how individual initiatives and partnerships have contributed (or have been instrumental) to this progress, rather than the current practice of listing a broad variety of individual achievements made with different partners without summing up what these achievements *mean* in terms of UNIFEM's overarching objectives. (See also sidebar.) Reports should provide evidence of the linkages between UNIFEM's work with the RO and the subsequent national-level changes. Further, they should distinguish between UNIFEM-RO interventions *contributing* to a positive change and *causing* a change.
- In order to track and document evolving changes over time, UNIFEM may consider the development of a limited number of progressive *progress markers* (or indicators) that make visible the assumed linkages between different stages of achievements in the complex social development processes that UNIFEM is trying to influence.⁸³

UNIFEM's internal learning

Systematically collecting, analysing and sharing information about its partnerships with ROs (or indeed other UNIFEM partners) can be a key tool for UNIFEM to continuously improve its work. By eliciting and sharing lessons and insights on what did and did not work well, UNIFEM offices can benefit from each others' experiences and thus help each other avoid 'reinventing the wheel' over and over again. One key question for analysis is what aspects of a particular experience were unique and context specific and which might point to more generic and replicable insights into the functioning of UNIFEM partnerships. Developing specific replicable 'models' for engaging with ROs (or other partners) is dependent on UNIFEM's ability to collect and analyse comparable data from a variety of partnerships over time.

82 See Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001, p. 41f.

83 For the notion of Progress Markers, see Earl, Carden, Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping – Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, Ottawa, 2001.

Gathering Lessons Learned

Another practical suggestion in the context of internal learning: UNIFEM could include in the Terms of Reference for upcoming UNIFEM evaluations (corporate and/or decentralized) selected questions on the characteristics of and lessons learned from the partnerships involved in the initiatives being evaluated.

LAC has developed a wealth of experience in supporting ministerial bodies linked to ROs. UNIFEM could benefit from documenting some of these experiences over time and how they are influencing RO and at the same time supporting NWM at national level (through enhanced credibility and capacity gained through a regional platform).

In order to systematically gather, analyse and share such information, UNIFEM requires adequate terminology/concepts to identify, describe and communicate its observations. Further, ongoing exchange and discussion among UNIFEM staff over key common *learning interests* with regard to RO partnerships can be helpful.

The various individual experiences and examples of potential lessons learned (see section 5.3) provide a rich basis from which UNIFEM can start to systematically collect and analyse information on a selected number of issues and/or concepts—to generate lessons learned and/or to provide the basis for developing actual models for engaging with ROs.

Recommendation 3: UNIFEM (corporately as well as in each geographical section) should review its current approaches to managing relationships with ROs to assess the potential benefits of and identify feasible ways of creating, more consistency across UNIFEM in how it manages its partnerships with ROs.

While in many respects partnerships with ROs may not differ substantially from UNIFEM's partnerships with other types of organizations (e.g., in terms of the particular strategies used to work with them), ROs are unique given their particular nature as subregional intergovernmental entities. This may warrant a closer look at the potential benefits of further strengthening and harmonizing UNIFEM's learning and approaches to working with these partners. The Evaluation Team therefore recommends that UNIFEM review its current approaches to partnership management in light of the key findings outlined in this report.

Throughout this report, the Evaluation Team points to various gaps in understanding regarding UNIFEM's corporately agreed concepts, expectations, criteria and guidance related to its engagement with RO partners. While these observations illustrate the Evaluation Team's expectations regarding the ideal (i.e., most effective and efficient) approach to managing partnerships, we recognize that the realities of the particular context may not allow for all of these ideals to be realized due to factors outside UNIFEM's control or because the costs of doing so would outweigh the benefits. UNIFEM will therefore need to determine which concepts need to be clarified.

One question that emerged during the evaluation is how partnerships with ROs can link more visibly and systematically to UNIFEM's subregional strategies. Another question was how to link interventions at the subregional level to interventions at the national level. Consultations with UNIFEM staff further indicate a wish to explore ways of making relationships with ROs slightly more corporate (more coordinated in terms of roles, responsibilities and oversight and more intense and focused exchange of lessons learned) without giving up the benefits deriving from managing day-to-day personal relationships through the respective UNIFEM field staff members.

Key questions in this context for UNIFEM review (at the corporate level and in each geographical section) are listed below. Please also see sidebar.

- Is the wish for enhanced coordination/collaboration an issue that is relevant only to UNIFEM's partnerships with ROs, or is it a broader issue that also applies to its partnerships with other similar organizations such as regional NGOs and CSOs?

- What strategic aspects of partnerships can/should be more coordinated? What operational aspects? For which aspects would more explicit guidance be helpful?

- What level of coordination/guidance (corporate or regional) is most appropriate for what types of management issues?

- How can/should UNIFEM's work with ROs in a particular geographic section be effectively monitored and reported upon? To what extent should the partnerships themselves be monitored (rather than the broader objectives/priorities in each subregion that they are contributing to)? Who should monitor what?

- Who can/should have coordinating function? Would increased coordination imply the need for additional positions? If so, where? What role would these persons play? Where would they be located?

- What, if any, changes to existing planning, programming, monitoring and reporting processes are needed? What are the expected benefits and costs of these changes?

Corporate Approach to Managing Partnerships

Different regions may present different challenges and opportunities in developing more integrated 'corporate' approaches to partnership management.

Africa may be in a unique position as the AU is a relatively strong continent-wide organization that has an agreed upon coordination function for various African subregional organizations. The UNIFEM AU liaison office and some SROs in other parts of Africa have already started to discuss opportunities and approaches to further aligning and coordinating their work with the AU and related RECs.

APAS – The situation is completely different for example in the APAS region where there is no single aggregating force and subregional specificities are very important.

UNIFEM may also want to explore whether the development of one or more actual replicable *models* of engagement with ROs (or related guidelines) would be useful in terms of providing corporate guidance to the SROs responsible for the respective partnership, or if UNIFEM staff and RO partners would perceive such guidance as more limiting than helpful given the unique settings each partnership has to respond to.

Appendices

UNIFEM's Partnerships with Regional Organizations to Advance Gender Equality





Appendix I

Terms of Reference Evaluation of UNIFEM's Partnerships with Regional Organizations

1. Background

In the pursuit of its organizational goal—that national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented in stable and fragile states—UNIFEM works together with a variety of different actors at the global, regional and national levels. Recently, UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations have grown, and there is increasing recognition of the fact that engaging in such partnerships can be a strategic and cost-effective strategy; that strengthening the capacity of regional organizations to support country-level work on gender equality is a key mechanism for expanding UNIFEM's reach.⁸⁴

The important role that regional organizations (defined as intergovernmental organizations operating at the regional and subregional levels) play in achieving progress on international, regional and national level goals for gender equality and women's empowerment makes them valuable partners for UNIFEM's work. At the international level, regional organizations have been given an important role in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the outcome document of the 23rd Session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5) and for international human rights conventions such as CEDAW and CRC. At the regional level, they help to establish consensus on gender equality issues among Member States and are capable of introducing regional norms and

standards on gender equality and women's rights issues and the monitoring of their realization. Their role in supporting research on gender issues and in collecting regional data and statistics on gender equality is also very relevant, especially in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the national level, they are involved in legislative reviews and amendment processes of Member States' compliance with international and regional gender equality standards. They provide technical and financial support on gender mainstreaming and for projects and programmes addressing gender equality. They are also involved in building the capacity of government officials and women's organizations on gender equality issues.⁸⁵

As described above, regional organizations' roles in advancing gender equality make them natural partners for UNIFEM to engage with in its work. The importance of developing partnerships with regional organizations was recognized in the Strategic Results Framework of UNIFEM's Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) 2004–2007, which had as one of its key indicators that “the policies, programmes and resource allocations of regional organizations should be consistent with gender equality.” The importance of expanding and strengthening UNIFEM's work with regional organizations has also been underscored by its Consultative Committee and is highlighted in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008–2011), which requires that UNIFEM “build on its close working partnerships with regional intergovernmental organizations” and “strengthen its support to gender units of intergovernmental regional organizations.”⁸⁶ In addition, GA Resolution 60/137 encourages UNIFEM to collaborate with regional organizations in its work to strengthen gender justice in peace building and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

84 Speech by Noeleen Heyzer, Former Executive Director of UNIFEM.

85 The role of regional and intergovernmental organizations in promoting gender equality, Commission on the Status of Women, 49th Session.

86 UNIFEM SP (2008–2011), Outcomes 5 and 7.

Overall, UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations seek to build capacity and awareness and generate positive change for gender equality within the organizations themselves, as well as among their Member States.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Use

In order to assess the effectiveness and relevance of UNIFEM's work in key areas, UNIFEM undertakes a number of corporate evaluations every year. Corporate evaluations are independent assessments that analyse UNIFEM's performance and contributions to critical areas of gender equality and women's human rights. They are considered strategic because they provide knowledge on policy issues, programmatic approaches, or cooperation modalities.

The evaluation of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations is a corporate evaluation and is undertaken as part of the 2008 evaluation plan of the Evaluation Unit. The justification for its selection as a corporate evaluation is based on a request made by UNIFEM's Consultative Committee during its 2007 Annual Session (reiterated during its 2008 Annual Session) for an assessment of UNIFEM's cooperation with regional organizations; the relevance of partnerships with regional organizations to the achievement of Outcomes 5 and 7 of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008–2011); the overall strategic importance of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations in achieving results on gender equality and women's empowerment at the international, regional and national levels; and its potential for generating knowledge on the most effective and sustainable ways UNIFEM can partner with regional organizations to achieve results.

Given the recent growth in partnerships with regional organizations, there is an understanding that UNIFEM needs to more closely analyse the effectiveness, sustainability and relevance of these partnerships. This will provide evidence of the benefits of engaging in such partnerships and of the effectiveness of strategies used by UNIFEM to catalyse progress on gender equality and women's empowerment within and by regional institutions. In addition,

as this is a more recent area of engagement for UNIFEM, an in-depth analysis of this work will also provide important learning on how partnerships with regional organizations can be improved, enhanced, strengthened and systematized to optimize gender equality results. It will also provide useful information on how to track changes in capacity and influence within regional organizations.

The findings, recommendations, good practices and lessons learned emerging from the evaluation will be presented to the Consultative Committee during its 2009 Annual Session and will be used by UNIFEM Geo Sections and SROs to develop more effective partnerships with regional organizations in the implementation of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008–2011) and Regional and Subregional Strategies.

The main objectives of the evaluation are:

- To better understand the context and parameters of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations.
- To assess the extent to which UNIFEM's strategies for partnering with regional organizations are actually contributing to institutional change and progress towards results on gender equality.
- To provide useful information for developing a more systematic and effective approach for UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations that makes the best use of its comparative advantage and role as a catalyst for gender equality and women's empowerment within each region.
- To identify opportunities, challenges, good practices and lessons learned that will be useful for strengthening, enhancing and expanding UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organization.

3. Scope of Work with Regional Organizations

UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations have been steadily increasing since 2005. In Africa, partnerships with regional organizations grew from 4 in 2004 to 10 in 2006, and in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), they grew from 2 in 2005 to 8 in 2006. Similar growth

was found in Asia, Pacific, and Arab States regions, with partnerships increasing from 1 in 2005 to 7 in 2006. In Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), partnerships increased to 2 in 2006. As described above, this growth is due to the recognition of the key role that regional organizations can play in advancing gender equality at the international, regional and national levels.

UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations involve diverse and varied strategies that are specific to the contextual issues within each region. UNIFEM has developed long-term partnerships with some regional organizations of political significance to support institutional change by providing technical and financial assistance, capacity development and policy advocacy. It often works directly with the gender units of regional organizations to enhance their capacity and influence to mainstream gender and advocate for action on gender equality issues both within the organization, as well as among Member States. In addition, UNIFEM also sometimes receives support for its work from regional organizations.

In Africa, UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations have been broad, substantive and driven by an understanding of their increasing relevance in shaping development in the region, as well as the transformative potential of regional collaboration and integration to contribute to poverty reduction. UNIFEM has provided technical guidance, support and leadership in gender mainstreaming and on a diverse range of issues, including agriculture, trade, women's leadership and gender-responsive budgets. UNIFEM has also contributed to peace processes and peace and security programming, particularly in the Great Lakes region. It has also been involved in advocacy, joint programming and the development of normative standards and policy on gender equality and in conducting gender audits. Key regional organizations that UNIFEM partners with include the **African Union (AU)**, the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**, the **African Development Bank (ADB)**, the **UN Economic Commission on Africa (UNECA)**, the **Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)**, the **Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**, the

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the **East African Community (ECA)**, the **International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGL)**, the **Economic Community of West African States (ECO WAS)** and the **Western African Economic and Monetary Unit (WAEMU)**. Formal partnerships exist with the AU and IGAD.

In LAC, UNIFEM has partnered with regional organizations to increase the political participation of women within these bodies and to advocate for women's economic empowerment and other gender equality and women's rights issues. UNIFEM has supported the formation of coalitions of the NWMs from the Member States of regional organization with the purpose of enhancing their capacity and organizing them to put forward a common agenda to advance gender issues in debates on trade, economic policy and data and VAW. In addition, UNIFEM has provided technical advice and financial support for research and the development of knowledge products on issues of women's economic empowerment, VAW, MDG analysis and reporting and gender and statistics, including the development of a gender-sensitive indicators database. It has also conducted gender audits and supported the creation of a regional Special Rapporteur on VAW. Key partnerships are with the following regional organizations: the **UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**, the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, **Mercado Común del Sur/Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)**, the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**, the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** and the **Association of Eastern Caribbean States**. A formal partnership exists with UNECLAC.

In the Asia, Pacific and Arab States region, UNIFEM's credibility and the strength of its work on anti-trafficking and ending violence against women has led to the formation of strategic partnerships with regional organizations to mainstream gender within regional conventions and declarations and the implementation for those that address gender equality issues. It also supports initiatives to strengthen women's human rights and gender equality, such as the development of a Gender Database initiative to collate regional data on gender-sensitive issues. Key partners in the region include the **Asian Development**

Bank (ADB), the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Women's Unit of the League of Arab States. A formal partnership exists with both SAARC and ASEAN. In the CEE/CIS region, UNIFEM has had limited engagements with regional organizations, but has partnered with the **UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)** to produce studies on women's employment and economic status.

The partnerships described briefly above are likely to expand during the period of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008–2011); therefore, an assessment of this work will provide useful learning for improving partnerships with regional organizations.

4. Scope of Evaluation: Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will examine UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations, defined as intergovernmental organizations that operate at both the regional and subregional levels, including regional development banks, UN economic commissions, etc. Regional organizations are not only entities in themselves, but are also composed of Member States, and the evaluation will also analyse this dimension of the partnerships. The definition of regional organization does not include regional and national nongovernmental networks and organizations, which are also key UNIFEM partners, although information on how these partnerships have been leveraged to advocate for change within regional organizations and/or in the implementation of regional policies and strategies will also be part of the analysis.

The evaluation will cover UNIFEM's work during the time-frame of the MYFF period (2004–2007). **Stage 1** of the evaluation will involve a desk study that will analyse UNIFEM's partnerships in all regions: Africa, Asia, CEE/CIS and LAC. It will also help to define the focus and scope of Stage 2 of the evaluation. **Stage 2** will involve a more in-depth study in Africa and LAC, where there are both multiple and long-standing partnerships. This will

involve field visits to selected regional organizations based on agreed criteria. The evaluation is to take place over a 5-month period from September 2008 to January 2009.

The evaluation will address the following questions:

Effectiveness - progress towards and the achievement of results

- What strategies has UNIFEM adopted in its partnerships with regional organizations and how effective have these strategies been in achieving progress towards results on gender equality and women's empowerment at the global, regional and national levels?

- Have UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations contributed to strengthening regional cooperation in addressing issues of gender equality and women's empowerment?

- What have been some of the unintended positive and negative results of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations?

- What are some of the good practices and lessons learned from UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations?

- What are some of the indicators for tracking institutional change within regional organizations that demonstrate capacity development, shifts in awareness and attitudes, or policy reorientation that will increase the achievement of gender equality results?

Sustainability - partnership collaboration and capacities installed

- Are UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations leading to sustainable institutional changes and results?

- What are some of the main challenges and key opportunities for working more effectively and systematically with regional organizations?

Relevance - alignment and response to context

- Are UNIFEM's strategies for partnering with regional organizations relevant to the regional political contexts?
- Has UNIFEM made the best use of its comparative advantage and role as catalyst in its partnerships with regional organizations, particularly with regard to progress towards the implementation of national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment?

It is expected that the Evaluation Team will develop an evaluation matrix that will address the above questions, the criteria for evaluating them, the sources that will be used and the indicators and means of verification as a tool for the evaluation.

Evaluation Approach

The Evaluation Team will outline a detailed approach to the evaluation that is results-based and rights-based on a gender equality perspective. The approach should also include the participation of key stakeholders at relevant points during the process. The evaluation will be conducted in two stages:

Stage 1: Comprehensive Desk Study

A comprehensive desk study will be conducted of UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations in all geographic regions of UNIFEM's work. The study will provide an analysis of regional contexts, the varying roles that regional organizations play within these contexts and the opportunities available for influencing regional agendas to achieve progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. It will also examine the role of other actors at the regional level. The desk study will include the review of key documents and interviews with key UNIFEM staff.

Stage 2: In-Depth Study

Following the desk study, a further in-depth study will be conducted involving field visits to the Africa and LAC regions that will utilize appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data on UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations. This will include,

but should not be limited to, in-depth interviews of key informants: staff within UNIFEM, the regional organizations that are key UNIFEM partners and beneficiaries at the regional and national levels.

5. Management of the Evaluation

The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit will manage the evaluation. During the evaluation process, it will consult with the Geo Sections, Directorate, the Subregional Offices (SROs) and key external partners. Coordination in the field, including logistical support, will be the responsibility of the relevant Geo Sections and SROs.

This evaluation will use participatory methods as appropriate and will have a strong learning component. An identification of key stakeholders will be conducted in order to analyse their involvement in the evaluation process during Stage 1. The management of the evaluation will ensure consultation with key stakeholders.

Once the evaluation study is completed, the final stage in the evaluation process involves a dissemination strategy for sharing lessons learned and a management response to the evaluation results. These activities are to be managed by the Evaluation Unit in close consultation with the relevant Geo Sections and SROs.

The Evaluation Unit may participate in the field visits in collaboration with the Evaluation Team.

6. Time-frame and Products

The evaluation will be conducted between September 2008 and January 2009.

Product	Time-frame
Inception report of the Evaluation Team, which includes the evaluation methodology and the timing of activities and deliverables.	26 September 2008
Progress Report of field work to UNIFEM Evaluation Unit and key internal and external stakeholders	20 October 2008
PowerPoint presentation on preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations	19 November 2008
Draft full report and five-page executive summary highlighting key evaluation findings and conclusions, lessons and recommendations. The format of the evaluation report will be agreed with the evaluators.	5 December 2008
Final evaluation report and five-page executive summary	19 December 2008
Presentation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned	5 January 2009

7. Composition, Skills and Experience of the Evaluation Team

An Evaluation Team of four members will conduct the evaluation: a team leader who is a senior evaluator and regional expert (Africa or LAC), a senior/mid evaluator and regional expert (Africa or LAC), a junior evaluator who has experience in Africa and LAC and a Research Assistant. The Evaluation Team should be gender-balanced, be culturally diverse and seek to include national/regional evaluators.

1) Evaluation Team Leader – International Consultant Master's Degree in a relevant discipline; PhD preferred.

At least 10 years of working experience in evaluation and at least 5 years in evaluation of development programmes. Experience with participatory approaches, organizational assessments partnership strategies and capacity development preferred.

Five years of experience and background on gender equality and women's empowerment and an understanding of human rights-based approaches.

- Regional expertise in either Africa or LAC.
- Experience with regional organizations, partnership strategies and UNIFEM or the UN system.
- Proven experience as an Evaluation Team leader with ability to lead and work with other evaluation experts.

- Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.

- Ability to produce well written reports demonstrating analytical ability and communication skill.

- Fluent in English and French or Spanish.

2) Senior Evaluator/Regional Expert Master's Degree in a relevant discipline, PhD an asset.

- At least 8 years of working experience in evaluation and at least 4 years in evaluation of development programmes.

- Expertise in participatory approaches, organizational assessments, partnership strategies and capacity development preferred.

- Experience and background on gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Strong regional expertise in either Africa or LAC and experience in working with regional organizations.

- Familiarity with the work of UNIFEM and the UN system.

- Ability to produce well-written reports demonstrating analytical ability and communication skills.

- Fluent in English and French or Spanish.

3) Junior Evaluator

Master's degree in relevant discipline.

At least 3 years of experience in evaluation. Experience in participatory approaches, organizational assessment, partnership strategies, or capacity development an asset.

- Experience and background in gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Experience and expertise in either Africa or LAC regions or knowledge of relevant regional organizations.

- Familiarity with the work of UNIFEM and the UN system.

- Ability to produce well-written reports demonstrating analytical ability and communication skills.

- Fluent in English and French or Spanish.

4) Research Assistant

Master's degree preferred.

At least 3 years work experience in evaluation and/or gender equality and women's empowerment. Knowledge of participatory approaches, organizational assessment, partnership strategies, or capacity development an asset.

- Familiarity with regional organizations in Africa, LAC and with UNIFEM and the UN system.

- Strong research and drafting skills.

- Fluent in English. Knowledge of French and/or Spanish an asset.

8. Ethical Code of Conduct for the Evaluation

It is expected that the evaluators will respect the ethical code of conduct of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). These are:

Independence: Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgment is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

Impartiality: Evaluators shall operate in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, program, project, or organisational unit being evaluated.

Conflict of Interest: Evaluators are required to disclose in writing any past experience, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest that may arise.

Honesty and Integrity: Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their own behaviour, negotiating honestly the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations and scope of results likely to be obtained, while accurately presenting their procedures, data and findings and highlighting any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.

Competence: Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.

Accountability: Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed while operating in a cost-effective manner.

Obligations to Participants: Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented.

Confidentiality: Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.

Avoidance of Harm: Evaluators shall act to minimize risks and harms to and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.

Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability: Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgments, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale so that stakeholders are in a position to assess them.

Transparency: Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.

Omissions and Wrong-Doing: Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority.

Annexes:

- Criteria for Selection of Evaluators/Evaluation Team
- UN Evaluation Norms and Standards

(http://www.unevaluation.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_soucerces_id=4)

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF EVALUATORS/EVALUATION TEAM for the “Evaluation of UNIFEM’s Partnerships with Regional Organizations”

The selection of the Evaluation Team will be based on the fulfillment of the specifications established in the ToR. The submitted proposals will be assessed on three main categories: the expertise and competencies of the evaluators as reflected in their CVs and the gender balance and diversity of team, the technical proposal for the specific evaluation and the financial proposal. The categories will be assigned different weighting, which will total to 100 per cent.

I. Team Composition (40 per cent):

The team leader's and all team members' experience and qualifications meet the criteria indicated in the ToR. The team is gender balanced and cross-culturally diverse.

II. Technical proposal (40 per cent):

1. **Evaluation matrix:** The matrix clearly addresses the ToR, relating evaluation questions with evaluation criteria, with indicators and with means of verification.

2. **Evaluation approach and methodology:** The proposal presents a specific approach and a variety of techniques for gathering and analysing qualitative and quantitative data that are feasible and applicable in the time-frame and context of the evaluation and incorporates human rights and gender equality perspectives.

3. **Work plan:** The time-frame and resources indicated in the work plan are realistic and useful for the needs of the evaluation.

4. **Motivation and ethics:** The evaluators reflect clear professional commitment with the subject of the assignment and follow UNEG ethical code of conduct.

III. Financial proposal (20 per cent):

The budget proposed is sufficient for applying the data gathering techniques and for obtaining reliable data for the evaluation in the time-frame indicated.

The proposal should include:

1. Technical Proposal

2. Evaluation Matrix

3. Work plan

4. Financial Proposal

5. CVs of the team leader and proposed team members

6. Sample of Evaluation Report

Please indicate if you will be submitting a proposal so that we can update you with information regarding the evaluation. Proposals and any questions should be submitted electronically to Shravanti Reddy at shravanti.reddy@unifem.org, copy to belen.sanz@unifem.org and rhonda.de-freitas@unifem.org.



Appendix II

Evaluation Framework

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Global Context	Paris Declaration	<p>To what extent is or could working with ROs be an innovative way of addressing Paris declaration principles of building country ownership?</p> <p>To what extent does the Paris Declaration support or hinder ROs working in the area of gender equality and women’s human rights?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs? And for other UNIFEM’s regional Partners (e.g., Civil society groups, NWM, etc.)?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	Global Economic crisis	<p>To what extent will the crisis affect the work of UN organizations and ROs in the short, medium and long term?</p> <p>To what extent will this contribute to enhanced collaboration or competition among these organizations?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	UN Context	<p>To what extent—if at all—is the process of UN reform likely to affect the role and relative importance of ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews or FGDs with members of UNCT and Gender Task Teams, other UN agencies</p>
	Gender equality and women’s human rights	<p>What have been the key changes and/or developments in the global context in regard to gender equality and women’s human rights?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>	<p>Paris Declaration</p> <p>The Millennium Declaration</p> <p>Key international conventions and agendas (such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action)</p> <p>Regional Conventions</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Global Context	Partnership development	<p>What are the key trends, best practices and lessons related to partnerships among developmental organizations? For the support of gender equality and women's human rights?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews or FGDs with other development actors</p>
	Regional Cooperation and Integration	<p>To what extent are trends towards regional integration and cooperation increasing or decreasing around the world? Do these trends vary across various regions of the world?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM stakeholders</p>
Regional Organizations' Context (For in depth studies only)	Economic and political stability	<p>To what extent do the political, economic and cultural environments within which the RO operates support or hinder gender equality and women's human rights? Partnerships with other development organizations?</p> <p>What implications does this have for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with RPs?</p>	Political, social, economic and cultural contexts	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	Gender equality and women's human rights	<p>To what extent are ROs committed politically and operationally to the promotion and support of gender equality and women's human rights? How does this vary across regions?</p> <p>To what extent are gender equality issues and women's human rights given increased or decreased importance in ROs? To what extent does this vary across regions?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	Influence of ROs at the national level	<p>To what extent are ROs having an influence on global, regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities? How does this vary across various regions of the world?</p> <p>How do ROs influence the adoption and implementation of international conventions and agendas, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of Action, at the national level?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Regional Organizations' Context (For in depth studies only)	RO Capacities and Performance	<p>To what extent do ROs have the supportive external and internal context, the financial and human resources capacities, the influence and clout, the authority, the track record and the strategies in place to carry out their mandates? To address gender equality and women's human rights?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM in developing its relationships with ROs?</p>		<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	UNIFEM Context	Rationale for Partnerships with ROs	<p>To what extent does UNIFEM have a clear and articulated rationale for engaging with regional organizations?</p> <p>What are the explicit and implicit reasons for UNIFEM to partner with ROs?</p>	<p>Documented statement of purpose</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions of rationale for engagement</p>
UNIFEM Resources		<p>To what extent does UNIFEM's resource base support or impede working relationships with ROs?</p>	<p>Financial, human and technological resources</p>	<p>Document reviews</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
UNIFEM Organizational Structures		<p>To what extent do UNIFEM's management and decision-making support or impede working relationships with ROs?</p> <p>To what extent to UNIFEM's policy-making and governance structures support or impede its work with ROs?</p>		<p>Document reviews</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
UNIFEM Culture and Incentives		<p>To what extent have UNIFEM's culture and incentives support or impede working relationships with ROs?</p>	<p>Types of incentives</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions of culture</p>	<p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Survey results</p>

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Results	Immediate Results for ROs	<p>To what extent have UNIFEM partnerships with ROs resulted in:</p> <p>Changed policies and practices regarding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO</p> <p>New knowledge Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO</p> <p>Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO</p> <p>Other results</p>		<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Site visits</p>
	Outcomes on ROs	<p>To what extent have UNIFEM partnerships with ROs resulted in:</p> <p>Enhanced performance of the RO in regard to Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights</p>	<p>RO Effectiveness</p> <p>RO Efficiency</p> <p>RO Relevance</p> <p>RO Sustainability</p>	<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Site visits</p>
	Outcomes on Member States	<p>To what extent have UNIFEM partnerships with ROs resulted in:</p> <p>Changed policies and practices regarding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO's Member States</p> <p>New knowledge regarding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO's Member States</p> <p>Enhanced capacities regarding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights within the RO's Member States</p> <p>Other results</p>		<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Site Visits</p>
	Outcomes for UNIFEM	<p>To what extent have UNIFEM partnerships with ROs had an effect on UNIFEM's policies and practices, knowledge and capacities performance regarding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights?</p> <p>Other types of results?</p> <p>Is there evidence that these partnerships have contributed to UNIFEM strategic outcomes related to gender equality and women's empowerment at the global, regional and national levels?</p>	<p>List of identified effects:</p> <p>Extent to which partnerships contributed towards the following UNIFEM outcomes at global, regional and national levels:</p> <p>Proportion of women as own account and contributing family workers in total employment</p>	<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Results			<p>Wage gap: ratio of female/male income</p> <p>Proportion of land titles in women's names</p> <p>Prevalence of violence against women</p> <p>Prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women</p>	<p>Survey results</p> <p>Field visits</p>
		To what extent has UNIFEM acted like a catalyst in its partnerships with ROs, particularly with regard to progress towards the implementation of national commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment?	<p>Stakeholder perceptions on relevance</p> <p>Results observed from partnerships with regional organizations as compared against results observed from other UNIFEM strategies with similar objectives</p>	<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Field visits</p>
Developmental Performance	Sustainability	Are UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations leading to sustainable institutional changes and results at the regional level?	<p>Sufficiency of institutional capacities created to maintain changes</p> <p>Changes in motivation, other factors that drive further changes</p> <p>Perceptions of other stakeholders on UNIFEM partnerships with regional organizations</p>	<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Field visits</p> <p>Survey results</p>
	Relevance	Are UNIFEM's strategies for partnering with regional organizations relevant to the regional contexts?	<p>Consistency with needs and priorities of regional partner and regions</p> <p>Consistency and alignment of UNIFEM and other (UN and other) partners in the region</p>	<p>Document review of UNIFEM performance reports, partner reports</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Field visits</p> <p>Survey results</p>

Foci	Sub Foci	Key Questions	Review Areas (where relevant)	Means of Verification
Management of Regional Organization Partnerships	Identification and Selection	<p>What are the systems, processes, procedures and criteria used by UNIFEM to identify, screen and select its partners (ROs) for program delivery?</p> <p>What are the strengths and areas for improvement in these systems?</p>	<p>Existence of a strategy/ approach to identifying and developing partnerships</p> <p>Existence of utilized tools and processes</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p> <p>Survey results</p>
	Implementation	<p>What are the systems, processes and procedures used by UNIFEM to negotiate and document (formalize) relationships with its partners (ROs) for program delivery?</p> <p>What are the strengths and areas for improvement in these systems?</p>	<p>Existence of utilized tools and process</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>What are the systems, processes, procedures and criteria used by UNIFEM to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its partnerships with ROs?</p> <p>What are the strengths and areas for improvement in these systems?</p>	<p>Existence of utilized tools and processes</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
	Costs and Benefits	<p>What types of costs (in kind, other) are incurred by UNIFEM and ROs in nurturing and maintaining their partnerships?</p> <p>How do the perceived benefits compare to identified costs?</p>	<p>Lists of identified costs and benefits</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with UNIFEM staff</p> <p>Interviews and FGDs with ROs and other external stakeholders</p>
Future	Lessons Learned and Good Practices	<p>What are the key best practices and lessons learned from UNIFEM's partnerships with regional organizations?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM?</p>	<p>Analysis of above</p>	<p>As above</p>
		<p>What are some of the main challenges and key opportunities for working more effectively and systematically with ROs?</p> <p>What are the implications for UNIFEM?</p>	<p>Analysis of above</p>	<p>As above</p>
	Future	<p>What changes are needed to UNIFEM's policies, practices and guidelines if any to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in working with ROS?</p>	<p>Analysis of above</p>	<p>As above</p>



Appendix III

List of Stakeholders Consulted

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
UNIFEM Staff - New York Headquarters		
Africa Section	4	Phone interviews Face-to-face individual interviews Methodology workshop
Asia, Pacific and Arab States Section	2	Phone interview Face-to-face individual interview Methodology workshop
CEE/CIS Section	2	Phone interview
Cross-regional Programme	1	Phone interview Methodology workshop
Directorate	4	Phone interviews Face-to-face individual interview Methodology workshop
Evaluation Unit	4	Debrief sessions Methodology workshop
LAC Section	5	Phone interviews Methodology workshop
OBDT	2	Methodology workshop
Thematic Section – Economic Security and Rights	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Thematic Section – HIV/AIDS	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Thematic Section – Economic issues	1	Face-to-face individual interview Methodology workshop
UNIFEM Field Staff		
Africa		
Burundi Country Office	5	Phone interviews Face-to-face individual interview Face-to-face group interview Debriefs
East and Horn of Africa Subregional Office	1	Phone and face-to-face individual interviews

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
Liaison Office with the AU	1	Phone and face-to-face individual interviews
Nigeria Country Office	4	Face-to-face group interviews and debrief
Southern Africa Subregional Office	3	Phone interviews Face-to-face individual interviews
West Africa Subregional Office	3	Phone interview Face-to-face group interview Debrief Teleconference
APAS		
Arab States Subregional Office	3	Phone interviews
East and South-East Asia Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Nepal Country Office	1	Phone interview
North Africa Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Pacific Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
South Asia Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States		
CEE Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
CIS Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Latin America and the Caribbean		
Andean Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Southern Cone Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
Caribbean Subregional Office	1	Teleconference Phone interview Face-to-face individual interviews Debrief
Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic Subregional Office	1	Phone interview
AGEM - Costa Rica	1	Phone interview
AGEM - Guatemala	1	Phone interview
AGEM - Nicaragua	1	Phone interview

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
AGEM - Panama	1	Phone interview
UNIFEM CC		
Permanent Mission of Chile to the UN	1	Group meeting
Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN	1	Group meeting
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations	1	Group meeting
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations	1	Group meeting
CARICOM Stakeholders – Guyana		
CARICOM, Culture and Community Development, Gender Affairs	1	Face-to-face group interview Debrief
CARICOM, Foreign Policy and Community Relations	1	Face-to-face individual interview
CARICOM, Human Development	1	Face-to-face group interview
CARICOM, Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP)	1	Face-to-face individual interview
CARICOM, Statistics Programme	1	Face-to-face individual interview
CARICOM, Strategic Planning and Evaluation	1	Face-to-face individual interview
CARICOM, Women's Desk	1	Face-to-face individual interview
CIDA	1	Face-to-face individual interview
DevNet	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Government of Guyana, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Government of Guyana, Ministry of Labour, Human and Social Services	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Government of Guyana, Women's Affairs Bureau	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Guyana Assoc. of Women Lawyers	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Help & Shelter	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Red Thread	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNICEF	2	Face-to-face group interview
CARICOM Stakeholders – Barbados		
CDB, Social Sector Division	1	Face-to-face individual interview

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
CIDA	1	Introductory meeting
National Organization for Women (NOW)	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNDP	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNFPA	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNICEF	2	Face-to-face group interview
ECOWAS Stakeholders – Nigeria		
Action Aid Nigeria	2	Focus Group with Civil Society Organizations
Centre for Democracy and Development	1	Focus Group with Civil Society Organizations
ECOWAS Commission - Human Development and Gender	5	Group meeting Face-to-face group interview Face-to-face individual interviews
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNFPA - HIV Prevention	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNHCR	2	Face-to-face group interview
UNICEF	1	Face-to-face individual interview
ECOWAS Stakeholders – Senegal		
Association of Senegalese Women Lawyers	3	Face-to-face group interview
Coopearazione Italiana	1	Face-to-face individual interview
ECOWAS Gender Development Center	2	Face-to-face group interview
IED Afrique	2	Face-to-face group interview
Le HUB	1	Face-to-face individual interview
ICGLR Stakeholders – Burundi		
Association des Femmes Économistes du Burundi	1	Focus Group with CSOs
BINUB	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Centre de Promotion des Droits de la Personne Humaine et de Prévention du Génocide	1	Focus Group with CSOs
Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile	1	Focus Group with CSOs
Goma Conference participants	3	Focus Group
GTZ	1	Face-to-face individual interviews

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
ICGLR National Coordination Mechanism Burundi (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	1	Face-to-face individual interview
ICGLR Secretariat	8	Face-to-face group interview Face-to-face individual interviews Group Debrief
Ministry of Gender and Human Rights	1	Face-to-face individual interviews
Réseau Femmes et Paix	1	Focus Group with CSOs
Synergie des Partenaires pour la Promotion des Droits de la Femme	1	Focus Group with CSOs
UNHCR	1	Face-to-face individual interviews
Women Peace Centre	1	Focus Group with CSOs
ICGLR Stakeholders – Kenya		
ICGLR National Coordination Mechanism Kenya (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	1	Face-to-face individual interview
SIDA	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNFPA East and Southern Africa / HRB Nairobi	1	Phone interview
UNICEF	2	Face-to-face group interview
UN-OCHA Regional Office-Central and East Africa	1	Face-to-face individual interview
SADC Stakeholders – South Africa and Botswana		
CIDA PSU Zimbabwe	1	Phone interview
Ministry of Home Affairs, Women Affairs Department	2	Face-to-face individual interviews
NGO Gender Links	1	Face-to-face individual interview
SADC – Gender Unit	2	Face-to-face individual interviews
SADC Parliamentary Forum	1	Phone interview
WILDAF	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Women and the Law in Southern Africa Research Trust	1	Face-to-face individual interview
African Union Stakeholders – Ethiopia		
ACGSD	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Action Aid International Africa	1	Phone interview
AU Agriculture and Rural Development Department	1	Face-to-face individual interview

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
AU Social Affairs Department	1	Face-to-face individual interview
AU WGDD	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Austrian Development Cooperation	1	Face-to-face individual interview
European Union AU Cooperation Office	1	Face-to-face individual interview
ILO	1	Face-to-face individual interview
National Network of Ethiopian Women's Organizations	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Norwegian Embassy	1	Face-to-face individual interview
Swedish Embassy Addis Ababa	2	Face-to-face individual interviews
UNFPA AU Liaison office	1	Face-to-face individual interview
UNICEF AU liaison office	1	Face-to-face individual interview
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)	1	Face-to-face individual interview
SICA/COMMCA Stakeholders (Phone interviews)		
Agencia Española de Cooperación (AECID)	1	Phone interview
COMMCA	1	Phone interview
Dirección Nacional de la Mujer Ministerio de Desarrollo Social Panama	1	Phone interview
Foro de Mujeres para la Integración Centroamericana (FMICA) – NGO	1	Phone interview
Instituto Nacional de la Mujer - Honduras	1	Phone interview
Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres – Costa Rica	1	Phone interview
Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer – Salvador	1	Written response
PAHO – Guatemala (also former Minister)	1	Phone interview
Secretaría de la Integración Social Centroamericana (SISCA)	1	Phone interview
Secretaria Presidencial de la Mujer – Guatemala	1	Phone interview
Secretaria Técnica – COMMCA	1	Phone interview
UNFPA Salvador	1	Phone interview
Other ROs' Representatives		
CEPAL – Gender Affairs Division	1	Phone interview

Section / Organization	Number of people consulted	Methods of consultation
SAARC – SGIB	1	Phone interview
SAARC – Social Affairs	1	Phone interview
UNECE	1	Phone interview
Members of the Evaluation External Reference Group		
AU – Women, Gender and Development Directorate	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
CARICOM – Culture and Community Development and Gender Affairs	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
ECOWAS Commission – Gender, Youth and Children’s Affairs Division	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
ICGLR Secretariat	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
IDB – Programme for the Support of Women’s Leadership and Representation	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
SAARC – Social Affairs	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
SADC – Gender UNIT	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
SICA – Technical Secretariat of COMMCA	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
UNECA – African Centre for Gender and Social Development	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference
UNECE	1	Consultation through UNIFEM per e-mail and teleconference



Appendix IV

List of Reviewed Documents

Context/Background

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Asian Development Bank

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ASEAN

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Appendix V

Summary of RO Partnership Agreements

Regional organization	Type of Agreement	Date	Duration	Amount (if applicable)	Comments
Formalized agreements I: Project Specific. Donor-Grant Recipient Types of Relationships					
African Union	Cooperation Agreement	2005	3 years	\$300,000	Project Agreement (Donor-Grant Recipient Relationship). Consultancy to develop an AU 5-year gender mainstreaming plan (was in fact used for a variety of tasks, including gender audit).
		2009	tbd	tbd	New MOU currently under negotiation. May broaden partnership beyond the AU gender directorate to include other AU entities.
CARICOM	Individual agreements on specific projects	Various agreements	Varying (short term)	Varying (small amounts usually less than \$20,000)	This partnership has existed for almost 30 years without a formal MOU. Project agreements (Donor-Grant Recipient Relationship) are signed on specific activities (e.g., "Institutional Strengthening: Improving Gender Mainstreaming in the CARICOM Secretariat"; "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social, Gender and Environmental Statistics: Preparation of User Manuals").
COMMCA	UNIFEM and COMMCA do not have a signed agreement. However, the AGEM programme has cooperation agreements at the national level with COMMCA members.				COMMCA also participated in strategic planning for the regional component. The Midterm External Evaluation of Phase II of the Regional Program, released in February 2009, recommends that AGEM "establish agreements with the COMMCA so that the Program's strategic statements can be launched through the Council to the Central American Council of Ministers of Economy" (pp.116–117).
ECOWAS	Individual agreements on specific programs or activities.	Starting from 2002	Varying (short term)	Varying (some examples include \$0,000 in 2004 for the consultation on the gender policy, the salary of the gender expert, approximately \$30,000 was provided to the Gender Centre).	Informal overall engagement to collaborate. A letter of Agreement was signed in 2002 for the provision of the gender expert services. This was referred to by some stakeholders as the original MOU. But nobody, both in UNICEF and ECOWAS, was able to locate this document. In the following years, several short-term project agreements have been signed.

Regional organization	Type of Agreement	Date	Duration	Amount (if applicable)	Comments
Formalized agreements I: Project Specific. Donor-Grant Recipient Types of Relationships					
ICGLR	Memorandums of Understanding	June 2007	1 year	\$140,000	<p>Despite their name, these documents do not capture the overarching rationale of the relationship between ICGLR and UNIFEM nor do they reflect overall objectives and practices of this relationship. Analysis indicates that they are more akin to project agreements than partnership agreements.</p> <p>MOU 2007: This document provides for the recruitment of a gender advisor to be placed in the ICGLR Secretariat structure and describes the activities to be undertaken under this agreement.</p> <p>MOU 2008: same model as first MOU. Four main areas of activity are identified:</p> <p>Strengthening women's networks in the region (follow up on the establishment of the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum, one of the projects under the Democracy Pillar)</p> <p>Supporting the establishment of the Gender Observatory within the Lusaka based Governance Centre (part of a project under the Democracy pillar)</p> <p>Supporting the implementation of the Protocol on Sexual Violence in Member States</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming, capacity-building and advisory services (through the continuation of the contract of the Gender Advisor for the year)</p>
		December 2008	1 year	\$481,700	
IGAD	Memorandum of Understanding	(1999) then extended until 2005 (to be confirmed by UNIFEM)	1st phase: 14 months 2nd phase: unknown	1st phase: \$150,000 2nd phase: unknown	The Memorandum of Understanding provides for UNIFEM to support IGAD in the establishment of a Women's Desk within the Secretariat (called the project in the MOU). UNIFEM provided financial and technical assistance to IGAD for this purpose.
SADC	Individual project type agreements.	unknown	unknown	unknown	There is no overall MOU between the two organizations. UNIFEM has informal agreement with the SADC gender unit and the SADC parliamentary forum. There are contracts/agreements for individual projects/activities, however, that are supported by UNIFEM.

Regional organization	Type of Agreement	Date	Duration	Amount (if applicable)	Comments
Formalized agreements I: Project Specific. Donor-Grant Recipient Types of Relationships					
UNECLAC	Interagency Agreement concerning the preparation of a regional Observatory on Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean	2008	2 years	\$58,500	The contribution of UNIFEM includes both a cash and in-kind component. Cash for i) publications and training for key personnel of National Institutes of Statistics, especially in countries where UNIFEM does not have a strong presence; ii) printing of 1,000 copies of "No More! The Right of Women to live Life free of violence"; and iii) administrative costs (\$4,388).
	Publication of the Study: "Objetivos de desarrollo del Milenio. Una mirada desde la igualdad entre los sexos y la autonomía de la mujer"	September 2007	8 months	\$5,000	Collaboration in the publication of the inter-agency regional reports concerning the follow-up of the Millennium Development coordinated by ECLAC and specifically the one on the follow-up of Goal3 (MDG3).
Formalized Agreements II : More General Partnership Agreements					
ASEAN	Framework for Cooperation	2006	3 years (plus another 3 years unless one of partner indicates wish to terminate)	Not specified	Partnership Agreement. Objective: to <u>jointly</u> develop and carry out practical measures to implement the above mentioned ASEAN and UN instruments in order to eliminate violence and end discrimination against women in the ASEAN region. Areas of cooperation: a) Consultation, exchange and dissemination of information b) technical assistance (UNIFEM to ASEAN) c) Research, advocacy and awareness raising Areas of cooperation include those where (a) UNIFEM and ASEAN are equal partners and (b) UNIFEM supports ASEAN.
SAARC	Memorandum of Understanding	2007 and 2001	3 years (plus another 3 years unless one of partners indicates wish to terminate)	NA	Partnership Agreement. Objectives: Mutually cooperate to strive towards GE based upon the empowerment approach in terms of BPFA, Beijing plus 5, MDGs and SAARC development goals. Promote mutual learning and cross-fertilization among developing countries for effectively tackling the challenges relating to gender discrimination, women's human rights and women's participation.

Regional organization	Type of Agreement	Date	Duration	Amount (if applicable)	Comments
Formalized Agreements II : More General Partnership Agreements					
UNECA	Memorandum of Understanding	2006	2 years	NA	Partnership Agreement Describes areas in which ECA and UNIFEM will collaborate based on their respective advantages.
UNECE	Memorandum of Understanding	2001	Indefinite duration	NA	Partnership Agreement. Not limited to specific project, but outlines a number of areas on which UNECE and UNIFEM intend to cooperate. Describes what each partner can contribute to the agreement and what both partners will do. The areas of collaboration and coordination include the following: Developing new initiatives aimed at introducing a gender perspective into macroeconomic analyses, policies and practices; Improving gender responsiveness of legal and regulatory frameworks in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States building upon the United Nations norms and standards and using the Acquis Communautaire as one entry point; Providing support for the diversification of job and employment options for women in transition countries such as entrepreneurship, home-based work and other atypical forms of work

Regional organization	Type of Agreement	Date	Duration	Amount (if applicable)	Comments
Partnerships without formalized agreement(s) or on which related information was not available from UNIFEM					
AfDB	Unknown				
Asian Development Bank	Not formalized				
CDB	No formal agreement – sporadic activities (technical assistance)				
CIM/OAS	No formal agreement – sporadic activities				
COMESA	Unknown				
EAC	No formal agreement –sporadic activities				
EurEsAC	No formal agreement –sporadic activities. However an MOU is being negotiated.				
IDB	Unknown				
League of Arab States	Not formalized				
MERCOSUR	No formal agreement – specific initiatives, UNIFEM has a REM observer status.				
NEPAD	Unknown				
OECS	Unknown				
Pacific Islands Forum	Not formalized. Sporadic activities				
Secretariat of the Pacific Community	Not formalized. Sporadic activities				
SICA/ COMMCA	Informal partnerships – AGEM, COMMCA Secretariat strengthening				
WAEMU (UEMOA)	Arrangements for ad hoc specific activities				



Appendix VI

Suggested Questions for Selecting / Reviewing Partnerships

Generic questions during partner selection	
<p>What role does the potential partner organization currently play in view of (<i>insert</i> UNIFEM's respective corporate, regional, or subregional objectives or priorities)?</p> <p>What type of partnership with this organization do you envisage? (Boundary/Strategic)</p>	
Specific Questions for potential Boundary Partners	Specific Questions for potential Strategic Partners
<p>What can UNIFEM do to help the organization strengthen its current role and contribution to (xx)?</p> <p>Does the organization need/want any particular kind of assistance?</p> <p>What benefits can/will the partnership bring for the organization? For UNIFEM? For others?</p> <p>What other reasons are there to partner with this organization?</p> <p>If the partnership is successful, what changes in the partner organization's behaviour (practices, networks, actions) do you expect to see? What changes do you hope to see? What changes would you love to see?</p> <p>What specific broader (long-term) results do you hope these changes can contribute to in the mid to long term?</p> <p>What, if any, negative effects do you expect if UNIFEM does <i>not</i> support/work with this organization?</p>	<p>What complementary strengths do UNIFEM and the partner organization bring to the table, respectively?</p> <p>What other reasons are there to partner with this organization?</p> <p>What value added will derive from UNIFEM and the organization jointly working towards (xx)?</p> <p>What opportunities can arise that would not otherwise arise?</p> <p>What broader (long-term) results do you hope the partnership can contribute to?</p> <p>What, if any, negative effects do you expect if UNIFEM does <i>not</i> work with this organization?</p>
For reviewing partnership after certain period of time	
<p>Which assumptions/expectations about the partner organization itself have shown to be correct? Which need to be modified? For which do you not have sufficient information? What additional assumptions need to be added?</p> <p>Which assumptions about the <i>benefits</i> of the partnership (for each partner, for others, in view of the particular issues worked on) have shown to be correct? Which have not? Where is it unclear?</p> <p>Based on your experience to date, how likely do you think it is that the partnership can contribute to the envisaged mid to long-term changes?</p> <p>How effective have the strategies used in this partnership been to achieve envisaged benefits for the partner/for UNIFEM/for others/for the issues worked on? What if any changes to these strategies might be useful?</p> <p>What negative effects are likely to follow if the partnership ceased to exist?</p> <p>Was the level of investment put into the partnership adequate/justified?</p>	



Appendix VII

Piloting UNEG Guide to Evaluation from a Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspective

Feedback from Universalia on the UNEG Guidance “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations in the UN System,” 3rd Draft, 18 December 2008.⁸⁷

1. Introduction

The purpose of this note is to provide feedback on the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations in the UN System. The Guide was reviewed in the context of conducting an evaluation of UNIFEM’s Partnerships with Regional Intergovernmental Organizations. Some suggestions from the draft Guide were also integrated in the evaluation process as described in section 6 below.

Feedback was provided by three female team members: our local consultant, senior evaluator and research analyst/junior evaluator. The team members had far more experience in gender equality and gender analysis than in the human rights-based approach (HRBA). Therefore, the HRBA content was particularly helpful to all of us.

The evaluation of UNIFEM’s Partnerships with Regional Intergovernmental Organizations does not easily fit into the language of project or programme interventions. Rather, the evaluation was looking at the relationship between two organizations—UNIFEM and regional organizations—and the interventions that have taken place in the context of that relationship to further women’s human rights and gender equality. In many cases, one part of that process

aimed to strengthen capacities of the ROs to mainstream gender in their work.

Similarly, because this evaluation was about “regional entities,” there was an added regional layer of initiatives/ organizations that encompass more than one national context for the relationships between duty bearers and rights holders.

Overall, the Universalia evaluation team found that the Guide is a useful tool for evaluators. The following sections follow the outline provided in the instructions for piloting the Guide.

2. Relevance of Guide

2.1 Introductory sections

How useful did you find the introductory sections on concepts and principles and the explanation of a rights-based and gender equality approach? Did these sections adequately explain how the UN normative frameworks were relevant for your evaluation? Were these sections easy to follow and what changes would you make to them?

- Section 2 (re: concepts and principles, approaches and links with evaluation) is useful and practical as it presents the key concepts of HRBA and specifies their implications for evaluation.
- One of the most significant contributions of the Guide is that we can now find, in one place, the justifications for encouraging the officers who manage evaluations to consider integrating these approaches based on clear UN system mandates (normative framework) and, in some cases, agency-specific MYFF or Strategic Plan. This gives the evaluator additional tools to negotiate such issues with clients in UN system.

⁸⁷ This feedback was originally shared with UNIFEM Evaluation Unit in February 2009.

- We think it will also prove to be particularly helpful to managers in UN country offices who oversee the day-to-day work of projects but may be further removed from UNEG. We have participated in country office-commissioned evaluations that do not always go through HQ units. Also, in this regard, local evaluators are important users of the Guide since they are frequently engaged with the country offices.

-
- About the challenges for evaluation to determine if development processes are participatory, the Guide is limited to illustrating two moments/components in a process aimed at promoting legislation on the rights of indigenous peoples (looking at whether relevant groups have been included in consultations and whether consultations led to amendments in the legislation itself). Shouldn't the evaluator look at how the consultations have integrated the feedback from relevant groups into their proposals? Shouldn't the evaluators look at what stages of the consultation process-relevant groups have been contacted? The Guide might benefit from a bit more description of the complexity of that development process.

-
- We had differences of opinion among the group on the need to speak explicitly about both HRBA and GE given that GE is a human right. We think that the Guide could be stronger in explaining WHY it is necessary that GE receives separate treatment.

-
- At times, the 'gender analysis' seems redundant. The questions related to human rights analysis should, in fact, yield the same or comparable information regarding gender 'inequality' in any policy, project, or programme. In fact, these questions can be supplemented by additional questions related specifically to gender mainstreaming and equality.

2.2 Section 3

How useful did you find Section 3 on integrating human rights and gender equality into evaluation practice?

This was a helpful section, especially the points about discussing with the client the extent to which HRBA and GE can be integrated and the corresponding resource requirements. Emphasizing the evaluability assessment is also a good feature.

- Section 3, which addresses the integration of both perspectives, actually integrates gender equality as part of the HRBA by adding in most instances “discriminated, marginalized and women” or the “discriminated and marginalized, including women.” The Guide should detail further how to integrate the gender equality perspective by, for instance, providing more examples of evaluation questions.

2.3 Section 4

How useful did you find section 4 on conducting the evaluation? Please comment on each section in terms of content, readability, length and any key information that you thought was missing (Note: the order of this section may change).

- Section 4 (re: conducting the evaluation) was also very practical with the inclusion of the rights and results assessment tool, the HRBA navigator, key questions to ask in relation to gender equality results, etc.

-
- Specific comments on some of the boxes are provided below.

2.4 Sections 5 and 6

How useful were sections 5 and 6. Did you need more details on drafting the report, writing recommendations and dissemination and use?

- At the time of providing this feedback, we are just getting to this stage of the evaluation, but the chapters as they stand seem helpful.

2.5 Case study material and resources

How useful did you find the case study material? Did this material ring true for you as an evaluator? Would you like to see more or less case study material of this kind? In Guides such as this, do you normally use the case study material?

List of resources: Was it useful? Are there any key resources that are missing? Please provide internet links if you have them.

- The comprehensive range of references is especially useful, as are the examples and case studies utilized to illustrate application of the concepts;

-
- We do normally use case studies to get concrete ideas of how to approach things.

2.6 Quality of checklists, good practices, etc.

Were there enough of these checklists, tips, good practice materials, etc.? Did they offer you the kinds of options that you need? Were they used in the right places throughout the Guide? Was their quality good enough? Is there anything you think was missing?

- The Guide provided interesting illustrations of research methods and evaluation approaches.

3. Completeness of content

Are there any key elements you thought were missing from the Guide? Please note these and provide any references if you have them.

- Seems complete.

4. Readability and ease of use

- We all liked the format and thought that it was readable and easy enough to use.

5. Annexes

- These annexes look good, although they were not directly relevant to our evaluation.
-
- One comment on the example ToR: Maybe it would be helpful if they request evaluators to present “options” for budget that would relate to investments required to achieve different levels of integration of HRBA and Gender Equality. That would also force the evaluators to read the Guide.

6. The evaluation process

- Because our evaluation was not squarely focused at a national level, we had some difficulty in using the Guide. However, we did integrate a number of suggestions, as shown in the sidebar.
-
- Our experience implementing these suggestions showed that the Guide’s comments about the resourcing required for the HRBA and GE approach to be integrated are key. An evaluation process that has all of the desired features requires time, allowing for consultative processes to take place. Often evaluation schedules are not realistic in this regard.

Integrating UNEG Guidance suggestions into the evaluation process

Following UNEG Guidance, the Evaluation Team:

- Reviewed the evaluation matrix in order to improve questions by introducing, in particular, the rights-based approach
- Included in its interviews an exploration of how the regional organization (RO) supported capacity development of rights holders (in the form of civil society groups) so as to have additional advocates for gender equality; at the same time, it also tried to understand the participatory mechanisms that ROs had in place for engaging civil society groups in their deliberations

- Tried to gain an understanding of the bearing that the RO had on the relationship between rights holders and duty bearers
- Ensured that it had ample representation from civil society representatives as rights holders
- Used national CEDAW monitoring reports as background documents for the countries to be visited and for greater understanding of the regional context for HR and gender equality

Evaluation Report

Annex I: Profiles of Six UNIFEM Partnerships with Regional Organizations



Contents

1.	Note to the Reader	125
2.	UNIFEM – RO Partnerships in Africa	127
	2.1 UNIFEM – African Union Partnership	127
	2.2 UNIFEM – ECOWAS Partnership	133
	2.3 UNIFEM – ICGLR Partnership	147
	2.4 UNIFEM – SADC Partnership	158
3.	UNIFEM – ROs Partnerships in LAC	167
	3.1 UNIFEM – CARICOM Partnership	167
	3.2 UNIFEM – SICA/COMMCA Partnership	175

Appendices

Appendix I	SICA Bodies and Institutions	183
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Exhibits

Exhibit 2.1	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – AU Partnership	131
Exhibit 2.2	Main UNIFEM Activities with ECOWAS (2002-2009)	137
Exhibit 2.3	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – ECOWAS Relationship	143
Exhibit 2.4	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – ICGLR Partnership	154
Exhibit 2.5	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – SADC Partnership	162
Exhibit 3.1	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – CARICOM Partnership	172
Exhibit 3.2	Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – COMMCA Partnership	178



1. Note to the Reader

As outlined in the methodology section of the main report, the evaluation team conducted six in-depth studies of UNIFEM-RO partnerships: four in Africa and two in the LAC region. Given the limited time and resources available for the evaluation, UNIFEM and Universalia agreed that observations and findings from the in-depth studies would be used to inform and be integrated into the main evaluation report, but that the evaluation team would *not* write detailed case studies.

The profiles provided in this document constitute observations by the evaluation team during and after field visits and/or phone interviews conducted for the in-depth studies. The content of these profiles has been shared and discussed with the UNIFEM staff members responsible for the respective partnership. However, consultations with UNIFEM indicated that there might be broader interest among UNIFEM staff to see these observations, which is why they are included in this annex to the main evaluation report.

Readers are asked to keep in mind that these profiles do not constitute and should not be read as detailed case studies. They summarize high level observations and findings, and provide varying amounts of detail depending on the specific context and circumstances in which the studies were conducted. For example, the in-depth study with one RO consisted mainly of telephone interviews, while other in-depth studies included site visits to one or more countries served by a RO. The evaluation team has attempted to make these profiles as uniform as possible; however, this was difficult in some cases (e.g., some profiles offer lessons learned and recommendations while others do not).

The evaluation team encourages UNIFEM staff to adapt these profiles for summarizing and updating their knowledge about individual UNIFEM-RO partnerships, if deemed useful.



2. UNIFEM – RO Partnerships in Africa

2.1 UNIFEM – African Union Partnership

Mission Dates: 4-6 February 2009

Mission Team: (Universalia), (UNIFEM EU)

Organizational Background

The African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of 53 African states. Established on 9 July 2002, the AU was formed as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). “The Vision of the African Union is to build an integrated Africa, a prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”.⁸⁸ The AU’s secretariat, the African Union Commission, is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The AU Gender Unit

The AU’s Women and Gender Development Directorate (WGDD) was created in 2002 under the Office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The WGDD’s mandate is to “promote Gender Equality within and throughout the Union as well as within Member States by translating policy agreements and instruments into measurable programmes and projects. It shall provide oversight by facilitating the development and harmonization of policy, facilitating coordination and initiating gender mainstreaming strategies.”⁸⁹

The WGDD currently has five staff members including a Director. There are also Gender Focal Points in all departments of the AU Commission who work closely with the

WGDD. The evaluation team did not obtain any information on the WGDD’s budget in absolute figures or on how it compares to the budgets of other departments. Stakeholders pointed out however that funding from external donors has a significant impact on WGDD’s ability to be operational.

Upon the WGDD’s creation, women’s NGOs and other advocates had lobbied for the Directorate to be placed under the Office of the AU Chairperson as this position would provide the WGDD with the potential legitimacy to reach out to all other AU Directorates. Consulted stakeholders observed that its position tends to isolate the WGDD from other thematic areas, and the WGDD Director has limited power to summon Directors of other Directorates.

UNIFEM – AU Partnership

History: The collaboration between UNIFEM and the AU can be roughly divided into two phases of ‘before and after’ establishing the UNIFEM liaison office at the AU in January 2008. Until the liaison office was put into place, collaboration with the AU was managed partly from UNIFEM HQ in New York, and partly through the SRO in Nairobi. Stakeholders noted that this ‘partnership by

⁸⁸ Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission. May 2004.
<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/Vision/Volumen.pdf>

⁸⁹ See: Report of the 3rd ordinary session of the Executive Council on the proposed structure, human resource requirements, and conditions of service for the staff of the commission of the African Union and their financial implications. (2003)
<http://www.africa-union.org/root/AUC/Structure%20English.PDF>

remote control' posed challenges since UNIFEM did not have permanent presence on the ground and had thus a limited ability to partake in and support ongoing discussions and decision-making processes in the AU. The establishment of the liaison office in 2008 is widely seen as a considerable improvement that has raised UNIFEM's visibility and its ability to be an active player in the AU context. According to consulted UNIFEM staff and AU partners, its ground presence has enhanced UNIFEM's ability to undertake sustained advocacy for the integration of women's rights and gender equality in AU's policy work, and to support the AU's WGDD and other departments of the AUC.

MOUs: The previously informal relationship between UNIFEM and the AU was formalized in 2005 through a three-year collaboration agreement between UNIFEM and the AU's WGDD. The collaboration – largely funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation – was to contribute to the development of an AU five-year gender mainstreaming strategic plan. When the UNIFEM AU liaison office was established, this MOU was extended for six months to continue ongoing support, e.g., for development of the AU Gender Policy. UNIFEM is currently engaged in discussions with the AU to develop a new collaboration agreement not just with the WGDD, but with the AU Commission as a whole. It is hoped this will allow UNIFEM to provide broader support to thematic AU bodies including, but not limited to, the WGDD.

Partners and key strategies: At present, UNIFEM's key partner in the AU is the WGDD to which UNIFEM provides technical and some financial support. In addition, UNIFEM supports (technically and financially) women's organizations, in particular regional NGO networks addressing gender issues whose advocacy work with the AU can support and strengthen the WGDD's work. Further, UNIFEM closely works with and sometimes provides financial support to initiatives of UNECA – another close partner of the AU's WGDD, and a key player for GE and WHR issues in the region.

Specific Activities/Initiatives: Key activities/initiatives under the 2005-2008 MOU have been:

- Support the WGDD by providing funding for
 - Three consultants to conduct an AU gender audit,
 - A regional knowledge fair on best practices and lessons learned on GE issues,
 - Development of handbook on good practices in gender mainstreaming.
- Technical assistance and advice to the WGDD to support the directorate's midterm planning and results orientation, and with re-establishing a positive reputation among external donors.
- Technical and financial support for the development of the AU's Gender policy (2008) – particularly (together with other donors such as UNFPA) through financial support for related Stakeholder consultations.
- Financial support for the AU Continental Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment in Malawi early 2008.
- Start-up and technical support to an inter-departmental meeting in the AU chaired by the WGDD to bring different directorates together and discuss possible approaches to mainstreaming gender.
- In collaboration with the WGDD, UNECA, and others, technical leadership and support for the preparation of the most recent African Development Forum (ADF) held in Addis, which focused on Violence against Women and is widely seen as a success.
- In collaboration with the WGDD, mapping of regional and subregional women's rights advocacy networks, and organisation of a strategy development workshop on how networks can strengthen their partnerships with the WGDD and be more effective in engaging the AU.
- In collaboration with the WGDD, convention of an experts meeting to develop a framework for multisector implementation of the CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa.

90 The WGDD's reputation had suffered due to prolonged periods during which the position of the WGDD director was vacant, and the unit was de facto not operational.

RO Context

Consulted stakeholders agreed that since its creation in 2002 the AU's relevance and influence as an economic integration body and as an institution working for Development in Africa has continuously increased. Most if not all member states show strong and still increasing interest in matters of African/regional integration and mutual collaboration.

During the past 3-5 years, an increasing number of AU Member States have appointed women in leading political positions, including as Foreign Ministers (e.g., in South Africa). This is important in the AU and GE context, as foreign ministers make up the Executive Council, the AU's key decision-making body.

Challenges created by the HIV/AIDS pandemic continue to negatively affect all countries in Africa. There is increasing recognition that related issues need to be addressed not only at national, but also at cross-border/regional levels.

While a large number of bilateral and multilateral development partners are interested in partnering with the AU, the AU has limited human and absorptive capacity.

During its most recent AU summit (26 Jan. – 3 Feb. 2009) the AU made visible steps towards furthering the idea of an African Union Government, as part of the long term vision of a "United States of Africa" (envisaged to be achieved by 2017). The AU Commission is to be replaced by an AU *Authority* with selected government powers. Some stakeholders fear that strong movement towards African Unity may tie energies of country governments and regional entities, to the disadvantage of gender equality issues. The new AU Authority is expected to play a stronger coordination role with regard to the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs). The RECS have been asked to send permanent liaison officers to the AU. This closer integration of the RECs into the AU may have implications for UNIFEM's future strategies for working with individual RECs as well as with the AU.

The AU has put into place a peer review mechanism among its member states. Currently the mechanism is mostly used to look at quantitative data e.g., related to elections, and less for substantive social development issues such as gender equality.

The AU's WGDD has suffered from staff turnover and leadership gaps.

Importance given to gender equality and women's human rights issues in the AU

Consulted stakeholders widely agreed that the AU has made considerable and important strides at the policy level to advance and express its commitment to Gender Equality. Key milestones are listed below.

- 2002 Women and Gender Development Directorate created

- 2002 Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union enshrined the Gender Parity Principle and a 50 per cent quota for women as commissioners (this goal has actually been reached)

- 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted and came into effect in 2005.

- 2004 Heads of State and Government adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), and committed to accelerate ratification of the Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa.

- 2005 First AU meeting of Ministers in charge of gender/women's affairs held

- 2005 The number of African countries that ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Women's Rights in Africa (2003) reached legal threshold of 15 allowing the Protocol to come into force. Ratifications now stand at 27 member states.

- 2006 AU gender audit conducted (supported by UNIFEM)

- 2008 Draft AU Gender Policy and related Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSPAU) covering the period 2008 to 2011. The Policy was adopted by the AU Assembly in January 2009.

AU influence on regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities

Consulted stakeholders noted that:

- The AU's actual and potential influence at regional and national levels was moderate to strong, depending on the respective subregion and/or country. Not all decisions taken at AU level necessarily filter through to the national level.⁹¹
- On some occasions, AU had "more political clout" than RECs, i.e., at least in some regions. AU decisions tend to have more relevance at the country level than decisions taken at the REC level. (At the same time, some RECs such as SADC were described as having a strong influence at the country level.)
- Gender related AU decisions, policies and resolutions provided important tools for gender advocates at the country level. In many cases, country leaders tended to be willing to agree to something if other leaders at the regional level had done so. This provided opportunities for NGOs and other gender advocates at the national level who could use these regional agreements to lobby at the national level by reminding the respective leaders of what they had agreed to regionally.
- Some stakeholders are of the view that the AU has played a very important role in "putting Gender on the agenda" of its member states, and/or for reconfirming member states' commitment to international agreements such as CEDAW. The evaluation team has no specific information on the extent to which the AU has directly influenced the adoption or implementation of CEDAW, BPFA and other conventions/agreements.

Obstacles to AU's commitment to and/or influence related to GE/WHR

With regard to capacities, one stakeholder noted that local/regional (African) human capacity/expertise for gender equality was sufficiently available, and that the key challenge was not local expertise, but appropriate resources for implementation of gender commitments at the country level.

Other key donors/development partners working with the AU

UNECA – especially the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD) has a longstanding relationship with the AU. UNIFEM has collaborated with ACGSD long before the UNIFEM liaison office was established in Addis. UNECA has provided financial support to the ACGSD, and has continued and intensified the collaboration since 2008. The collaboration appears to be very close and productive, making use of UNIFEM's and the ACGSD's complementary skills and capacities. UNIFEM and UNECA have signed an MOU to coordinate their support to the AU. UNECA is a regional organization and has pool of expertise in different areas.

UNFPA – has played and continues to play an important role regarding the gender equality agenda in Africa. Before UNIFEM came, UNFPA was the de facto lead UN agency on gender issues in relation to the AU. They have provided considerable support to the development of the AU Gender Policy. UNFPA is interested in further strengthening its collaboration with UNIFEM and sees a strong need to get all AU directorates – not only WGDD – actively involved in gender concerns.

Other UN agencies – address gender issues to varying degrees. One of the most active agencies in this regard appears to be UNICEF. Consulted stakeholders stated that coordination among UN agencies has at times been challenging, as it was not always clear who is in charge of leading coordination efforts. At the regional level there exists a Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) structuring the UN's work in Africa into several thematic clusters. Gender is supposed to be a cross-cutting priority. Due to UNIFEM's and others' advocacy efforts, a new sub-cluster on youth and gender has been established under the social development cluster, co-chaired by UNIFEM and UNFPA.

⁹¹ One stakeholder mentioned that it was more likely for decisions to be followed through at the country level if they went through NEPAD.

European Union (EU) – has a comprehensive (yet gender blind) framework for collaboration with the AU addressing eight priority areas (which does not include gender). UNIFEM has offered to work with the EU to translate its silent commitment to mainstream gender into action.

Results

Exhibit 2.1 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – AU Partnership

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	Development of (draft) AU Gender Policy	UNIFEM provided some financial support mostly for the conduct of consultation meetings around the AU policy.	AU Member States
New knowledge Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	AU Gender Audit	UNIFEM (with funds from the Austrian Development Cooperation) provided financial resources for three consultants who conducted the AU gender audit. One of the audit's key findings was that it was difficult for AU Directorates to mainstream gender without a guiding policy document. The audit contributed to the subsequent development of the AU Gender Policy.	AU Member States
Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	Mapping study of regional women's organizations working with (or planning to work with) the AU.	Part of the 2005-2008 MOU between UNIFEM and the AU was capacity development for the WGDD. Based on discussions with WGDD, UNIFEM agreed to work on strengthening women's organizations to be more effective in engaging with the AU, which in turn would help the WGDD fulfil its mandate. The Mapping Study is a first step in this regard. It was carried out as a self assessment by women's organization networks in the region. One key finding of the study was that many organizations lack basic knowledge about how the AU operates, and how to access AU planning and decision-making forums. UNIFEM is now discussing with women's organizations possibilities to support creating a permanent NGO/CSO liaison office in Addis to allow CSOs to have more permanent and continued access to the AU.	Women's Organizations AU WGDD AU

Sustainability

The UNIFEM-AU partnership (in its current incarnation) is only just beginning. The first year of existence of the new liaison office was mostly one of learning, getting started, and engaging in some activities to establish UNIFEM; it is premature to examine sustainability or major institutional changes. However, the evaluation team noticed that UNIFEM's current and planned initiatives are consciously designed in terms of the sustainability of results, i.e., UNIFEM is working to strengthen core capacities of gender advocates within and outside the AU, and is assisting them in developing sustainable solutions rather than one-off ones.

Partnership Management

UNIFEM deliberately sought a partnership with the AU as it became clear that the new AU (emerging from the OAU) would become a key player in terms of development in Africa.

To the team's knowledge, monitoring and evaluating of the partnership has been limited to brief reports on the progress made under the 2005-2008 MOU. To date, the team has seen one such report (2006).

The team has no information on the types of costs (in kind, other) that are incurred by UNIFEM and the AU in nurturing and maintaining the partnership.

Challenges

Staff turnover in WGDD and the vacancy in the Director's post posed some challenges under the current MOU: activities were stalled for awhile. Because of the gap in staffing and activities, the AU cut the WGDD's 2008 budget by 16%, as the Directorate had not been able to spend its allocated budget in the previous year. When the UNIFEM liaison office was established, one key priority was to help the WGDD access new/additional funds.

UNIFEM's AU liaison office has a large workload but limited capacity. Initially the office was staffed by only one person; since August 2008 the office has employed two

staff. At the time of the mission, UNIFEM indicated that it planned to hire a finance officer. If a new MOU is signed between UNIFEM and the AU (rather than with the WGDD alone) a large number of opportunities for collaboration on specific thematic issues (e.g., women's economic empowerment/land rights) with AU organs may emerge – if UNIFEM has the capacity to respond to them.

There are many, many opportunities of working with different AU bodies. Given UNIFEM's limited resources, the key challenge is to choose among them and choose the strategically most relevant.

Another challenge relates to how UNIFEM can demonstrate the results of its partnership with the AU? What kinds of results can be attributed to this partnership? (Or suggest that UNIFEM has contributed to results?).

A final challenge is that there is a lack of data and of related data-collection tools and systems that would provide reliable information on whether and to what extent AU decisions and policies have an actual effect at the national level, and on women's lives. This lack of data is something all UN agencies (and other development partners working with the AU) are struggling with.

Opportunities

The implementation of the AU Gender Policy within the AU and at the national level is one of the key tasks of the WGDD, and it will need all the support it can secure. In this context, the increasing integration of the RECs into the AU is likely to be of importance. UNIFEM staff in the AU liaison office as well as in several (S)ROs have already begun to discuss possible implications of this integration for UNIFEM's strategy/strategies at regional and sub-regional level. UNIFEM may wish to further explore these implications systematically, and reflect them explicitly in its regional and subregional strategic plans.

The UNIFEM AU liaison office has developed a framework to promote multi-stakeholder approaches to CEDAW and AU protocol implementation. The framework is aiming to change the widespread attitude that gender issues

are the responsibility of National Women's Machineries, rather than of all government bodies. The AU's WGDD has expressed interest in using the tool. UNIFEM (the AU liaison office) has also established contact with African experts e.g., the foreign minister from South Africa, and with UNIFEM SROs. There appears to be some interest at the national level to pilot the tool.

After one year on the ground, UNIFEM is still a relatively new player in the AU context, and some development partners consulted were not always aware of UNIFEM's work with the AU or its presence on the ground. Others, however, emphasized that the creation of the liaison office had considerably increased UNIFEM's visibility and presence.

One suggestion for a change in UNIFEM's approach mentioned by some consulted stakeholders was that UNIFEM should not put any more money into the development of policies, studies, or strategies, but focus on supporting the implementation of existing commitments and plans.

Stakeholders indicated that UNIFEM is considered to be an important player due to its well known technical expertise, its institutional focus on gender issues, and its UN agency status which allows it to act as a facilitator or even mediator (e.g., between ECA and the AU). It was further emphasized that UNIFEM's close and good relationship with NGOs across Africa is a strong asset, which is considered valuable by the AU as well as by other players.

2.2 UNIFEM – ECOWAS Partnership

Mission Dates: 26-31 January 2009

Mission Team: Universalia

Organizational Background

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, founded in 1975. Its mission is to promote economic integration in "all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters" ECOWAS'

treaty was revised in 1993 to accelerate the integration process. ECOWAS headquarters are located in Abuja, Nigeria. In 2005 ECOWAS Secretariat was transformed into ECOWAS Commission, with increased supranational powers. In particular the Commission's normative acts have increased binding power over member states than the traditional Protocols and Conventions.

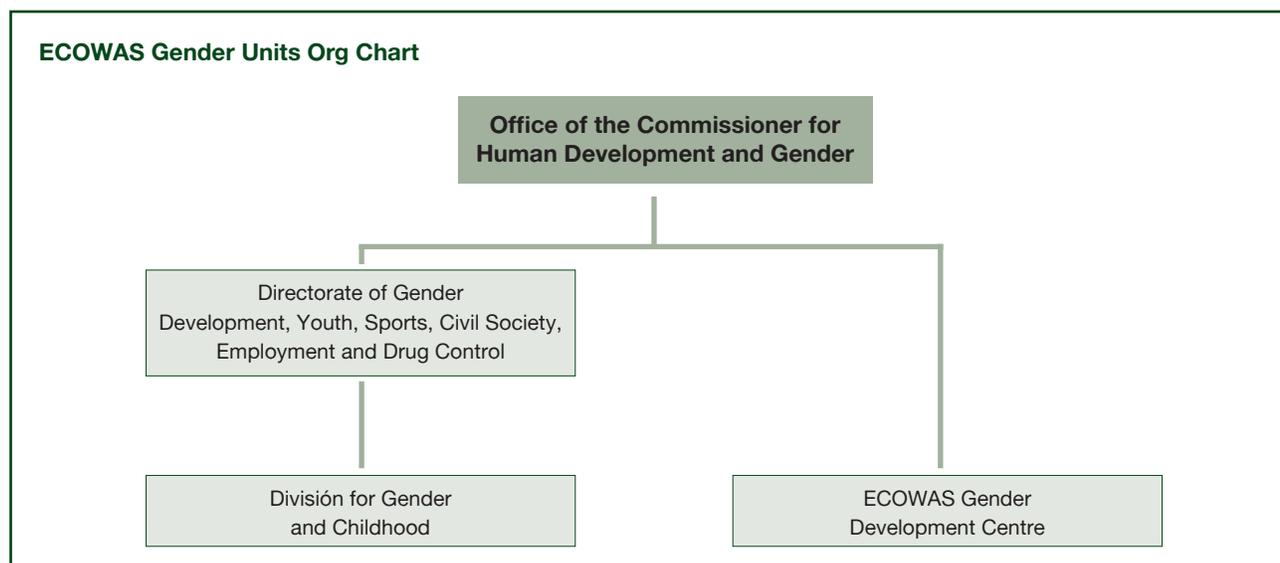
Member states

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

The ECOWAS Gender Units

At January 2009, ECOWAS had two units with responsibility for gender: the Division for Gender and Childhood (housed in the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja) and the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC) in Dakar, Senegal.

The Division for Gender and Childhood was created at the end of 2004, with the appointment of a Gender Officer (to date the only professional staff of the division). The Gender Officer draws upon consultants and interns to support the Division's activities.



Following the recent ECOWAS institutional reorganization new structures responsible for coordinating and overseeing gender issues were created in 2008: the Office of the Commissioner for Human Development and Gender and the Directorate of Gender Development, Youth, Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control. The Division is placed under the Directorate and the Directorate is part of the Office of the Commissioner (see sidebar).

Both the Commissioner for Human Development and Gender and the Director for Gender, Development, Youth, Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control were appointed in July 2008. At the time of the visit, the Directorate had a total two professional staff (one for the Gender Division and one for the Youth, Sports and Employment Division, who was appointed in December 2008). As far as financial resources are concerned, according to ECOWAS staff, the Gender Division does not have programming resources and it is highly reliant on external donors. Nevertheless we do not have factual

information on this issue (the evaluation team was not able to access the Division's and Directorate's budgets).

The ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC) was created in December 2004 to replace the previously existing WAWA (West Africa Women's Association). It reports directly to the Commissioner for Human Development and Gender. The Gender Centre has 6 professional staff (3 of these are involved in programming; the others are responsible for management and administration). It draws upon consultants and interns to support its activities. The Centre is managed by a Director who served as Acting Director for four years until she was formally appointed in 2008. The EGDC had an original action plan for 2005-2008. The EGDC has just developed a strategic plan for 2009-2013, which is considered very ambitious by most stakeholders. It will require substantial financial support from external donors to be implemented.

The EGDC has a focal point (FP) in every member state (usually in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs or equivalent). The main responsibility of Country FPs is to promote gender development at the country level, influence policies at the country level, and coordinate the implementation of ECOWAS (and more specifically EGDC) activities at the country level. FPs are also responsible for providing EGDC with information about member countries when requested. In order to do so EGDC provides training and capacity-building initiatives for FPs.

UNIFEM – ECOWAS Partnership

History: UNIFEM’s Nigeria Office (which was the Anglo-phone Regional West African office until December 2007) began working with the ECOWAS Commission based in Abuja in 2001. UNIFEM’s original interest in working with ECOWAS was in relation to women’s participation in regional trade and economy (UNIFEM was working at

that time with women entrepreneurs) and on engendering ECOWAS’ Protocol on Free Movement (See sidebar). When UNIFEM first approached ECOWAS, its need for support on gender institutional capacity-building and mainstreaming emerged. In 2001 the West African Regional development Centre of UNECA, as part of collaborative arrangements with ECOWAS, initiated discussions on the development of a subregional gender policy and gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS on the basis of a needs assessment previously conducted. It then involved UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat for the purpose of supporting ECOWAS in developing a draft Gender Policy, and Management System as part of a joint effort to mainstream gender in ECOWAS. Since then, UNIFEM and ECOWAS have engaged in a series of activities involving the ECOWAS Commission, the Gender Centre and the UNIFEM offices in Nigeria and Senegal.

ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement

In May 1979 ECOWAS member states adopted a Protocol relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. It stipulated among other things the right of community citizens to enter, reside and establish economic activities in the territory of member states and outlined a three phased approach over 15 years to achieve the “complete freedom of movement” envisaged by the treaty.

Phase I provided for the elimination, over five years, of the need for visas for stays of up to 90 days within ECOWAS territories by Community citizens. Phase two focused on the Right of Residence and Phase Three on the Right of Establishment. Phase one has been fully implemented in the subregion. Progress on the second and third phases has been much slower, despite the adoption of four additional Protocols providing for their implementation.

Our analysis shows that the UNIFEM-ECOWAS relationship has gone through three main phases.

- 1st Phase (2001-2004): UNIFEM provided institutional support for the development of gender policy and management mechanisms in the ECOWAS Commission. UNIFEM provided a gender expert to the ECOWAS Secretariat to support the development of the Gender Policy and Management System, to build the Gender Division structure and capacities. UNIFEM was also instrumental in kick-starting the ECGD. The relationship between the two organizations was reported to be very active.
- 2nd Phase (2005-2007): UNIFEM and ECOWAS participated in ad hoc thematic activities/short term projects (such as support to sporadic training initiatives and events); UNIFEM was not providing technical support to the institution but to specific activities⁹². The UNIFEM Nigeria office initiated activities with the ECOWAS Commission (Gender Division) while the UNIFEM office in Senegal initiated activities with ECGD in Dakar. Scarce resources were involved. Contacts and activities became less regular. Interviewed stakeholders point to a certain apathy and a lack of champions on both sides, and also to the fact that the gender division was in a formative stage.

⁹² According to some stakeholders this shift was due to the fact that following the first phase and the establishment of the Gender Division within ECOWAS, it was assumed that direct technical support by way of a gender expert was no longer required.

- 3rd Phase (since 2008) Since the merger of two UNIFEM West Africa offices in December 2007 (see section on “UNIFEM Context” for more details), some new contacts have been established between the new West Africa RPD (based in Dakar) and the President of ECOWAS (based in Abuja), with the collaboration of UNIFEM’s Nigeria Office. The President of ECOWAS has expressed an interest in developing a strategic partnership with UNIFEM and working on specific thematic areas (migrations, agriculture) with the relevant Sectoral Directorates/Commissions.

MOUs: There is no overarching MOU guiding the relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS.⁹³ A letter of Agreement was signed in 2002 for the provision of the gender expert services. UNIFEM-ECOWAS relationships have been guided by a series of short-term project agreements on specific activities.

Partners and key strategies: During the first two phases of the UNIFEM-ECOWAS relationship the main partners within ECOWAS were the Gender Division in the Commission and the EGDC. Currently UNIFEM is starting to work with other divisions inside the Commission to pursue thematic/sectoral work (e.g., Migration, Agriculture, Political Affairs, Peace and Security).

During the first phase, UNIFEM provided technical and substantial financial support to ECOWAS. In the subsequent phases UNIFEM provided mainly technical support with limited financial support. Although consulted stakeholders in UNIFEM and ECOWAS made generic comments on the financial dimensions of this relationship, at the time of writing, no data was available concerning the total financial investment made by UNIFEM for its relationship with ECOWAS.⁹⁴

The main strategies⁹⁵ utilized by UNIFEM in its relationship with ECOWAS are the following:

- Institutional development: UNIFEM placed a gender advisor within ECOWAS to support the development of a gender policy and management system, and to mainstream gender within the institution. This was particularly during the first phase, but continued in a less regular way (ad hoc technical advice to gender division) during the second phase
- Joint Activities: UNIFEM and ECOWAS organized together training and events (e.g., Gender responsive Budgeting Training)
- Sectoral policy development: UNIFEM is working with specific sectoral divisions within ECOWAS commission to engender sectoral policies (e.g., Migration). This approach is recent (since 2008).

Specific Activities/Initiatives: UNIFEM and ECOWAS have engaged in a broad variety of activities over time as shown in the following table. With the notable exception of UNIFEM gender mainstreaming support to the Commission between 2003 and 2005, most projects have been relatively small in size, and have been of a short duration (one year or less).

93 During the course of the in-depth review, we learned of a possible MOU between the UNIFEM Nigeria office and the ECOWAS commission that was developed in the early 2000s; however, UNIFEM has been unable to locate a copy of this document. The fact that UNIFEM offices in Nigeria have moved several times might partially explain this.

94 The Nigeria office made available financial information since 2004 showing that investments had been made in 2 activities for a total of \$48,000: \$42,000 for “Research and Gender Analysis” in March 2005 (extension of the gender advisor contract for the period December 2004-February 2005) and \$6,000 for “Conference organizing services” for the First Ladies Summit on Peace and Security in December 2008

95 These categories of strategies refer to the typology identified in the evaluation report, Paragraph Section 3.3.

Exhibit 2.2 Main UNIFEM Activities with ECOWAS (2002-2009)

Theme	Project/Activity/Year	ECOWAS	UNIFEM	Type of support
Gender Mainstreaming in ECOWAS	<p>Development of gender policy and management system 2002-2005</p> <p>Support to the creation of the Gender division and the Gender Centre</p> <p>Capacity-building for gender mainstreaming in the Commission: e.g., Gender audit training</p>	Commission (Gender Division)	Nigeria Office	<p>Deployment of gender advisor October 2002-Feb 2005</p> <p>Financial support for capacity-building activities</p> <p>Technical Backstopping</p>
Gender Budgeting	Support to the “Regional training workshop on Gender Budgeting” for ECOWAS commission staff and member countries FPs, 2008	ECDG	Senegal Office	UNIFEM provided the Terms of Reference and the Methodology for the training as well as the trainer.
Common Approach to Migration	<p>UNIFEM contributed to engender the Common Approach and Guidelines on Migrations 2007</p> <p>Development of a concept note for the “women empowerment in migration project”, a joint initiative with ECOWAS, ILO, IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA to spearhead research and high level policy dialogue on the gender dimension and dynamics of migration in West Africa. July 2008. The initiative has not received approval and funding yet.</p>	Commission (Gender Division, Free Movement Division, other ECOWAS departments)	Senegal + Nigeria Office	UNIFEM participated in the Expert meeting held in Ghana in May 2007, provided input for revising Common approach incorporating gender
Peace and Security	Support to First Ladies Summit on Peace and Security, Dec. 2008	Commission (Peace and Security and Gender Directorate)	Nigeria Office	Technical support, goodwill message, and financial support
Agriculture	Engendering the Common Agriculture Policy, 2006	Commission (Agriculture Division)	Senegal Office	Gender expert worked in the HUB to engender ECOWAS Agriculture Policy
Others	Support to the organization of the annual meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Women Affairs, where the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan of ECOWAS Gender Development Centre was validated and adopted and activities in preparation for the Accra Aid Effectiveness Meeting were conducted. May 2008	ECDG	Senegal Office	Financial and technical support
	“Enforcement and Promotion of Women and Child Rights: which approach for Africa” Consultative meeting organized by ECDG, UNIFEM and African Women Lawyers Association, 2006	ECDG	Senegal Office	Financial and technical support
	Participation in the ECDG Strategic Planning Process (2007-2008)	ECDG	Senegal Office	Participation in discussions and consultations. Technical support.

RO Context

According to the majority of consulted stakeholders ECOWAS is the key subregional institution in West Africa. Although other subregional organizations (e.g., West African Economic and Monetary Union⁹⁶) exist, and have progressed quite far in regional integration (e.g., with the introduction of a common currency in Francophone West Africa), ECOWAS is the only AU-recognised REC in West Africa and the only West-African subregional organizations including Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone countries. It has the authority and established mechanisms that can be used to influence policy-making of its member states. Moreover since its reform in 2005, ECOWAS has strengthened its supranational character, increasing its binding power over member states. Nevertheless, ECOWAS appears to be in a transitional phase. It is largely recognised that its mandate and objectives are not matched with adequate resources, capacities, structures and systems.

Development partners (both UN agencies and bilateral donors) have acknowledged ECOWAS' role as the main political and developmental interlocutor in the region, but they are also aware of its limitations. For this reason they are providing significant support to it, both technical and financial.

Among UN agencies there seems to be a consensus on the need to work with ECOWAS for several reasons:

- Its political role and its positioning in the wider framework of African Integration
- A belief that working at the regional level can complement other strategies used by UN agencies (for example with governments, CSOs, etc)

- To address transnational issues (e.g., peace and security, food crises, HIV-AIDS, migration).

According to the majority of consulted stakeholders, ECOWAS has been able to play a significant role in the region in its most traditional areas of engagement: Peace and Security issues (e.g., through ECOMOG⁹⁷), and to a certain extent in economic issues (e.g., Free movement). Its role and influence remain more limited in social and development issues (including gender).

As far as gender is concerned, traditional social norms and practices in the subregion strongly define different and unequal roles for women and men in society. Moreover women play a modest role in politics in most member states and in ECOWAS.

Following the strong CSOs mobilization on gender issues around Beijing conference (1995) and the increased involvement of African First Ladies on this issue, gender equality acquired a higher political profile in the subregion since 1995. Regional bodies in Africa (AU and ECA) showed heightened interest/commitments to gender issues since the early 2000s. By consequence RECs have also been actively encouraged to examine their own policies and practices in regard to gender issues since then. This context motivated ECOWAS in transforming its principle commitments to gender into policies and structures (see next point).

96 UEMOA (from its name in French, Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine) was created by a Treaty signed at Dakar, Senegal, on January 10, 1994 by the Heads of State and Government of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. On 2 May 1997, Guinea-Bissau became its eighth member state. UEMOA is a customs union and monetary union (the member states share a common currency, the CFA franc). It was established to promote economic integration among member countries. In terms of its achievements, UEMOA members have harmonized their regulations (including indirect taxation), implemented macroeconomic convergence criteria and a surveillance mechanism; put into place a common market, adopted a customs union and common external tariff; and have initiated regional structural and sectoral policies. Source: <http://www.uemoa.int/uemoa.historique.htm>

97 ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) is a West African multilateral armed force established by ECOWAS member states in 1990 to intervene in the civil war in Liberia (1989–96). It has since intervened in conflicts in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

Gender Mainstreaming in ECOWAS

The Gender Policy and the Guidelines for the Establishment of a Gender Management System (GMS) made provisions for the creation of several entities responsible for the implementation of the Gender Policy. (Gender Management Team, Gender Division, Secretariat Departmental Focal Points, Gender Commission, ECDG). Data collection in January 2009 indicates that these units either do not exist or are not fulfilling their roles as originally intended. Only the Gender Division and the ECDG have been created; however there is evidence that their current roles do not completely match with what was originally planned.

No overall guidelines mainstreaming gender in the different sectors have been fully developed and implemented (despite the fact that there have been some attempts in this direction).

Some positive examples have been observed, that mainly took place outside the Gender Policy and Management System framework:

- The Political Affairs, Peace and Security Commission in collaboration with the Gender Division has developed, with

DANIDA funding, a framework for Women in Peace and Security issues (not much has been done to implement the framework)

- The Directorate of Humanitarian Affairs with the Gender Division assistance has developed a manual on how to integrate gender when deploying civilian taskforces (with UNHCR support)

- Gender considerations have been integrated in the Common Approach to Migrations (with UNIFEM support).

- Gender considerations have been integrated in the Agriculture Common Policy and some work done on gender issues with the Agriculture Commission (with UNIFEM and HUB support)

- Financial reports have gender disaggregated data

- A new ECOWAS HR policy has been introduced that encourages the appointment of women when capacities of candidates are equal.

Importance given to gender equality and women's human rights issues in ECOWAS

The original ECOWAS treaty (1975) did not mention gender nor women's equality. The revised Treaty (1993) introduced new principles in this respect: Articles 61 and 63 affirm ECOWAS' commitment to women's empowerment and to the promotion of women's organizations as a means of ensuring collective involvement in development activities. The Treaty gives ECOWAS a strong mandate to formulate policies and develop programmes that enhance women's economic, social and cultural conditions. With the encouragement of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and others including UNIFEM, ECOWAS embarked on a process in the early 2000s to develop a gender policy and related instruments with the aim of integrating gender issues in the organization. Between 2001 and 2005, ECOWAS undertook several policy and structural initiatives, with the support of two gender consultants assigned by UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat. This led to the adoption in July 2004 of the Gender Policy and associated strategic documents (Guidelines for Establishment of a Gender Management

System for ECOWAS, Gender Strategic Plan Framework). In late 2004 the Gender Division was created in the Secretariat (now Commission) and the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development was established in Dakar.

These documents and structures provided a basis for ECOWAS to begin to address its stated priorities in regard to gender. However following this initial phase, there has been modest progress within ECOWAS in regard to mainstreaming gender.

There is little evidence that the guiding policies and frameworks have been utilized to inform, guide and/or monitor ECOWAS actions in regard to gender (see sidebar). Interviewed stakeholders inside and outside of ECOWAS confirm this finding; moreover, data collected as part of this study did not reveal any ECOWAS plans to reinvigorate these or other policies and strategies in ECOWAS. One indicator of ECOWAS' commitment to gender equality and women's rights relates to the amount and type of resources allocated (human or financial) to address the various actions outlined in its strategic document.

At present, both the Gender Commission as well as the Gender Centre are very modestly resourced (see above “ECOWAS Gender Units”). Moreover, according to several consulted stakeholders in ECOWAS, UNIFEM, other UN agencies and CSOs, their influence is very limited inside ECOWAS. Therefore, while attention to gender has a place in ECOWAS structures, policies and budget, it is generally viewed as marginal to ECOWAS. Some positive examples of gender mainstreaming have taken place recently at the sectoral level. Moreover recent developments (e.g., the recruitment of the Director for Gender, Development, Youth, Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control, the new HR policy and a renewed commitment of the President of ECOWAS to Gender) may lead to increased attention to gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS.

ECOWAS influence on regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities

According to most consulted stakeholders ECOWAS’ expected role in the region as far as GE and WHR are concerned should consist in:

- Influencing member states to adopt and implement regional and international commitments
- Providing leadership on gender issues
- Creating an enabling environment for member states to advance on GE and WHR

In practice, ECOWAS presently has a relatively modest reputation in regard to mainstreaming gender in the region. Interviews with a sample of regional and national CSOs and development agencies suggest that they are generally not knowledgeable about the role(s) played by the Commission in regard to gender issues. They note that the Commission is better known for its more established, historical roles in addressing peace and security issues than in regional development. Several of the leading agencies we interviewed were totally unaware, or marginally aware, of the ECOWAS gender policy and role.

During the review, we did not find evidence that suggests that ECOWAS influences the adoption and implementa-

tion of international conventions and agendas, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of Action or the development of gender policies at the national level. For example, informants from Nigeria and Senegal both noted that ECOWAS was not involved in the development of their gender policies (formulated in 2008 and 2005 respectively).

On the other hand, several interviewed stakeholders (UN agencies, bilateral donor agencies, national and regional CSOs) mentioned that ECOWAS’ influence is increasing, in particular in promoting regional integration and peace and stability in the region. ECOWAS is reported to be demonstrating a strong political will to move towards supranational regional integration: the transformation of the Secretariat into a Commission is a notable step in this direction; ECOWAS’ future decisions will be binding for member states. Moreover ECOWAS is showing some political determination (i.e., recently barring the Guinea’s military leaders from attending meetings of all decision-making bodies of ECOWAS following the military coup in December 2008). This trend illustrates how ECOWAS may be able to influence its member states in terms of GE and WHR in the future, for example by mainstreaming gender in increasingly binding sectoral policies and guidelines.

Obstacles to ECOWAS’ commitment to and/or influence related to GE/WHR:

Limited institutional ownership. Interviews with key stakeholders suggest that overall there is marginal support within ECOWAS for addressing gender equality and women’s human rights. Interviews with ECOWAS internal and external stakeholders suggested that while the ECOWAS President’s commitment as well as ECOWAS policies show that support exists, this has not yet been matched with the financial and human resources required to operationalize these policies. For example, the Directorate responsible for Gender has a very broad mandate which mixes very different thematic areas including, besides Gender Development, Youth, Sports, Civil Society, Employment and Drug Control; yet has only 3 professional staff (including the director) to carry out this mandate. According to interviewees also financial resources are very

limited (one key informant noted the absence of programming money for the Gender Division).

Absence of a clear shared vision for ECOWAS in regard to gender. Interviews with senior individuals in the Commission and the EGDC suggest that there are extremely different views on ECOWAS' role and priority activities in regard to gender. Some see it as addressing women's strategic needs through policy level interventions at the highest levels, others see it as a programme implementer at the institutional level, while yet others indicate that ECOWAS should be working at the grass roots level addressing women's practical needs. These are very different visions. At present there is no mechanism or plan in place to reconcile these various visions.

Unclear roles and responsibilities for the Gender Division and the EGDC. The ambiguities in terms of ECOWAS' vision in regard to gender also affect the roles played by the Gender Unit and the EGDC and their reputations. According to ECOWAS documents and to several interviewees (both within and outside ECOWAS), the ECOWAS' Gender Division has responsibility for developing policies and programmes, while the EGDC is considered the "technical arm" and is responsible for providing leadership in implementing policies and programmes and for liaising with member countries. In practice, interviewed stakeholders indicate that the roles of these units are not sufficiently clear, differentiated and appropriate given ECOWAS' mandate.

If the role of the Division appears to be clear in theory, on some activities (e.g., training for ECOWAS staff, developing gender mainstreaming tools for ECOWAS) duplications have occurred with the EGDC.

According to several stakeholders (UNIFEM staff, CSOs, bilateral donors, UN agencies) the ECDG should have a leadership role in gender in the region, provide guidance, coordinate other organizations working in the field, identifying gaps and needs and finding ways to fill them. But the Centre appears to be currently focusing on activities that could be carried out effectively by other

organizations (training, etc.) instead of positioning itself at a more strategic level. According to several consulted stakeholders (UNIFEM, CSOs other donors) the role of the ECDG remains unclear because it is too broad. The new Strategic Plan is an example of this trend according to consulted stakeholders: in it the ECDG is trying to include activities at all levels, focusing both on ground level implementation and on providing a strategic and coordinating framework for gender initiatives in the region.

According to consulted stakeholders, given the lack of clear roles, the ECDG and the Gender Commission have a quite conflictual relationship which is not conducive for advancement on gender issues within ECOWAS. Several consulted stakeholders (including UNIFEM, some ECOWAS staff, CSOs and other UN agencies) believe that there is a need for some further thinking about the organizational structure of the Gender Division and of EGDC.

The lack of clear roles of the Gender division and of the EGDC makes it difficult for UNIFEM to identify a strategy to work with ECOWAS.

Difficult implementation at the national level. One of ECOWAS' main challenges is to ensure and monitor the implementation of its programmes and policies at the country level. On the one hand, ECOWAS lacks resources and systems to do so. On the other, ECOWAS Member States are often reluctant to introduce change as far as GE and WHR are concerned. Moreover NWMs in the region are generally regarded as very weak by consulted stakeholders (ECOWAS, UN agencies including UNIFEM, other donors, CSOs, government representatives in the two visited countries). According to the ECOWAS Gender Policy, NWMs should have an active role in overseeing and coordinating policy implementation at the national level. However, the Ministries responsible for gender equality and women's human rights in member states appear to play a modest role in monitoring the realization of ECOWAS gender policy. For example, at January 2009, there was no established mechanism for the Ministers to meet regularly and develop agenda items for Heads of State Meetings; we were informed by the Gender Devel-

opment Centre that the Ministers plan to establish such a mechanism in 2009.

Other key donors/development partners working with ECOWAS

Besides UNIFEM, ECOWAS received initial support for the development of its gender Policy and Management System from UNECA and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Other donors involved in gender-related initiatives with ECOWAS include:

- UNHCR: MOU since 2001. It's a general framework for collaboration. It is very dynamic. Implementation started in 2005. Support to build humanitarian capacity (emergency response team). Plus other activities.

- IOM – International Organisation for Migration

- UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

- Danida: support to the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Commission for the development of a framework for Women in Peace and Security issues)

- Sida – Swedish International Development Agency

- Italian Cooperation (support to Gender Centre in collaboration with UNIFEM)

UNIFEM Context

The merger of the West Africa Regional Offices

Until December 2007 two regional offices were present in West Africa. The Anglophone West Africa Regional Office, based in Abuja, and the Francophone West Africa Regional Office based in Dakar. These two offices were autonomous and equal. In January 2008 the two offices were merged. The new West Africa Regional office is now based in Dakar, while the Abuja Office was transformed in a Country office. The merger had significant consequences, in particular for the Abuja office. The transition of the UNIFEM office in Nigeria from a regional to a country office has affected the morale and reputation of the UNIFEM office there. Many external stakeholders as well as some internal stakeholders expressed their concern about this change, noting the implications it has had on the independence and authority of the Nigerian office.

Human Resources

UNIFEM staff both in Abuja and Dakar offices are recognised among their partners for their technical capacities and commitment to GE and WHR.

Both the Dakar and the Abuja offices have known significant turnover at the senior level in the recent years. The current West Africa RPD joined the Dakar office in 2006 (the previous RPD became the Chief of Africa Section). The former Anglophone West -Africa RPD left in December 2007 (to become the liaison officer with the AU). This turnover affected the institutional memory of the organization in the region and in some cases affected strategic relationships (There is evidence that this happened in the case of the relationship with ECOWAS).

At January 2009, the post of Nigeria Country Programme Manager, vacant since January 2008, was staffed by an acting Country Programme Manager and the recruitment process was underway. The absence of an appointed Country Programme Manager in Abuja appears to have limited UNIFEM's leadership and engagement in Nigeria. UNIFEM is still providing technical leadership, for example within the UNCT GE. However, what appears to have diminished is its ability to “pull its weight” at the higher political level.

Financial Resources

The UNIFEM Dakar office budget in 2008 was USD 7,142,068.28. According to UNIFEM staff, since 2006 the financial situation of that office has improved because UNIFEM has been able to leverage more non-core funding (especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone). It has generally been more difficult for UNIFEM (and other donors) to leverage resources for Nigeria (because of its wealth due to oil). Some internal redistribution can take place.

UNIFEM has scarce financial resources. Moreover in West Africa it has a one-year budgeting cycle and most of programming depends on non-core funding. Even if implementation plans are usually done on a 4-year basis, funding is available on a yearly basis. This situation does not allow multi-year commitments and is largely viewed by interviewed UNIFEM staff and its partners as an obstacle in building long-lasting and sustainable partnerships. It

also reduces the possibility for UNIFEM to follow up on the projects it funded. Several stakeholders lamented the lack of follow-up activities by UNIFEM of funded projects. In several cases UNIFEM initiated an activity that at the end of the project period had to be abandoned (or funded by other donors) because funding was not renewed. (For example the provision of a gender expert to the HUB for Gender Mainstreaming in ECOWAS Agriculture Common Policy or the organization of the Association of Women Lawyers Annual Meetings). Partners recognised UNIFEM's inputs in terms of its expertise and technical support, but are disappointed in terms of the amount of financial resources it brings. In some cases, this seems to reduce some partners' interest in partnering with UNIFEM. In others, although partners recognised UNIFEM's leadership on gender issues they are obliged to knock on other doors in order to obtain financial support.

UNIFEM's role

UNIFEM is the only UN agency exclusively dedicated to gender and is regarded as the leading agency on gender issues by several interviewed stakeholders (CSOs, ECOWAS, governments, other UN agencies). Several stakeholders consider UNIFEM as the natural place to go when working on gender issues. UNIFEM is also recognised for its multiple links and working relationships with CSOs and National Women's Machineries. UNIFEM also generates and disseminates documents, supports women political participation, etc. UNIFEM is deemed different from other donors/UN agencies because it provides technical assistance and capacity-building more than funding. UNIFEM's reputation is sometimes hindered by its limited resources and ability to commit on the long-term (see previous point).

Results

Exhibit 2.3 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM-ECOWAS Relationship

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	ECOWAS Gender Policy, Guidelines for Establishment of a Gender Management System for ECOWAS, Gender Strategic Plan Framework adopted	UNIFEM has contributed significantly to the development of these documents and to the process leading to their approval. But there is little evidence that the guiding policies and frameworks have been utilized to inform, guide and/or monitor ECOWAS actions in regard to gender. Moreover the Gender Policy does not appear to influence gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS member states.	ECOWAS
	ECDG established and functioning	UNIFEM was instrumental in the creation of the ECDG. But the Centre is not currently playing the role that it was expected to because of resources, capacities and leadership issues.	ECOWAS NWMs
	Common Approach to Migrations Engendered	UNIFEM participated in the Expert meeting held in Ghana in May 2007, provided input for revising Common approach incorporating gender	ECOWAS Member States
	The president of ECOWAS appears to be recognising UNIFEM expertise.	Stakeholders mentioned that thanks to high level policy dialogue between the President of ECOWAS and UNIFEM, UNIFEM was requested to provide its input on the Common approach to migrations.	UNIFEM
New knowledge regarding GE/WHR			
Enhanced capacities regarding GE/WHR	Member States FPs, ECOWAS Staff, NWM and other Women representatives participated in several training (e.g., gender audit, GRB) and events.	UNIFEM provided its support to several training initiatives. There is very limited evidence though that the participation to these training has actually led to enhanced and applied capacities of the participants. According to some UNIFEM staff the main result obtain through this investments has been to have a political entry point and to gain some access and visibility at the ministerial level in the member states.	UNIFEM

Sustainability

The evaluation team observed some serious weaknesses concerning the sustainability of the results of UNIFEM-ECOWAS partnership:

- The results of the first phase (Development of the Gender Policy and Management System) have not been sustained by ECOWAS. After being adopted, these documents have not been used to inform gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS, resources have not been allocated for their implementation, and there has been no monitoring of their rolling out. At present they are scarcely known by some of the main stakeholders (inside ECOWAS and UNIFEM). The presence of a UNIFEM funded Gender Advisor in ECOWAS between 2002 and 2005 was considered effective for the development of a policy and framework for gender mainstreaming in ECOWAS, but not for sustaining its use and application. When this support ended, ECOWAS was not able to institutionalize the obtained results and to provide internal leadership for gender mainstreaming.
- Most of UNIFEM's subsequent investments with ECOWAS have been activity-based, short-term mostly isolated interventions⁹⁸, with no resources allocated for follow up (e.g., support to training, forums, events). These types of investments do not tend to bring sustainable results.
- The renewed relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS President might be a positive factor for increasing institutional ownership and thus sustainability of current UNIFEM's activities with ECOWAS.

Partnership Management

According to UNIFEM staff, the relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS was jointly initiated by the Anglophone and Francophone West Africa Regional offices, as they were both covering ECOWAS member states. Over time, the deployment of this relationship has been dictated by geographic proximity: the Abuja office became responsible for the relationship with the ECOWAS Commission in Nigeria while the Dakar office managed the relationship with the ECOWAS Gender Centre in Dakar. Many of the interviewed stakeholders have pointed out that in effect, UNIFEM had two parallel relationships with ECOWAS, mainly because of how UNIFEM is organ-

ized on the ground, without a formally defined umbrella strategy⁹⁹ or overall partnership agreement with ECOWAS.

This situation appears to be changing. Following the merger in December 2007, Abuja office became a Country Office reporting to the West Africa Regional Office in Dakar. Although country offices can initiate activities, the responsibility for developing and nurturing high level strategic partnerships lies in the regional manager as part of the regional strategy. This has led to the Dakar office taking the lead for high level-strategic discussion with ECOWAS Commission and for making strategic choices on how and where to engage with ECOWAS. However, due to geographic proximity, the Abuja office still carries out the day-to-day groundwork with the Commission. The Abuja office reports some difficulties and frustrations in implementing this task because of limited and over-stretched human resources and the lack of autonomous financial resources.

There is evidence that personal commitment and relationships between UNIFEM RPDs and key ECOWAS staff and other local stakeholders was crucial in building the initial relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS (both with the Commission and ECDG). The departure of the former RPDs in 2006 and 2007 appears to have affected to some extent the continuity of the relationship and some of the trust-building work that had been carried out in the past, in particular given the lack of an overall strategy for engagement with ECOWAS. Since 2007 the new RPD and officers have been working to build renewed relationships and trust with ECOWAS.

Given the absence of an overall strategy on UNIFEM's side or of an MOU defining objectives and expected mutual benefits of the partnership, the relationships between UNIFEM and ECOWAS have evolved reacting to emerging opportunities over time, in a rather ad hoc manner and on the basis of short term activity/project agreements.

⁹⁸ Even if in some cases these initiatives were related to wider UNIFEM programmes, for example Gender-Responsive Budgeting and the Regional Programme to End Violence.

⁹⁹ Informants mentioned that there were some informal efforts in this area, especially at the beginning.

Challenges

The potential added value of the relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS is limited in practice by several factors:

- As far as UNIFEM is concerned, two offices have been in charge of the relationship with ECOWAS to date, on the basis of geographic proximity and personal relationships. UNIFEM staff also mentioned a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities as far as the relationship with ECOWAS is concerned; this emerged clearly with the senior staff turnover and the merger of the two SROs. Staff also mentioned as a hindering factor the fact of being constantly overworked and the lack of time to dedicate to nurturing the relationship with ECOWAS. This affects the quantity and quality of communication between UNIFEM and ECOWAS, the ability to plan and attend meetings, the familiarity with ECOWAS key people and documents. UNIFEM also has very limited financial resources to invest in the relationship with ECOWAS and can commit only on a very short-term basis. UNIFEM mainly provides technical support, but ECOWAS voiced the need for more significant, predictable and long-term financial support.
- ECOWAS has limited human and financial resources and capacities as far as gender is concerned. This affects both leadership and programme delivery on gender. ECOWAS is also affected by mixed member states buy-in on gender issues. Many stakeholders pointed out ECOWAS' added value is mainly in advocacy, policy development, influencing national policies, etc. Organizations wanting to partner with ECOWAS, such as UNIFEM, should support ECOWAS' most strategic activities.
- The UNIFEM-ECOWAS relationship has developed over time in an ad-hoc, activity-based, short-term manner. Given the lack of a partnership framework that articulates the objectives of such a relationship and the expected mutual benefits, activities have responded to emerging opportunities and to the presence of motivated champions on both sides. This approach has a significant impact on the sustainability of the results of this relationship and on the ability to shape a strategic relationship beyond single activities.
- ECOWAS is the key subregional institution in West Africa. Association with ECOWAS provides UNIFEM with the potential to access the top political leaders of the region, for the purpose of influencing national and regional policies and decision-making, providing leverage that it would otherwise not have. ECOWAS provides UNIFEM with regional political legitimacy. It can also provide UNIFEM with additional knowledge and insights about the region's priority concerns and issues.
- Working through and with ECOWAS provides potential efficiencies for UNIFEM activities in the region; working with ECOWAS can multiply the effects of UNIFEM's interventions beyond the Commission to its 15 member states, even where UNIFEM does not have a field presence.
- Working with ECOWAS provides UNIFEM with the possibility of collaboration with ECOWAS' other partners, be they bilateral donors or other multilateral institutions, in keeping with the spirit of Paris declaration principles.
- There appear to be a trend among UN agencies to work more at the regional level with regional actors in order to address transnational issues (e.g., migration, HIV-Aids, peace and security), and provide another level for development work and coordination. Also more donors are willing to invest in regional programmes, as they may be better able to support them beyond traditional bilateral and multilateral channels. UNIFEM's work with ECOWAS fits this trend.

From ECOWAS' point of view, the main added values of partnering with UNIFEM are:

- technical expertise in gender (UNIFEM is the only UN agency specialized in gender)
- increased visibility and credibility among UN agencies and other donors
- contacts and entry points in the UN system
- UNIFEM is a global organization: it can bring to ECOWAS knowledge and lessons learned from other regions.

Opportunities

Despite the challenges mentioned above, according to consulted stakeholders, given UNIFEM's objectives and strategies in the region, ECOWAS has the *potential* to be a key partner in the region for several reasons. However there is limited evidence to assess whether and if this potential has been or will be realized.

According to consulted CSOs, the relationship between UNIFEM and ECOWAS is seen as an occasion for UNIFEM to play a bridging/facilitator role between CSOs and governments through ECOWAS. UNIFEM could work to make ECOWAS and its policies and tools more known to CSOs and it could bring CSOs voices to be heard inside ECOWAS. According to CSOs, there are some

important issues that have to be dealt at the regional level but that have very concrete results on poverty, women's empowerment, etc. on the ground (e.g., trade policy, economic agreements). On these issues, CSOs want to be able to raise some "red flags" and UNIFEM can facilitate this process.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The following lessons have emerged from this study:

- ECOWAS provides an important avenue to influence regional policy in a gender-sensitive way, especially since its reform increased the binding power of its decisions for its member states.
- UNIFEM's experience with ECOWAS has shown that the institutional approach does not guarantee sustainable change within the institution, unless it is sufficiently long-term and based on strong internal ownership and leadership mixed with technical capacities.
- The UNIFEM-ECOWAS relationship has shown that the lack of an overall partnership framework, identifying objectives and mutual benefits in relation to the partners own objectives and strategies, leads to sparse and not always strategic activities. Moreover it leaves the relationship very vulnerable to leadership or context changes. This consideration is particularly important given UNIFEM scarce resources and thus its need to strategically allocate them.
- Forging relationships with ECOWAS' President and the Gender Director, going beyond punctual activities with the ECDG and the Gender Division.
- Pushing for accreditation and an overall partnership agreement. Accreditation would allow UNIFEM to have a formal status within ECOWAS and to be able to attend all the meetings (while now it has to be invited). An overall partnership agreement would provide a multi-year framework for mutual engagement, spelling out objectives, expected mutual benefits and possible strategies to realize them. This is particularly important given UNIFEM's type of added value in a partnership. UNIFEM is appreciated for its technical support and expertise that can be best used in a longer term partnership. On the other hand, shorter-term partnerships, with a high focus on financial contributions would not be advisable for UNIFEM given its limited resources.
- Working at the programme/thematic level (e.g., migration, agriculture, peace and security,). Success built at this level would probably provide a good leverage to push ECOWAS toward a more encompassing gender mainstreaming effort. It would also help by-passing some of the complexities related to the unclear roles and "conflicting leaderships" within ECOWAS gender machinery.

On the basis of the experience gained so far in partnering with ECOWAS, and of the identified challenges and opportunities of this relationship, UNIFEM West Africa has already (informally) identified some possible next steps:

Our analysis fully supports the next steps identified by UNIFEM. A clear commitment should be made in this direction (at the corporate and regional levels) and clear roles and responsibilities in Dakar and Abuja offices should be defined in relation to it. Also champions within ECOWAS should clearly be identified and supported. Finally UNIFEM should clearly identify the areas in which a partnership with ECOWAS would contribute to advancing gender equality and women human rights in the region and those in which other types of partnerships (i.e., with National Women Machineries, CSOs, other UN agencies) would be more appropriate.

2.3 UNIFEM – ICGLR Partnership

Mission Dates: 2-6 February 2009

Mission Team: Universalia

Organizational Background

The idea of an international conference for the Great Lakes dates back to the second half of the 1990s in the aftermaths of the Rwandan Genocide and the spreading out of the crises to the Great Lakes Region. Designed as a joint United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and inter-State process to promote peace, security, democracy and development, the process leading to the creation of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) began in 1996 with the assigning of Special Envoys by then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to conduct initial consultations with states and experts in the region. In 2000 the UN Security Council adopted two resolutions 1291 and 1304 calling for an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the region. A small UN/AU secretariat of the Conference was created in Nairobi.

As a result of UN and AU diplomatic efforts, the initiative was launched in 2003. In the preparatory phase a multistage consultation and negotiation process convened State and non-State actors from across the region, alongside supportive members of the international community (the “group of Friends”). This process led to

the Dar- as- Salaam first Summit of Heads of States and Government in November 2004 that adopted the Dar-as-Salaam Declaration, containing the ICGLR objectives, vision, principles and main working themes.

Following this founding declaration, between 2004 and 2006 the Pact on Security Stability and Development in the Great Lakes region was developed which provided a comprehensive framework for regional cooperation. It was approved in December 2006 by the 11 Heads of State and it entered into force in June 2008. The contents of the Pact are outlined in the sidebar. The ICGLR currently counts 11 member states: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The Secretariat was established in December 2006 in Burundi. Ambassador Mulamula from Tanzania was appointed Executive Secretary. Currently the Secretariat is composed of: the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary, four Programme Officers, one Cross-Cutting Issues Officer, one Communications Officer as well as several support staff. In addition, the Secretariat receives support from a UNIFEM funded Gender Advisor as well as a GTZ Advisor.

Pact on Security, Stability and Development

10 protocols (establishing legal commitments among member states)

4 regional programmes of action in the 4 thematic pillars, each comprising several projects:¹⁰⁰

Democracy and good governance (5 projects)

Economic Development and Regional Integration (15 projects)

Humanitarian and Social Issues (7 projects)

Peace and Security (6 projects)

Cross-cutting themes: Gender, Environment, Human Rights, HIV/AIDS, Human Settlements.

Follow up mechanism, including the creation of an autonomous Secretariat in Bujumbura.

¹⁰⁰ Projects were conceived in order to translate the political commitment of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration and the Pact into action. They are intended to respond to those factors that affect security and stability in the region, when they have a transnational character (e.g., border issues, displaced people, etc). They should complement what member states are doing and fill noted gaps. They are also seen as a practical way to obtain UN and donors' support, where donors are seen as more willing to invest on a specific project in which they have expertise.

ICGLR and Cross-cutting issues (including Gender)

ICGLR employs a Cross-Cutting Issues Officer whose responsibilities include mainstreaming gender (as well as Environment, Human Rights, HIV/AIDS, and Human Settlements) in Conference activities and programmes. He receives some support from the UNIFEM-funded Gender Advisor in regard to his gender-related responsibilities. The Gender Advisor also works with others in the Secretariat including the Executive Secretary, and the Programme and Communications Officers. The ICGLR Secretariat does not have a gender unit or desk.

UNIFEM – ICGLR Partnership

History: UNIFEM has started supporting ICGLR since the preparatory phase. In 2003 UNIFEM received an invitation by the ICGLR Secretariat in Nairobi to provide support on gender mainstreaming within the Conference. Between 2003 and 2006 UNIFEM contracted a Gender Advisor based in Nairobi (who also liaised with UNIFEM’s Central Africa Regional Office) responsible for following all the preparatory meetings and making sure that gender was taken into consideration in the development of ICGLR. In particular the Gender Advisor worked for gender mainstreaming in the Pact and supported the development of the Protocol on Gender Based violence (GBV).

In the meantime, national consultative processes were taking place. UNIFEM supported the participation of women from the region in these processes.

Following the ICGLR Secretariat establishment in Bujumbura (December 2006), UNIFEM decided to continue its support to ICGLR Secretariat by placing a Gender Advisor within the Bujumbura-based new structure. Two so-called one-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been signed to date (June 2007 and December 2008) detailing the scope and extent of UNIFEM’S support to ICGLR. Moreover UNIFEM is the lead agency (with UNICEF) for the implementation of ICGLR’s Sexual Based Violence protocol/project (see “other donors”).

MOUs: During the preparatory phase, no formal MOUs were signed between ICGLR and UNIFEM. The first MOU

was signed in June 2007. This document provides for the recruitment of a Gender Advisor to be placed in the ICGLR Secretariat structure and describes the activities to be undertaken under this agreement. The duration of the MOU is one year and the total budget is \$140,000.

A second MOU was signed in December 2008, following the same model as the first. The duration is again one year; however, the allocated resources increased to US \$ 481,700. Four main areas of activity are identified:

- Strengthen women’s networks in the region (follow up on the establishment of the ICGLR Regional Women’s Forum, one of the projects under the Democracy Pillar)
- Support the establishment of the Gender Observatory within the Lusaka based Governance Centre (part of a project under the Democracy pillar)
- Support the implementation of the Protocol on Sexual Violence in member states
- Gender mainstreaming, capacity-building and advisory services (through the continuation of the contract of the Gender advisor for the year).

Based on our review of the documents as well as feedback from interviewed UNIFEM and ICGLR stakeholders, these MOUs do not capture the overarching rationale of the relationship between ICGLR and UNIFEM nor do they reflect overall objectives and practices of this relationship. Analysis indicates that they are more akin to project agreements than partnership agreements. There is no description of the rationale for the partnership, nor does it define shared long-term objectives, expected mutual benefits, nor roles (besides ICGLR accountabilities for the funds received). They are of short-term duration (one year) and mainly include details about resources and specific activities to be carried out. These MOUs appear to follow a standard funding agreement format that UNIFEM’s utilizes with organizations it funds. As a consequence they reflect UNIFEM’s funding mechanisms requirements, instead of providing a broader framework for collaboration, with clearly established long-term goals, mutual responsibilities and general guidelines for joint action, not necessarily tied to financial disbursement.

Partners and key strategies: The main partner is ICGLR Secretariat. The focal point for this partnership within the Secretariat is the Cross-Cutting Issues Officer, who is overall in charge of gender issues. UNIFEM provides both technical (mainly through the Gender Advisor) and financial support to ICGLR Secretariat. Other important partners are national and regional women’s organizations and CSOs.

To date, two main strategies¹⁰¹ have been used in this relationship:

- Institutional development: UNIFEM supports gender mainstreaming in ICGLR’s key documents, structures, protocols, project by providing a gender advisor to the Secretariat and technical backstopping and advice. UNIFEM also assists with capacity-building for RO staff.
- Support to gender advocates: UNIFEM provides support and mobilizes women’s organizations at the regional level in order to integrate their views in ICGLR’s process, decisions and programming.

Specific Activities/Initiatives:

- Between 2003 and 2006 UNIFEM provided support to the ICGLR by providing a Gender Advisor to the Nairobi-based Secretariat and supported the participation of Women in national consultative processes (see above).
- 2004: UNIFEM provided support to the Women’s Regional Meeting in October 2004. Attended by over 100 women, the Women’s Regional Meeting addressed for the first time in the region the specific needs of women in matters pertaining to peace and security, democracy and governance, economic and regional integration as well as humanitarian and social affairs. The meeting resulted in the Kigali Declaration which was later incorporated into the Dar-es- Salaam Declaration of the First Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2004. Financial and technical support was provided to women’s organizations and national coordination committees and national women’s machineries (NWM) to strengthen their capacities to make substantial inputs in the process.
- November 2007- present: UNIFEM supported the recruitment of a Gender Advisor who was attached to the ICGLR secretariat to support gender mainstreaming as a cross-

cutting issue in the Conference activities and programme of action. Thanks to the Gender Advisor’s technical assistance and to UNIFEM financial support the following activities were realized:

- Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects were developed, and support provided to programme officers for gender mainstreaming.
- Support was provided to the organization of the Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in the Implementation of the Pact on Security , Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (March 2008).
- Support was given to the production of sensitization materials, including posters and DVDs, to aid the dissemination of the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women
- Work visits were conducted in several member states to assess and monitor the domestication of the Pact and consult with local women’s organizations and NWM
- Preparatory work for the organization of the Regional Women Forum was conducted.

- June 2008: UNIFEM supported the organization of the Goma High-Level Consultation on Eradicating Sexual Violence. UNIFEM also provided support for the participation of women’s civil society organizations (CSOs) to attend the conference.

RO Context

The Great Lakes Region (GLR) has been massively affected by violent conflicts since the mid-1990s. Although conflicts are not new in the region, a peak in violence has been witnessed since the mid-1990s with the Rwandan genocide, the spill over of this conflict in neighbouring countries, the DRC conflict and its destabilizing effect on the whole region, and the Sudan conflict. Since the mid-1990s armed conflicts or violent crisis have occurred in 9¹⁰² of the 11 states in the region. It is important to note the regional nature of these conflicts. Violence crosses borders, conflicts spills from one country to another, putting the overall stability of the region at stake.

The consequences of these conflicts on the Region’s population have been dramatic. Millions of people have died during the conflicts or in their aftermath, and millions

101 These categories of strategies refer to the typology identified in the evaluation report, Section 3.3

102 Burundi, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Uganda, Sudan, Angola, Kenya, DRC

have been displaced. Violence has become endemic, and women have been among the main victims of it. Rape and other forms of GBV have been utilized as weapons in several countries of the region, and most recently in DRC.

States are extremely fragile in the region. Eight of the 11 countries in the region belong to the top 35 countries (“alert” code) according to the Failed States Index 2008 (Foreign Policy and Fund for peace. Available at www.fundforpeace.org), Sudan ranking 2nd and DRC 6th. This means that governments in most states in the region have no or very limited control over their territories and on the use of violence, are not perceived as legitimate by significant parts of the population, and do not provide or provide very limited security and basic social services to their populations. Nevertheless in some cases significant improvements have been observed, in particular in Rwanda (which is no longer in the alert zone according to the Index), Burundi and Uganda.

The Great Lakes region is also affected by extreme poverty and very low human development conditions. Seven of the 11 countries rank among the Low Human Development countries according to the 2008 UNDP Human Development Index; three (CAR, DRC and Burundi) are among the 10 least developed countries in the world.

The Region’s predominant cultural and traditional rules and practices define specific roles for men and women in society, hindering women’s equality and empowerment in many countries.

Several regional integration initiatives dovetail in the region, such as ECCA, EAC, IGAD and SADC. Many ICGLR member states are also part of other regional organizations. Several stakeholders have pointed out that the ICGLR has a specific role to play in the region because:

- It is the only organization that covers the whole Great Lakes Region (it goes beyond traditional subregions).
- While the original idea behind the other regional organizations is mainly economic integration (although it has evolved differently, e.g., IGAD), ICGLR’s main objective is to serve as a political process fostering peace, security and stability

in the region, and address the causes of instability within this main framework.

Nonetheless some stakeholders have pointed out that a “regional protocols-declarations-agreements fatigue” is present in the region, because of the multiplication of regional initiatives. This seems to be the case in particular for donors.

Importance given to gender equality and women’s human rights issues in ICGLR

As illustrated below, the ICGLR has shown its commitment to Gender Equality and Women Human rights since its inception. UNIFEM support has been largely instrumental to this.

- ICGLR founding documents have been engendered (Dar-es-Salaam Declaration and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development).
- One of ICGLR Protocols directly addresses Gender Based Violence (Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children) while other Protocols, of particular relevance to GE and WHR, have been engendered (Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to internally Displaced People, and the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons).
- Gender is one of the cross-cutting themes identified in the Pact.
- The ICGLR has been proactive in its efforts to mainstream gender in the implementation of the Pact. A “regional workshop on gender mainstreaming in the Implementation of the Pact on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region” was held in Bujumbura in March 2008 and gender mainstreaming guidelines for ICGLR programmes and projects are being developed (in particular for the Social Issues Pillar).

According to several consulted stakeholders, the ICGLR has gained a reputation in the region for its commitment to gender issues. This reputation is fostered by the personal commitment and credibility of the ICGLR Executive Secretary, who is seen as a champion for women’s participation in peace processes and the fight against GBV in various regional high level forums (most specifically in

the context of the new acute phase of the crisis in DRC). ICGLR has also shown its commitment to ending GBV by organizing the Goma High Level Consultation on Eradicating Sexual Violence (June 2008), that has led to the adoption of the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity In the Great Lakes Region.

At the organizational level, ICGLR Secretariat does not have a gender unit. As noted earlier, gender, as one of the 5 cross-cutting issues, falls under the responsibility of the Cross-Cutting Issues Officer together with Environment, Human Rights, HIV/AIDS, and Human Settlements. The Cross-Cutting Issues Officer does not have any dedicated ICGLR staff to assist him with any other of his diverse responsibilities. Interviewed stakeholders indicate that the support received from the UNIFEM funded gender advisor has allowed gender to achieve a higher level of attention and mainstreaming in ICGLR programming and has fostered more significant progress on gender priorities than on the other cross-cutting issues. Nevertheless, the post of Gender Advisor is not institutionalized in ICGLR Secretariat's organization chart and relies on external, short-term, funding.

Women's representation among Secretariat professional staff is low. Apart from the Executive Secretary, one out of six officers is a woman, and 2 of the 11 National Coordinators are women. This is related to the fact that most of the National Coordinators are highly ranked Foreign Service officers and in member states women are rarely found in these positions. Also, according to some, the location of the Secretariat in Burundi (post-conflict, non family duty-station) appears to have discouraged well qualified female applicants.

ICGLR influence on regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities:

ICGLR is still very new. Its political framework for cooperation (the Pact) and its legal instruments (the protocols) have been signed by its eleven member states and constitute the first regional corpus of commitments in favour of peace, security and development. It is still premature to assess the extent to which these protocols have influenced domestic policies to date. National

Coordination Mechanisms (NCM) have also been created in each member state, but in most cases they are just getting started.

Despite its young age, ICGLR has shown its ability to assume a regional mediation role by undertaking a proactive role in peace talks, negotiations and summits in Kenya, Burundi, and DRC.

Obstacles to ICGLR's commitment to and/or influence related to GE/WHR:

ICGLR is very young and has limited human and financial resources and internal capacities. Nevertheless it has very ambitious objectives and a very broad area of focus as established in the Pact, in the Protocols and in the Projects. Moreover ICGLR seems to operate at a double level: operational (project development and oversight) and political (mediation, influence, etc). All this might impact on ICGLR's ability to realise its objectives.

The implementation of ICGLR's Pact relies on one main assumption: that National Coordination Mechanisms will be responsible for its implementation; the Secretariat is only expected to coordinate and provide oversight. However, experience to date suggests that NCMs are very weak and have not been able to assume active roles in Pact implementation.

The Secretariat appears understaffed given ICGLR ambitious objectives as well as the limited capacities of NCMs. While in theory ICGLR Programme Officers should only coordinate and monitor Member States' efforts to implement the Pact, in practice, they are assuming a much more active role in implementation as National Mechanisms are very weak.

ICGLR staff report that its Member States' contributions are not sufficient for implementing ICGLR programme. Thus, programme implementation assumes the participation of external donors (see next point). ICGLR is highly dependent on external donors for the operationalization of its programmes from both technical and financial perspectives.

Other key donors/development partners working with ICGLR

The UN and the AU were instrumental in initiating the ICGLR and hosted its Secretariat until 2006. Also a “Group of Friends” was created comprising bilateral and multilateral development partners providing financial, diplomatic, technical and political support to the process. But after 2006, with the creation of the new Secretariat in Bujumbura, the UN agencies and the AU assumed a lower profile. Also the Group of Friends has ceased its activities, although some development partners are still providing support to the ICGLR in an autonomous way (e.g., GTZ). To some extent this was planned: at the inception of the Secretariat, it was agreed that the AU and the UN would withdraw to allow the Secretariat to run as such, the idea being of giving the Secretariat space for operation and affirming the fact that the preparatory process was over. However two main reasons have been mentioned by interviewed stakeholders to explain why the UN and AU have kept this low profile since the establishment of the Secretariat.

- Logistical challenges: All UN agencies have their regional presence in Nairobi while the ICGLR Secretariat is in Bujumbura, making liaison difficult. (Many of the agencies are present in Bujumbura but not necessarily with a regional mandate.)
- Political/strategic challenges: UN agencies want to see what the ICGLR can do on its own before providing support. According to some stakeholders within the UN family it is time for ICGLR to prove member states ownership and reliability. Other strategic issues are internal to the UN family (i.e., definition of thematic leadership among agencies, identification of typology of partnerships with ICGLR – on specific issues or on a wider basis – coordination among UN agencies in supporting ICGLR, visibility concerns in defining support strategies and priorities) coordination in support to ROs.

Since the implementation phase has started, the Secretariat has been seeking the support of UN agencies and other development partners for the implementation of its projects. In June 2008 it organized thematic workshops with donors and UN agencies to seek their support, establish workplans, and revise projects. As far as the projects and protocols under the Humanitarian and Social Issues Pillar are concerned, UN agencies are in the process of putting into place a coordination mechanism to support their implementation (see sidebar).

UN coordinated support to the Humanitarian and Social Affairs Pillar

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – Regional Office for Central and Eastern Africa has been identified as the coordinating agency for UN support to the implementation of ICGLR’s protocols and projects under the Humanitarian and Social Issues Pillar (this includes sexual based violence, displaced people and so forth). OCHA has established a Nairobi-based Steering Committee for UN support to the implementation of the protocols and projects under the Humanitarian Pillar. The Steering Committee can be called by OCHA or the Secretariat. Under OCHA overall coordination, each project in the Humanitarian and Social Issues Pillar will have a lead agency (responsible for accompanying the implementation and mobilizing resources) and each lead agency should develop and sign an MOU with ICGLR.

There was a common format circulated, but no agreement has been reached so far and no MOUs have been signed. After long negotiations UNIFEM and UNICEF have been identified as co-leads for the Sexual Based Violence protocol/project. Discussions are still underway on roles and responsibilities, coordination and on how to integrate UNIFEM’s current MOU with ICGLR within this broader picture. In the meantime UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) have provided support or organized autonomous initiatives with/around ICGLR in relation to the Humanitarian and Social Issues Pillar but with no coordination.

Several interviewed UN agencies and Donors have indicated that in their opinions the primary “added value” of the conference is its work at political level, as a facilitator, mediator, and convener and its influence in regional and national peace processes and policies. Many of those interviewed acknowledged that they (i.e., UN agencies and Donors) should provide support for these high level political activities; however, in practice, they tend to support very operational projects. There is a serious disconnect between what those interviewed say they *believe* and what they *do* (see sidebar). This may be due to several reasons, including the fact that it is easier for partner organizations to obtain support from the UN on the basis of operational project plans than for less measurable strategic or political objectives. The process recently started by ICGLR to obtain UN support is based on this assumption. Another reason may be the fact that the people in UN agencies who are responsible on an everyday basis for this partnership are closer to the implementation side than to the political/strategic side.

The current relationship between ICGLR and AU is not clear. The legal status of ICGLR in respect to the AU and the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) is not defined. As the AU-led African integration process is becoming more and more important, some donors have expressed some concerns in providing support to ICGLR as they do not see how it fit into the bigger picture.

UN coordinated support to the Humanitarian and Social Affairs Pillar

“UN agencies are all going towards this direction becoming more and more operational in their relationships with ROs. In the case of ICGLR the reason why the UN started the whole process was because they identified the need for a regional political body to deal with the conflict situation in the Great lakes region. But now what the UN agencies are doing is to get involved in the implementation of the projects. UN agencies are actually weakening most of the ROs by pushing them towards being more and more operational, a role that they should not have (but a way for them to obtain money from the donors). There is a need for “policy people to work on these partnerships.” UN agency representative

UNIFEM Context

UNIFEM’s Central Africa Regional Office (CARO) was created in 2002 (previously Central Africa was under the responsibility of the Kenya Office). The Burundi office has been officially a Country Office reporting to CARO since 2006 (before it was only implementing specific projects).

According to the majority of consulted stakeholders the main strengths of UNIFEM in the region are the following:

- Its specific thematic focus on gender

- Its credibility as a member of the UN family

- The high level of technical expertise and experience of its staff, that leads to UNIFEM’s ability to provide highly valued advisory, technical backstopping and facilitation services

- Its good knowledge of the regional context, environment, stakeholders. This allows UNIFEM to provide respected mediation services (e. g. between CSOs and decision-makers).

- UNIFEM is considered flexible, agile and more approachable than other larger UN agencies. It is also seen as more innovative and catalytic.

- UNIFEM has a good track record in working with CSOs in the region in particular in the context of the Peace process and has had a recognised positive role in promoting gender and women’s participation in peace processes in the region. UNIFEM is also recognised in its fight against GBV and in favour of women political participation.

UNIFEM’s main challenges in the region are:

- Its limited financial resources and overstretched staff (this is not specific to the region, in general UNIFEM resources are considered limited)

- Short-term funding: usually UNIFEM can engage with partners for very short periods (max. one year). This also limits UNIFEM’s ability to invest in follow up/monitoring of its investments.

Results

Key results of the UNIFEM-ICGLR partnership are listed in the table below. Overall, ICGLR is in early stages of the life cycle. The set up of the Secretariat and of the other Structures (e.g., NCM) occupied most of 2007 and to

some extent is still on-going. ICGLR entered the so called implementation phase only very recently (e.g., review of Projects, Thematic workshops etc.) and it is thus premature to look for significant results. Our analysis shows that UNIFEM contributed to the achievement of “preliminary” results (e.g., engendering documents, protocols, etc). In

the meantime ICGLR has been involved in several political and negotiation initiatives in the region (e.g., Kenya and DRC): some stakeholders mentioned that the relationship between UNIFEM and ICGLR has influenced the way gender issues were addressed in these situations, although clear attribution is impossible.

Exhibit 2.4 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – AU Partnership

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	Gender mainstreamed in all main ICGLR documents (Declaration, Pact, Protocols, projects)	UNIFEM input in engendering documents through constant support of gender advisor since the preparatory phase has been widely recognised. To date, there is no evidence of any trickle down effects at the national level. There are some concerns about the sustainability of such results because of the lack of institutionalization of the role of the gender advisor with ICGLR; it is not evident that the already overburdened Cross-Cutting Officer or others have the capacity or resources to sustain activities being undertaken by the Gender Advisor if/when her contract is completed.	ICGLR Member States
	Women recognised as one of the interlocutors in peace processes at the regional level	UNIFEM’s lobbying for and support to women’s participation in the early stages of ICGLR process contributed to the affirmation of the principle that women, even when not representing one of the combating parties, need to have a voice in peace processes. This approach had already been utilized by UNIFEM at the national level in Burundi and Rwanda; ICGLR provided an opportunity to affirm this principle at the regional level and to integrate gender considerations in peace processes in the region. For example, Women Regional Meeting requests identified in Kigali were integrated in the Dar-as-Salaam Declaration. There is evidence that ICGLR is currently implementing this principle when dealing with new conflict situations (e.g., DRC). For example Gender considerations were included in ICGLR’s action on DRC conflict (solidarity action to DRC women during the Nairobi Summit).	ICGLR Member States Women’s Organizations
New knowledge Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights	Regional Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming: increased knowledge and awareness on gender mainstreaming among stakeholders.	UNIFEM provided technical and financial support to this workshop (with GTZ).	ICGLR ICGLR National Coordination Mechanisms
Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights	CSOs and women organizations increased capacity to participate in High Level Forums (e.g., Kigali, Goma)	UNIFEM has contributed to the mobilization and organization of CSOs at the regional level and has provided financial, logistic and technical support for their effective participation at these meetings	Women’s Organizations

Sustainability

UNIFEM support to ICGLR has extended over several years since the beginning of the ICGLR process. This allowed UNIFEM to contribute to embedding gender considerations in all ICGLR founding documents and to instilling gender mainstreaming as an institutional principle.

Nevertheless, some concerns about the sustainability of UNIFEM's results with ICGLR remain:

- Because of its internal mechanisms, UNIFEM's financial commitments are usually short-term (maximum 1 year). In the case of the Gender Advisor and other ongoing activities planned for 2009, there is no clear plan on what will happen after the end of the current MOU and to what extent and how her position and contributions and other activities initiated with this support will be institutionalized by ICGLR. Moreover, at present there is no formalized vision about UNIFEM-ICGLR relationship beyond 2009.
- Another concern relates to the relatively large financial commitment being provided by UNIFEM to ICGLR for one year (over \$US 450K).¹⁰³ Given ICGLR capacity constraints, such a high level of support has the risk of contributing to an over dependency on UNIFEM. However some UNIFEM staff pointed out that if on the one side this risk exists, on the other ICGLR needs more support in this phase of its evolution (the beginning of the implementation phase) and that over time the gender unit will develop its capacities in fund raising and UNIFEM will progressively be able to reduce its contribution.
- UNIFEM's current MOU with ICGLR includes support for the creation of a Gender Observatory in Lusaka (as well as strengthen women's networks in the region support the implementation of the Protocol on Sexual Violence in member states). Given noted capacity and budgetary constraints within ICGLR, it is unclear how a Gender Observatory will be sustained by ICGLR. Given UNIFEM resources and the respective roles of UNIFEM and ICGLR there is a concern that UNIFEM is not focusing enough and not strategizing on what are the priority areas for support in ICGLR (especially with the new MOU). There is a risk that UNIFEM is "spreading itself too thin" on different activities instead of focusing on a selected few. A more focused strategy would permit more resources to be dedicated to in-depth and follow-up activities that would increase the sustainability of results.

Partnership Management

ICGLR's regional coverage and structure do not dovetail easily with that of UNIFEM. Several UNIFEM regional offices and national offices have roles/potential roles to play in the partnership with ICGLR. This affects the partnership management and ownership on UNIFEM side.

- UNIFEM follows a general rule that the partnership responsibility falls under the SRO in which the RO's Headquarters are located. Since 2007 CARO has become responsible for the partnership with ICGLR because ICGLR Headquarters moved to Burundi. It developed the MOU and according to it CARO RPD has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the partnership. Previously the UNIFEM office responsible for the Partnership was Nairobi because the ICGLR Secretariat was located there during its preparatory phase.
- UNIFEM's East and Horn of Africa Subregional Office based in Nairobi is still responsible for attending all UN and donor coordination mechanisms on ICGLR, because they take place in Nairobi. According to UNIFEM staff in Nairobi, one person has been identified in that UNIFEM office to follow up on ICGLR related meetings.
- Only five of the ICGLR member states are under the responsibility of CARO. Four of them are under the East and Horn of Africa SRO (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan) and two (Angola and Zambia) under the Southern Africa Regional Office. This poses a challenge because UNIFEM SROs cannot decide on any expenditures in countries that fall outside their geographic control (even if one of them has the leadership over a regional partnership).
- The office in Bujumbura is a country office. It does not have authority over the ICGLR partnership. However, because of the geographic proximity, the country officer is performing day-to-day contacts and ground work with the Secretariat. The Burundi Country officer defines herself a "Focal Point" for the partnership. This responsibility is not part of her TORs, so this work is done on a voluntary basis.

¹⁰³ We are not able to calculate what percentage of ICGLR total budget this contribution represents because ICGLR financial information was not made available to the evaluation team. However the dramatic increase of the contribution (more than tripled in one year) may pose some challenges in terms of absorption.

This situation requires high level of coordination among UNIFEM stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring activities and effective regular communication. It also requires clearly defined roles and responsibilities. At present, there are no formal guidelines or systems in place in UNIFEM for this. According to interviewed UNIFEM staff, communication and coordination takes place in an ad hoc way and on the basis of personal initiatives.

Challenges

The main challenges that the UNIFEM-ICGLR partnership faces are:

- The absence of a long-term vision about the purpose of UNIFEM-ICGLR relationship (beyond the current 1-year MOU).

- The broad focus encompassed by UNIFEM support to ICGLR. UNIFEM is currently providing significant financial support, in a very short-time framework (1 year) to work on many areas of activities and at many levels (both political and operational). Given the limited resources and capacities on both sides, there is a risk that this broad focus will negatively affect the effectiveness and sustainability of this relationship.

- Unclear ownership and leadership on UNIFEM's side and limited formal coordination among involved UNIFEM offices. This makes it difficult for both organizations to establish a clear long-term vision about the partnership and for UNIFEM to clarify the expected contribution of this partnership to UNIFEM's strategies and investments in the region.

Opportunities

According to the majority of consulted stakeholders, the partnership with ICGLR provides UNIFEM with:

- Possibility to influence decision making and peace processes at the regional level

- Access to the Ministerial level and a potential entry point even in countries where UNIFEM does not have a field presence.

- Opportunity to learn best practices in peace, security and development in the region.

From ICGLR's point of view, UNIFEM has brought the relationship valued and steady technical advice, besides significant financial support (in more recent times).

Moreover UNIFEM has brought its experience in working with CSOs. The partnership with ICGLR has allowed UNIFEM to bring CSOs and women's organisations' voices into ICGLR processes and more generally into peace negotiations and processes at the regional level.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

- 1 The early engagement of UNIFEM with ICGLR has built trust and credibility among partners and has led to some remarkable immediate results in terms of integrating gender in ICGLR's key documents and protocols and in supporting the reputation of ICGLR in terms of commitment to GE and WHR in the region. These efforts appear to be strengthened by the involvement of CSOs in this process (i.e., a top-down and bottom-up strategy). Nonetheless UNIFEM engagements through short-term, activity-bound agreements may affect the sustainability of such results. Experiences from other subregions have shown that institutional change and capacity-building on Gender Mainstreaming take a very long time and that when the support of external advisors ends the likelihood of the results being sustained and institutionalized depends on both internal leadership and ownership, as well as the systems and structures that have been created over time. In the case of ICGLR, there is no clear plan of how gender mainstreaming will continue after the end of the current MOU with UNIFEM. This poses a threat to the sustainability of the results obtained to date.

- 2 There appears to be a strong rationale for UNIFEM to engage with ICGLR. Although UNIFEM's priority is to obtain results at the national level, ROs are relevant to UNIFEM as far as they enhance the negotiation power of the countries at the regional and global levels, and provide avenues for high level advocacy and influence among peers (the member states). There is wide agreement among UNIFEM and other UN agencies that this is the main rationale for engaging with ROs, and specifically ICGLR. While this is clear conceptually, it is less clear in practice in regard to how the partnership is developed and managed. According to interviewed stakeholders UNIFEM's relationship with ICGLR, makes sense at the political level (advocacy, influencing policies, etc) but less so at the operational level (supporting the implementation of projects). In practice UNIFEM support is addressing both levels, with a noted shift towards the operational level (see new MOU and activities within the OCHA Steering Committee). This could be due to a number of factors including; a) the lack of clear UNIFEM guidelines

on how to develop and implement these relationships; b) the capacities available on the ground (UNIFEM national offices are more involved in operational than political activities); or c) the lack of clarity on where the ownership for this relationships rests within UNIFEM. This lack of clear focus could affect the extent to which the partnership with ICGLR will be able to contribute to UNIFEM's objectives in the future.

3 Partnership leadership and ownership for ICGLR are not clearly located inside UNIFEM. Interviews indicate fragmentation among 2-3 UNIFEM regional offices and one country office because of the lack of clear guidelines or well established corporate practices on this subject. In addition UNIFEM HQ, in accordance to UNIFEM's administrative processes, signs all the partnerships agreements above a certain amount, including the one with ICGLR. Given the political and strategic level at which this relationship seem to find its rationale (see point 2), there appears to be an argument for regional (as opposed to subregional) or corporate level ownership and leadership.

4 In order to address the previous issues, alternative ways to manage this relationship should be considered. The majority of the consulted UNIFEM staff appeared open to alternative management modalities. Two main options are favoured:

- Identifying a UNIFEM office/person responsible for partnerships with regional organizations at HQ level
- Establishing a liaison office for African ROs including ICGLR in the UNIFEM AU Liaison office in Addis.

In both cases this office would be seen as responsible for developing strategies, priorities, mobilizing resources and so forth. The ground work could then be delegated to specific field offices on the basis of clear TORs.

5 The current MOU does not reflect the overall objectives and practices of the relationship between UNIFEM and ICGLR. At present it is limited to a time and resource-bound project-agreement type of document. Both ICGLR and UNIFEM key staff expressed an interest in developing a formal "relationship agreement" that defined the rationale for the relationship, the benefits of the relationship for both sides, the roles of different players, as well as review and consultative mechanisms. The focus would be on a longer term vision for the relationship instead of specific, short-term monetary commitments. Such a document would provide a framework for developing the relationship between UNIFEM and ICGLR in a way that it could contribute to the two organizations' objectives in the region. Given UN coordination efforts to support ICGLR and develop several MOUs with leading UN agencies, some stakeholders suggested the idea of developing a one-UN MOU with ICGLR (as is the case for the SADC).

"Having a "regional mechanisms liaison office" for the whole of Africa seems a good idea. But this should really be at the policy/political level. Having it in Addis could make sense but there is a risk that being close to the field would make it become too operational. The solution could be to have it in NY (corporate ownership), with clearly identified focal people in the field (with good policy analysis skills). If UNIFEM could focus on the policy and political aspects of its relationships with ROs less resources would be needed, because there would be no implementation. In this way they could find the money for dedicated people."

UNIFEM field staff representative

"I propose to have a person responsible of RO for each section (Ex: Africa Section) and present at the field level and not at HQ because UNIFEM needs to be more present on the field and the other reason is to facilitate contacts and communication with RO."

UNIFEM field staff representative

2.4 UNIFEM – SADC Partnership

Mission Dates: 29 January - 2 February 2009

Mission Team: Universalis, UNIFEM EU

Organizational Background

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been in existence since 1980, when it was formed as a loose alliance of nine states in Southern Africa known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), with the main aim of coordinating development projects in order to lessen economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. The transformation of the organization from a Coordinating Conference into a Development Community (SADC) took place on 17 August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia when the Declaration and Treaty was signed at the Summit of Heads of State and Government thereby giving the organization a legal character. SADC headquarters are located in Gaborone, Botswana.

The SADC Gender Unit

The SADC Gender Unit was established in 1996¹⁰⁴ following SADC Member States' initiatives to mainstream gender perspectives and concerns in their policies, plans and programmes. The Gender Unit is responsible for advising on matters pertaining to gender mainstreaming and empowerment strategies and providing strategic direction in gender mainstreaming to the SADC Secretariat and Member States.

In its Declaration on Gender and Development, SADC commits to the establishment of a Gender unit with a minimum of two staff members, and at present the unit has just these two staff. This is widely regarded as too small given the GU's responsibilities. Over the past years SADC has undergone several restructurings which led to staff expansions in many other units, while the gender unit has remained at the same size. There are plans to add

gender Focal Points in SADC's thematic directorates. To date, only one such Focal Point has been appointed, in the Directorate of Social and Human Development. Her position is funded by the African Development Bank. CIDA has announced its interest in funding an additional three such positions.

According to consulted GU staff, the unit's budget is considerably smaller than that of any other unit in SADC.¹⁰⁵ Only approximately 3% of the gender unit's current budget is supplied by SADC member states. The rest is provided by international donors.

Several consulted stakeholders indicated that the GU's position has been weakened in the past five years or so, as initially (under its first director) the GU reported directly to the SADC Executive Secretary, which was widely regarded as providing it with enhanced opportunities to be heard and acknowledged. Following SADC restructuring and changes of ES and GU director, the unit no longer had direct access to the ES, but reports to a Director responsible for several cross-cutting issues. At the same time it is still considered an advantage that the GU is not (yet) integrated in one of SADC's thematic directorates, but is still in a position that at least formally legitimizes its work at the institutional level across directorates.

¹⁰⁴ There appears to be uncertainty about the actual date of its establishment – information derived from the SADC website, and from consultations with different stakeholders gave 1996, 1997 and 1998 as possible dates of its establishment.

¹⁰⁵ We did not find information on the GU's exact budget and its comparison to that of other SADC units. Next to all consulted stakeholders indicated however that the unit's financial resources (as well as its human resources) were very limited.

UNIFEM – SADC Partnership

History: UNIFEM has supported SADC’s gender programme since 1992. The initial 1992-1998 SADC gender programme that was supported by UNIFEM has been evaluated in 1999, but – so far – we have not been able to get hold of this document. One consulted stakeholder noted that the initial UNIFEM-SADC programme provided a basis for institutionalizing gender in SADC by establishing the GU as it raised wide awareness about the existing gaps and needs regarding GE issues. The current relationship between UNIFEM and the SADC GU appears to be close and personal, with the GU frequently seeking informal advice from the UNIFEM SRO in Johannesburg via phone or email. UNIFEM has provided modest financial assistance to various SADC GU initiatives. Its technical expertise and assistance is at least, if not more valued though than its financial support.

MOUs: UNIFEM and SADC have collaboration agreements for specific projects/initiatives that UNIFEM provides financial assistance for and provides UNIFEM with regular reports on these initiatives. There is no overarching MOU describing the parameters for ongoing institutional collaboration. This may change soon in that there are plans to establish an ‘umbrella MOU’ between the UN as a whole and SADC.

Partners and key strategies:

- Provide financial and technical support to the SADC gender unit – mostly for specific initiatives/processes, but also on an ad hoc basis if and as needed.
- Provide financial and technical assistance to the gender programme of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

Specific Activities/Initiatives:

- **Related to the SADC Gender Unit:** Provide financial and technical support to Civil Society Organizations and National Women’s Machineries to successfully advocate for the establishment of a SADC Gender Unit, and to be actively engaged in consultation and advocacy processes related to the GU’s work, in particular around the SADC Gender Policy and the SADC Gender Protocol. In particular, UNIFEM has provided assistance for coordination and planning meetings that have allowed different CSOs from across

the region to come together and develop joint strategies. UNIFEM has further provided advice and technical input whenever needed.

- **With the SADC Gender Unit:** Financial and technical support to the development of SADC Gender Policy (2007), Financial and technical support the development and dissemination of the draft Gender and Development Protocol for SADC. In particular, UNIFEM’s financial support allowed the GU to conduct consultation workshops with a broad range of stakeholders. Further, UNIFEM was part of the SADC Protocol Task Team, and as such actively involved in the drafting and reviewing/editing of the Protocol.
- **With the Parliamentary Forum:** UNIFEM provided financial and technical support to: the establishment of the Task Force on Gender in the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the development of a handbook on the role of MPs in the fight against HIV, the regional network of women in parliament, advocacy for increased participation of women in politics and leadership positions, to a desk study on gender mainstreaming in parties, and for various training and capacity-building initiatives.

RO Context

HIV/AIDS continues to be a huge problem in the subregion that is not only a health, but also a social and economic challenge. Southern Africa is the world’s hardest hit region in terms of HIV/AIDS. The link of HIV/AIDS and Violence against Women is increasingly being realized and discussed.

There is growing poverty in the region, which particularly affects women (and children). The current global economic crisis is likely to negatively affect the economies of most or all SADC member states, which in turn can have negative effects on their ability and willingness to address (and invest in) ‘soft’ social issues such as GE.

Women’s political participation in most SADC countries has increased over the past decade, but continues to be limited.

Some SADC member states (such as Zimbabwe) are facing severe political, social, and economic crises that negatively affect women, and the states’ ability to effectively address issues of GE and WHR.

In 2006, following the Windhoek conference on Aid Effectiveness, SADC and its International Development Partners (ICPs) jointly issued a Declaration on “A New Partnership between SADC and the International Development Partners. The declaration outlines the overall objective, the commitments by SADC and ICPs and the structure for effective dialogue under the new partnership, as well as the key areas of cooperation between SADC and ICPs.

As part of the ongoing UN Reform the UN Regional Directors’ Team is planning to sign a joint MOU with SADC. It remains to be seen whether and in what ways this will impact on UNIFEM’s work with SADC.

Importance given to gender equality and women’s human rights issues in SADC

SADC has ratified all major international declarations and Conventions – CEDAW (2004), and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa through which it has reaffirmed commitment to GE as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union Article 4, the Dakar PFA (1994), Beijing PFA (1995), MDGs, SCR 1325 (2000), and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003).¹⁰⁶ During the past decade, SADC has further embarked on the development and dissemination of a number of subregional (SADC specific) policies, strategies, and actions.

- 1996 – Establishment of the SADC Gender Unit – to our knowledge the first gender units in an African subregional organization of this kind.
- 1997 *SADC Declaration on Gender and Development*, which calls for a 30% quota of women in politics and decision making, reform of all discriminatory laws and social practices, women’s full access to and control over productive resources, prevention and eradication of VAW, women and girls’ access to education, and a culture of GE and WHR in the SADC region.

- 1998 *Addendum to the Declaration on Gender and Development on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women*.
- 1999 *Plan of Action for Gender*
- 2002 Creation of SADC *Regional Women’s Parliamentary Caucus*.
- 2005 *Regional Strategic Implementation Framework on Gender and Development (2006-2010)*, which included the goal to develop a regional gender policy.
- 2007 *Regional Gender Policy* approved and endorsed by the SADC Council of Ministers and SADC Summit- comprehensive guiding framework for the implementation of all gender commitments especially gender mainstreaming efforts at national and regional levels.
- 2007 Drafting of *SADC Gender and Development Protocol*. The Protocol is envisaged to assist with and push the implementation of the Regional Gender Policy. It is legally binding for Member States, and includes a set of clear targets and timelines. Member states are expected to monitor and regularly report upon progress.
- 2008 The Gender Protocol was initially rejected by the SADC summit (2007), but was adopted in August 2008. All except three SADC Member States have signed it. To date, no country has ratified it yet. Implementation in all member states is hoped to be achieved by 2015.

Consulted stakeholders stated that while SADC had shown considerable political commitment and willingness to further GE and WHR issues, there continues to be a lack of action both at regional and national levels to translate policy into action. The SADC Gender Protocol is hoped to be a tool to push this ‘translation’ into action.

SADC influence on regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities:

SADC has been key for shaping a (previously non-existing) formalized regional agenda on GE/WHR by providing a comprehensive, agreed upon regional Gender Policy and Gender Protocol. Its leadership role in this regard appears to be welcomed and accepted by most if not all

¹⁰⁶ Source: SADC Gender Policy (2007).

member states and by CSOs – who had actively pushed for the establishment of a SADC Gender Unit.

SADC has no implementation power at the national level, but is a convener, coordinator, and *catalyst* (like UNIFEM). SADC policies and tools provide guidance to member states, and SADC studies and reports provide information on best practices and lessons learned.

Consulted stakeholders noted that one of the most effective ways in which SADC can instigate change at the national level is by creating ‘peer competition’ among member states, e.g., through meetings that bring representatives from different MSs together, or through publications such as the SADC Gender Monitor that summarise and compare gender related achievements of different member states.

Stakeholders indicated that SADC plays an important role in terms of legitimizing and taking forward issues lobbied by national and regional CSOs to the highest political levels.

Stakeholders see that it is important and helpful to have such a regional entity that can coordinate and facilitate exchange and common action between SADC member states. One stakeholder mentioned that it was important to further consolidate this leadership role, e.g., by making clear that regional events – although sponsored by international donors – are owned and led by SADC (and not, for example, by UNIFEM).

Obstacles to SADC’s commitment to and/or influence related to GE/WHR

The SADC gender unit is under staffed and under resourced. Its budget is nearly exclusively dependent on external donors. One contributing factor appears to be the assumption within SADC that gender mainstreaming does not require financial resources.

There appear to be reoccurring discussions within SADC (Secretariat & Member States) with some calling for the elimination of the Unit, and/or a change of its status (i.e.,

rather than being directly under the ES, some would like to see it being integrated in one of SADC’s thematic directorates, which would likely (further) limit its ability to claim responsibility for gender mainstreaming across directorates. Its sustainability thus constantly appears to be under threat.

The rotation of leadership within SADC has affected the stability and consistency of the GU’s work and potentially its ability to reach its long-term targets within the given time-frame.

Knowledge and skills related to GE and WHR within SADC directorates are still limited, and more capacity development is needed to ensure that GE is addressed in all SADC programmes, policies, and strategies. Current GU resources do not suffice to provide this sort of CD in the near future.

The National Women’s Machineries of most if not all Member States remain weak in terms of available human and financial resources and status.

UNIFEM Context

The partnership with SADC appears to take up a considerable amount of time from the UNIFEM SRO staff (compared to the time spent on other partnerships and initiatives.) To our knowledge, the UNIFEM Regional Director has until now taken a lead role in this partnership, yet other staff members have also taken on tasks. With the recent arrival of a Deputy RD, work related to the partnership may be spread out between team members even further.

We do not have detailed information on financial resources allocated to the partnership in the past. In the SROs current strategy a core allocation of 50,000 has been made for 2009 for “advocacy with the NGO Alliance for SADC Protocol for costing and implementation of the Protocol at national level”.

Stakeholders noted that UNIFEM’s technical expertise and experience on all issues related to GE/WHR and gen-

der mainstreaming positively distinguished it from many other development partners. UNIFEM was described as being highly accessible, and always willing and able to provide quick, informal advice and assistance (phone, email, visits) if and as needed. UNIFEM with its focus on

GE/WHR is more of an ally rather than ‘only’ a donor. Another strength is UNIFEM’s broad networks and its related ability to connect relevant stakeholders (including UN agencies, CSOs, NWM) with each other.

Results

Exhibit 2.5 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM – SADC Partnership

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	Establishment of the SADC Gender Unit	UNIFEM assistance to CSOs and NWMs has contributed to them successfully lobbying for the establishment of the SADC gender unit – a move that is widely seen as helpful both at regional and national levels.	SADC Member States CSOs
	Development of the SADC Gender Policy and Gender Protocol.	Both documents are seen as very important milestones for GE/WHR at the regional level as they provide SADC, Member States and CSOs with a common, agreed upon framework that can be used for advocacy. While UNIFEM has not been the only donor to support their development its assistance is being described as highly important, in that it was not limited to financial support, but also included valued technical assistance and advice. In particular, UNIFEM’s ability to network and provide support so that CSOs are involved in the process is cited often. UNIFEM was part of the initial Task Force working to develop the draft Gender Protocol, and has been helpful in bringing different stakeholders together to discuss the Protocol.	SADC Member States CSOs
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR (Cont’d)	UNIFEM supported the SADC Parliamentary Forum in its advocacy work for enhancing women’s political representation, and their participation in decision-making processes.	Mentioned in Southern Africa 2005 report Results of this advocacy work as reported in UNIFEM reports include: Legislated quotas have been adopted and upheld by the Supreme Court following a legal challenge in Lesotho’s constituency system. In South Africa, where the law encourages parties to fill equal numbers of men and women, the African National Congress (ANC) has set itself a fifty- percent target for local elections scheduled for December 2005. Also at political party level, ZANU PF in Zimbabwe put in place a provincial quota whereby 30% of all constituencies in a province had to be represented by women candidates. We have no information that would allow us to verify whether and to what extent the reported changes at national and party levels have a) been a direct consequence of the SADC PF’s advocacy, and b) whether and to what extent UNIFEM’s support to the PF has contributed to these changes.	Member States Political Parties (national level)

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR (Cont'd)	Intensive advocacy by the SADC Parliamentary Forum and women's organizations through UNIFEM support	<p>Mentioned in Southern Africa 2005 report</p> <p>According to UNIFEM reports: Resulted in the appointment of top leadership: as deputy presidents in Zimbabwe and South Africa and as Prime Minister in Mozambique. In order to make this a reality, vote for Woman Campaigns were organized for the 2004/5 elections, capacity-building and training workshops for potential candidates to strategize collectively on a successful campaign and development of advocacy materials.</p> <p>In Zimbabwe, this lobbying resulted in the elevation of the Gender Department to a full fledged Ministry of Women, Gender and Community Development as well as the amendment of Section 23 of the constitution that previously sanctioned discrimination against women. A similar consideration is being made in Swaziland.</p> <p>Same as with previous results: We do not have sufficient information to assess whether and to what extent the SADC PF's advocacy work has contributed or caused these changes, nor whether and to what extent UNIFEM's support has played a role in bringing them about.</p>	Member State (Zimbabwe government and Gender Unit/Ministry)
New knowledge Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	Study: Taking stock of progress in ending gender violence since the 2006 Sixteen Days campaign and in the context of the draft SADC Gender and Development Protocol	Mentioned in Southern Africa 2007 report.	Member States SADC CSOs
New knowledge Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (Cont'd)	UNIFEM collaborated with the SADC Parliamentary Forum on a study that noted that political party manifestos differ on the level of participation of women in political parties (e.g., quota systems). The study results were shared at a consultation of the Gender Advisory Team of the SADC PF of which UNIFEM is a member.		
Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	Training of trainers (TOT) on CEDAW and HIV/AIDS	UNIFEM supported a Training of trainers (TOT) on CEDAW and HIV/AIDS in order to promote and protect the human rights of women in Southern Africa and to mainstream issues of HIV/AIDS in all areas of activity. The training introduced participants to the human rights and development frameworks relevant to women in SADC, considered the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at SADC level and explored how the provisions of CEDAW and the Protocol assist in developing and/or enhancing a strategic approach to dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic at SADC level.	

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	Development of VAW score cards to allow measuring progress to end gender violence and link this progress to the SADC Gender and Development Protocol	Southern Africa 2007 report	Member States SADC
	Development of a framework that can be used to develop/strengthen national action plans on ending gender violence and relates to/is based on the SADC gender protocol	Southern Africa 2007 report	Member States

Sustainability

The partnership has contributed to the establishment of the SADC GU, and has assisted the GU in successfully fulfilling its mandate. While the continued existence of the GU appears to be under repeated threat, the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) explicitly commits SADC to the “establishment of a Gender Unit in the SADC Secretariat consisting of at least two officers at a senior level” which enhances the likelihood of the GU being sustainable. Regional CSOs and various Member States have shown commitment to continue lobbying for the GU’s continued existence.

The SADC gender policy and protocol provide comprehensive, SADC region specific guidance and targets for GE and WHR. They have been developed with input from SADC Member States (mostly NWMs and CSOs), which enhances the likelihood of MS ownership of these documents. While not bringing about immediate changes on the ground, the Gender Policy and Protocol provide a conducive environment for such changes at regional and national levels. The Gender Policy also provides a model for the development/revising of national gender policies e.g., Malawi.

Challenges

Continued lack of capacities and resources for GU in SADC and for NWMs at the national level, which limits their ability to fulfil their mandates and reach high level decision makers. The continued lack of capacities in NWMs emphasizes the need for UNIFEM to also continue its work at the national level, which can help to push for the adoption and implementation of regional agreements (such as the SADC protocol) in Member States.

The SADC Gender Policy and particularly the Gender Protocol are promising tools. However, as one stakeholder pointed out – “an instrument is only as good as the mechanisms and resources available for its implementation allow it to be.” As experience with similar tools (such as CEDAW, or the SADC Declaration on Gender) has shown, the key challenge for even the best instruments is its translation from policy into action.

Given that UNIFEM has to report upon results, one challenge of the partnership with SADC is that SADC has a similar role to UNIFEM, namely that of a catalyst/facilitator and coordinator, i.e., it is not an implementing agency and cannot bring about changes at the national level, but can merely create a more conducive environment for such changes.

Opportunities

While the continued existence of the SADC Gender Unit appears to be at frequent risk, it needs to be acknowledged that it is an entity that was established based on the request by regional CSOs and Member States (especially NWMs), who have also lobbied repeatedly for its continued existence. While it is acknowledged that the GU has limited capacity, its work is seen as being highly important, and stakeholders acknowledge that the unit gets a lot done given their limited resources. UNIFEM is thus supporting an entity that is considered to be relevant and important by key GE stakeholders in the region.

There are no apparent changes that UNIFEM should make to enhance its collaboration with SADC. The extent of its support is to some extent dictated by its limited resources. Our data indicate that to date available resources have been well used. The following suggestions thus relate to what UNIFEM already does and what we think it should *continue* to do:

- Multipronged approach of supporting change both at regional and national levels. Seek and use synergies created by this multipronged approach – e.g., systematically use information and lessons learned at the national level to inform regional level advocacy, and vice versa.

- Focus on key partners in SADC that already have a clear gender mandate – i.e., the GU and the PF – to work towards further strengthening their capacity to broaden their influence within and outside SADC.

- Make use of UNIFEM's key strengths: Its technical expertise and hands-on approach, its broad and diverse networks, and its role as a UN agency that often opens doors. It appears that effective support to SADC does not necessarily require large amounts of funds, but that UNIFEM's continued and readily available moral and technical support are also of high value. UNIFEM also has a continued role to play in helping stakeholders from across the region to create and keep up the momentum required for successful collaboration among them.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

- Largely demand driven: The momentum for many initiatives UNIFEM has supported in or in relation to SADC came from regional stakeholders – be it CSOs, NWMs, or the SADC secretariat.

- Enhancing regional ownership: One key aspect of UNIFEM's role has been its support for bringing diverse stakeholders from across the region together to develop and work on a joint agenda.

- Common goal: Several stakeholders emphasized the positive effect concrete goals such as the completion of the SADC Gender Policy and Gender Protocol had for forging an alliance between different women advocates. Working on this concrete target helped groups to overcome differences, and focus on their common, overarching goals.

- Working at the regional level with SADC cannot replace UNIFEM's work at the country level, but is an important complement to this national level work.
 - Provides space for the exchange of ideas, lessons learned, tools, best practices, which enhances the knowledge and skills of gender advocates in each country which they can use for their advocacy and policy work at the national level.
 - Regional instruments such as the Gender Policy and the Gender Protocol provide a common vision and goal that advocates across the region can refer to, and that they can use to inform their work at the national level.
 - SADC meetings/forums as well as SADC publications including information on progress towards GE targets provide the opportunity for exercising 'peer pressure' among Member States.



3. UNIFEM – ROs Partnerships in LAC

3.1 UNIFEM – CARICOM Partnership

Mission Dates: 19 - 21 January 2009

Mission Team: Universalia

Organizational Background

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of 15 member states and five associate member states of the Caribbean. It was established in 1973, when the Heads of Government of the seven member countries of the former Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) concluded an agreement to expand CARIFTA's free trade area into a more integrated market including measures such as free movement of labour and capital, and the coordination of national policies (e.g., agricultural, industrial and foreign policies). Established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas on 4 July 1973 in order to improve the competitiveness of the region at the international level, CARICOM's objectives as stated in Article 6 of the revised Treaty are; i) to improve standards of living and work; ii) the full employment of labour and other factors of production; iii) accelerated, coordinated and sustained economic development and convergence; iv) expansion of trade and economic relations with third states; v) enhanced levels of international competitiveness; vi) organization for increased production and productivity; vii) achievement of a greater measure of economic leverage and effectiveness of Member States in dealing with third states, groups of States and entities of any description and viii) the enhanced coordination of Member States' foreign and foreign economic policies and enhanced functional cooperation. The CARICOM Secretariat is based in Georgetown, Guyana.

CARICOM's Gender and Development Unit

The CARICOM's Gender and Development Unit (GDU) was preceded by a Nutrition/Women's Desk established in 1978 with UNICEF funding. In 1980, an independent Women's Desk was created with funding from the UNDP, to promote and implement policies and programmes aimed at improving the status of women within the Caribbean Community, through regular meetings of Ministers with responsibility for women's/gender affairs. The current Gender and Development Unit is located within the Programme on Human Resource Development in the Directorate of Human and Social Development. This was a result of the recommendation of CARICOM's Heads of Women's/Gender Bureau Meeting held in September, 2002.

The goal of the Gender and Development subprogramme is to promote new focused intersectoral approaches to contribute to Human Resource Development, Poverty Reduction, Gender Equity and the protection of disadvantaged groups in the furtherance of the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The Gender and Development subprogramme revolves around the mandates given at Heads of Government and the Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) meetings. The last COHSOD on gender was held in 2005.

The GDU is currently staffed by a Deputy Programme Manager, who liaises with the Heads of Women's Bureau within each of the CARICOM member states. The GDU's subprogramme budget appears to be based on funding from external donors as well as the CARICOM Secre-

tariat¹⁰⁷ however we were unable to ascertain the quantum of the GDU's annual budget.

UNIFEM – CARICOM Partnership:

History: The collaboration between UNIFEM and CARICOM dates back to the establishment of the Nutrition/Women's Desk in the late 70s and early 80s. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the first Programme Director of UNIFEM's Caribbean Office was instrumental in facilitating projects related to domestic violence during the 1980s. In addition, stakeholders noted that the staffing of the UNIFEM Caribbean Office with personnel from the region meant that their approach always reflected an understanding of the weaknesses of national machineries, including the constraints faced by the CARICOM Women's Desk. As such, the UNIFEM office has always pursued opportunities for collaboration and partnership in support of its gender equality mandate.

MOUs: A formal MOU detailing arrangements for collaboration between UNIFEM and CARICOM does not exist. However, grant agreements have been signed related to specific initiatives funded by UNIFEM. In addition, the close relationships nurtured between key staff at UNIFEM and the GDU has meant that informal requests for technical assistance, policy reviews and general advice are readily considered.

Partners and key strategies: At present, UNIFEM's key partner in CARICOM is the Gender and Development Unit¹⁰⁸, (GDU) to which UNIFEM provides both technical and financial support. Other beneficiaries of UNIFEM support include the Statistics Division and the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP). In addition, UNIFEM supports the participation of Women's Gender Bureaux in Regional and International meetings, provides

funding for programmes aimed at increasing gender awareness, prevention of gender based violence and related gender equity initiatives. Regional NGO networks addressing gender equity are also key partners. UNIFEM works closely with relevant UN agencies within the region (UNDP and UNICEF¹⁰⁹) as well as other donor agencies such as CIDA and DFID.

Specific Activities/Initiatives:

- **Related to CARICOM:** UNIFEM has provided financial and technical support to National Women's Machineries, facilitating their participation in regional and international meetings and providing technical policy advice as necessary. In addition, UNIFEM has been instrumental in funding sensitization and awareness programmes within Caribbean states. UNIFEM's contributions to the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) have included review and development of new Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework integrating gender equality dimensions as well as ongoing advice during implementation of stigma and discrimination component, among others. Financial support has also been provided to the CARICOM programme on Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics.
- **Related to GDU:** Between 2005 and 2008, UNIFEM has provided financial¹¹⁰ and technical support to initiatives such as Improving Gender Mainstreaming in the CARICOM Secretariat (2006), CARICOM Gender Audit (2008); hosting of the Regional Advisory Group on Gender and Development (2005 to present); Review of CARICOM Model legislation on Domestic Violence. UNIFEM has also begun to support the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, a high-level position that is intended to help build political commitment and political will for greater action on gender-based violence. Discussions about the Terms of Reference for this position are underway.¹¹¹

107 The Logical Framework Analysis 2007-2009 reflects both sources of funds but does not detail the specific activities and outputs to be funded by external donors.

108 The Deputy Programme Manager of the GDU co-chairs the Regional Advisory Group Gender and Development with UNIFEM. UNIFEM has also supported a Gender Audit of the CARICOM Secretariat.

109 The UNFPA is involved in programming related to gender equity; however there is limited collaboration with UNIFEM.

110 An estimated US\$40,000.00 has been provided for institutional strengthening initiatives.

111 Although UNIFEM is providing technical advice on the TOR, the VAW High Level Rapporteur will be funded via the CARICOM/Spain Cooperation agreement

RO Context

Consulted stakeholders agreed that CARICOM was still the most credible and legitimate intergovernmental organization in the region, despite some mixed views about its effectiveness. As such, it continued to be the most appropriate mechanism to facilitate a regional approach to policy formulation and implementation.

CARICOM continues to be the preferred partner for donors working in the region including arms of the UN system, CIDA, DFID and also regional entities such as the Caribbean Development Bank, the OECS and the IADB.

Although Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and Suriname have made strides in the number of women appointed to Parliament and Cabinet during the past 5 years, other CARICOM States continue to lag behind. Significantly, there has been some movement away from appointing women to 'soft' portfolios such as health, education and social services to appointments in Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs, Finance, Legal Affairs and Office of the Attorney General. In addition, the first female Prime Minister in the region was appointed in Jamaica in 2006/2007;

Consulted stakeholders agree that CARICOM's primary focus continues to be on economic and security issues and that the need to analyse these issues through a gender lens is not similarly understood within the organization. This is of great concern particularly as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) both have significant implications for women and men in the region. The fact that the last Council on Social and Human Development Meeting to specifically address gender was held in 2005 reflects the low priority of gender.

While the increasing enactment of domestic violence legislation within the region is encouraging, the incidence of domestic violence is on the rise.

The intersection of gender based violence and HIV/AIDS is a related phenomenon that has been recognised and

accorded high priority. Note, the Caribbean is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and is therefore vulnerable to the related social and economic fall out.

Consulted stakeholders generally agreed that the women's movement in the region needed to be revitalized. Women's issues were given visibility and 'voice' through the efforts of the very vibrant women's movement in the late 70s to mid 90s, however the dilution of the movement with the shift from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD), coupled with the aging of the once active movement, has resulted in a decline in advocacy regarding both women's issues and gender issues.

The 'male marginalization' thesis which emerged in the post Beijing period, concerning the underachievement of boys in the school system, has done a great deal to shift attention away from issues of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Importance given to gender equality and women's human rights issues in CARICOM

Consulted stakeholders generally agreed that although CARICOM States have made incremental progress in the area of gender equality, enduring challenges remain. For example, all states have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the majority have signed and ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Protection, Prevention and Eradication of All Forms of Violence against Women (Belem do Para) and several states have enacted domestic violence legislation. Despite this, domestic violence remains a major concern across CARICOM member states. Further, despite the appointment of increasing numbers of women to Parliament and Cabinet in at least four member states, women's participation in decision-making at the highest levels continues to be slow. Stakeholders agreed that gender equality and women's human rights continued to be a low priority in member states as well as at the level of CARICOM.

Nevertheless, CARICOM has implemented several key initiatives including:

- 1978, Nutrition/Women's Desk created

- 1980, Women's Desk established with funding from UNDP

- 1989 to 1991, CARICOM facilitated the drafting of model legislation to address gender disparities in the areas of citizenship, domestic violence, equal pay, inheritance, sexual harassment and sexual offences. The process also benefited from comments from both government agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs), the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), and the Caribbean Women's Association (CARIWA). CARICOM Ministers responsible for the Integration of Women in Development adopted the Model Legislation in 1991 and mandated the Secretariat to produce model legislation in two other areas, equal opportunity and treatment in employment and child maintenance.

- 1996, Gender Equality, Social Justice and Development: The CARICOM Post Beijing Regional Plan of Action to the year 2000 was formulated to ensure a focus by all member states on issues such as, (i) gender socialization and its impact on the educational choices and performance of females and males, (ii) the relationship of the reproductive and sexual health issues of female and male adolescents to the continuing rise in sexual and domestic violence, (iii) the attitudes and cultural norms that impact negatively on women's full participation at all levels of society and (iv) finding effective means of mainstreaming gender in policy making and planning by governments, among other things.

- 1996, Towards Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Social Justice, CARICOM Secretariat was adopted by Ministers responsible for women's affairs in 1996.

- 2003, Plan of Action to 2005: Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into Key CARICOM Programmes, provides a framework for establishing a more constructive approach to mainstreaming gender in CARICOM's work programme, the conduct of research, and the design and implementation of policies and programmes by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which share responsibility for working towards gender equality in CARICOM

- 2005, Regional Advisory Group on Gender and Development re-established in collaboration with UNIFEM. The RAGGD includes representation by Heads of Women's Bureaux/Gender Divisions and key donors across the region.

CARICOM influence on regional, national and CSO agendas and capacities:

Consulted stakeholders noted that:

- The CARICOM's actual and potential influence at regional and national levels was considered weak to moderate; implementation of decisions at the national level appears to be limited. Further, the dilution of the function of the GDU to include youth and children's issues has meant that a dedicated resource is no longer available to facilitate policy advocacy at the national level or track national level progress in the implementation of CARICOM decisions on gender.

- The RAGGD plays an important role in facilitating dialogue on gender issues across the member states of CARICOM and ensuring information sharing and exchange among the Women's Bureaux/Gender Divisions.

- The provision of model legislation has also been a considerable contribution to the progress achieved across the region in enacting GBV and other types of legislation.

- CARICOM has also played a key role in facilitating meetings of Ministers with responsibility for women's affairs and by extension consensus on key issues related to gender equality.

Obstacles to CARICOM's commitment to and/or influence related to GE/WHR:

Many consulted stakeholders agreed that CARICOM was a creature of member states, and as such the issues that member states deemed priorities would become CARICOM's priorities. As such, CARICOM's agenda was determined by the directives of member states and not the reverse. Therefore CARICOM's position on gender equality and women's human rights essentially reflects the position of member states.

The capacity of the GDU is limited, both in terms of funding and status. In 1978 when the precursor to the GDU was established, the Nutrition/Women's desk was staffed by one individual. Some 30 years later, the GDU is still staffed by one individual, whose mandate has been expanded to address youth and children's issues. One Consulted stakeholder noted that the CARICOM Secretariat had not done enough to promote the work of the GDU, either within the Secretariat or regionally. As such, very little appears to be known about the work of the GDU.

Despite the formulation of a gender mainstreaming strategy for the Secretariat, the general perception of staff in the CARICOM Divisions consulted, reflected that ‘gender’ was the work of the GDU. On a positive note, staff agreed that gender was significant and felt that more sensitization of staff was necessary, at all levels.

There is a critical need to build capacity in gender analysis and mainstreaming. Consulted stakeholders agreed that there continued to be poor understanding of concepts and definitions related to gender and gender mainstreaming. This was true, both within the Secretariat and across member states. As such, women’s issues were regarded as synonymous with gender issues. This might be a factor in the continuing resistance to gender mainstreaming.

Although CARICOM has a Civil Society Charter, the CSOs consulted are unaware of the extent to which it is implemented or the mechanisms that exist for civil society to advocate/lobby CARICOM. When coupled with the weaknesses of regional expressions of civil society (noted above in relation to the women’s movement, but perhaps more widely applicable), this appears to limit space for “rights holders” to dialogue with the “duty bearers” on issues of regional integration and commitments to gender equality and women’s human rights.

Other key donors/development partners working with CARICOM

CIDA – CARICOM is one of the major partners in the region. CIDA is represented on several Task Forces established by CARICOM and has also provided assistance to institutional strengthening initiatives within the Secretariat.

Commonwealth Secretariat – Funding has been provided for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in the CRSP as well as to support legislative reviews.

Other UN agencies – UNICEF has been working with CARICOM to establish minimum standards for early childhood services. They participate on the RAGGD. They have collaborated with CARICOM and UNIFEM to support UWI research focused on boys and their progression in the school system in the Caribbean. They support the organization of COHSOD on ECD and other educational issues.

Results

Exhibit 3.1 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM–CARICOM Partnership

Type of Change	Examples	Comments	Most relevant to
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	Review of CARICOM Model Legislation	UNIFEM provided financial support, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and UNECLAC for a legal audit of the CARICOM model legislation on issues affecting women adopted in 1991. Stakeholders in Guyana indicated that model legislation on VAW had been consulted, along with the legislation of CARICOM countries, in developing Guyana's legislation.	CARICOM Member States
New knowledge Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	CARICOM Secretariat Gender Audit	Following the signature of a grant agreement with CARICOM, UNIFEM provided financial resources for the conduct of a gender audit, released in October 2008. Findings from the audit revealed that staff of the Secretariat were generally unaware of the GDU's gender mainstreaming policies and plan of action and did not necessarily use these publications/guides in their work programmes.	CARICOM Member States
	CARICOM Statistics Handbook	UNIFEM provided financial resources to complete CARICOM statistics handbook (forthcoming) "Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social, Gender and Environmental Statistics: Preparation of a User Manual"	
Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights	Institutional Strengthening: Improving Gender Mainstreaming in CARICOM Secretariat	Support has been provided for sensitizing staff of the Secretariat to the concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming	CARICOM
Enhanced capacities	Reviewing Programme Results Frameworks in order to improve gender	As one of the partners in this initiative, UNIFEM actively worked with the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), hosted by CARICOM, to revise the Caribbean Regional Framework on HIV/AIDS with gender-sensitive indicators for the period 2008-2012.	CARICOM Member States
Changes in RO structures and/or practices	Reconvening of CARICOM's Regional Advisory Committee on Gender and Development	The Advisory Committee is recognised as a valuable forum for development partners and CARICOM to discuss common approaches. Although this forum has existed in the past, UNIFEM has helped to reconvene and support continuity. CARICOM organizes similar types of fora on other issues.	CARICOM Member States

Sustainability

The UNIFEM/CARICOM partnership has existed for almost 30 years without a formal MOU guiding the collaboration. One of the reasons suggested for the longevity and quality of the partnership has been the fact that in the early stages of the partnership staff of both UNIFEM and the GDU emerged from the women's movement in the region. In addition, positive personal relationships between representatives of both organizations have reinforced relationships.

Partnership Management

A core principle of UNIFEM's operations is to engage in partnerships with key agencies in the region in pursuance of its mandate. As such, the partnership with CARICOM, though imperfect, is deemed to be critical to UNIFEM's approach and implementation of their programme of work. Other UN agencies interviewed also note the need to partner with regional organizations and, as one stakeholder noted, it is integrated in the way that they do business. There is recognition of the need for patience when supporting regional processes since changes in behaviour take time. UN Agencies, such as UNICEF and UNFPA also emphasize the need to work both at regional and country levels at the same time.

We have no information on the types of costs (in kind, other) that are incurred by UNIFEM and the CARICOM in nurturing and maintaining the partnership.

Challenges

There is a perception in the region that women's empowerment and gender equality are not high priority issues for governmental or non-governmental entities other than women's NGOs. The superior performance of girls, compared with boys in the education system is often cited, to suggest that women have made advances over men. At the same time, little attention is paid to the fact

that achievements in education have not translated to advances in the labour market or politics. Until the political directorate at National and Regional levels understands that gender equality is fundamental to economic and social development in the region, the issue will not be taken seriously.

National women's machineries across the region still have limited capacity and are situated in social sector ministries. These two characteristics often limit the potential for the NWM to participate in the policy development process. The GDU needs to be properly resourced to effectively address gender mainstreaming and the critical issue of gender based violence across the region. One officer, with an expanded mandate for other critical issues is insufficient to move the gender agenda forward.

Integration in the Caribbean is still very much a work in progress. In addition, CARICOM decisions are non-binding for Member States, thus requiring a certain level of political will in countries in order to implement progressive policies in favour of WHR and GE. Given UNIFEM's limited resources, the strategy to work through regional organizations is a good one, however, UNIFEM may also need to look at alternative approaches and organizations in the region if it wishes to bolster its contributions to the national level policy environment.

Gender equality is now a cross-cutting theme in all UN programmes, as such, more clarity would be useful regarding the role/niche of UNIFEM vis-à-vis organs such as UNFPA.¹¹²

Opportunities

UNIFEM has built some serious social capital with its partners in the region and is generally well regarded in terms of the technical gender expertise that the agency can bring to bear on critical issues as well as the collaborative approach taken to working with other donor organizations,

112 While UNIFEM's role in supporting the Gender Desk is clear; there is less clarity as far as support to NWM is concerned

CARICOM and national machineries. UNIFEM's network of women's organizations and civil society groups is a resource for other UN Agencies, such as UNICEF. Consulted stakeholders all agreed that UNIFEM's achievements were phenomenal, given the very limited resources available to the agency. UNIFEM needs to strategize on how it can leverage this positive image to forge more effective relationships at the political level of CARICOM.

UNIFEM's recent work on trade and economics (the Gender and EPA study) could play a significant role in sensitizing the CARICOM Secretariat to the relevance of a gender lens in considering these issues. In this regard, feedback about other regional experiences (Mercosur) in integrating Women's Human Rights in the trade and economic agenda might be helpful to the GDU in its attempts to mainstream gender in the Secretariat.

Consulted stakeholders agreed that there could be more collaboration with UNIFEM on e-discussions, e-forums, bulletin boards much in the way that ECLAC has done in preparation for regional meetings.

The Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, both have gender mainstreaming policies linked to their respective programmes in the region. Partnerships with these agencies might more effectively contribute to the achievement of UNIFEM's mandate at the national level.

There is a need for UNIFEM to strengthen its influence at a political level and in the near term it may be more feasible to do on an issue basis (VAW, ECD, HIV/AIDS). The role to be played by the Special Rapporteur on VAW provides an interesting model that targets the senior levels of the Secretariat and the Heads of Government. Efforts like this – that aim to influence the Heads of Government agendas – may effectively break through at this level.

The current strategic planning process at CARICOM is a potential opportunity and perhaps both the findings of the gender audit and GDU could inform the process. The POA to Mainstream Gender could be resurrected and reviewed in the context of its relevance and feasibility to the cur-

rent priorities in the region and to the strategic plan. As CARICOM begins to move to a results orientation (supported by the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division) it will be important for the Action Plan to be clearly linked to CARICOM's overall objectives and results so that it gets some additional buy-in within the secretariat.

UNIFEM's support for the strengthening of civil society regional actors who can advocate women's human rights demands on CARICOM is important. This is one of the roles that UNIFEM has played in the past and other agencies in the UN system are also drawing on UNIFEM success in this area. At the same time, it might require working with CARICOM to clarify the fora where women's human rights and gender equality advocates have opportunities to express their voices on some of the issues.

The global economic downturn may present an opportunity for harmonization of approaches and programmes among donors in the region. Theoretically, reduced budgetary allocations could facilitate increased collaboration, particularly among UN agencies.

UNIFEM may consider developing a multi-year framework agreement or a more formal "relationship agreement" that explicitly details the benefits of the partnership for both sides, rationale for the relationship and the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The agreement is also a good way of setting joint priorities and could make explicit how CARICOM views its role in the region, for example in relation to convening and strengthening the NWM. After many years of collaboration, it is probably an opportune time to review the UNIFEM-CARICOM partnership and use the framework agreement to help shape a vision of how the two organizations would like to work together in the region.

3.2 UNIFEM – SICA/COMMCA Partnership¹¹³

Conducted by Phone Interviews:

March and April 2009

Mission Team:

Universalia

Organizational Background

The creation of the System of Central American Integration (*Sistema de Integración Centroamericana – SICA*) in 1991 reinvigorated a long process of regional integration dating from 1951, with the signing of the *Carta de San Salvador*, which established the *Organización de Estados Centroamericanos* (ODECA). SICA's main objective is the integration of Central American countries in a region of "Peace, Liberty, Democracy and Development"¹¹⁴. Seven countries from Central America are members of SICA: Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, El Salvador. The SICA is made up of economic and social organs, either "bodies" or "institutions", the latter including technical secretariats and specialized institutions. Bodies represent the main fora for political decision-making / regional agreements and institutions provide the mechanisms for implementing those agreements. A table with the SICA Bodies and Institutions is provided as Appendix I.

In 2002, under the leadership of the National Women's Machinery (NWM) from Guatemala (*Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer de Guatemala-SEPTEM*), the Council of Ministers of Women's Affairs of Central America (*Consejo de Ministras de la Mujer de Centroamérica*) -- known as COMMCA--was established. The COMMCA brings together the national women's machineries of Costa Rica, Belize, Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, replacing what was known as the Network of

Women's Offices in Central America (*Red de Oficinas de la Mujer de Centroamérica*). In 2005, the COMMCA was formally declared to be part of the SICA structure.¹¹⁵ The process was subsequently ratified by an Agreement of Functional Cooperation in 2007. Shortly thereafter, the COMMCA established its first Secretariat in the office of the Secretary General of SICA.

The COMMCA operating budget over the past few years has been provided largely by the COMMCA member governments and the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID). UNFPA and UNIFEM have provided technical assistance and financial support for meetings. The COMMCA presidency pro-tempore rotates every 6 months to the NWM of a different member country, in parallel to the rotation of the President of the SICA.

COMMCA's mandate is to provide analyses and recommendations on political, economical, social, environmental and cultural issues to SICA member countries, in order to support the development of policies aiming to transform the situation, position, and condition of women in the region. COMMCA defined three priority themes in its 2006-2009 Strategic Plan: (i) women's economic autonomy, (ii) women's political participation, and (iii) women's health. In these areas, COMMCA included, as part of its work programme, *violence against women* and *trafficking of women*.

113 This in depth study was conducted by telephone interviews instead of through a field visit as all the other in-depth studies. Because of the different data-collection methodology the data collected is to some extent different than in the other studies, and in some cases less in-depth analysis and observation was possible. These differences are reflected in the structure of this study

114 SICA website

115 Consejo de Ministras de la Mujer de Centroamérica, Plan Estratégico 2006-2009, Octubre 2005, p. 2.

UNIFEM – RO Partnership

History: UNIFEM’s relationship with COMMCA has developed largely in the context of a UNIFEM regional programme on women’s economic empowerment known as the AGEM (*La Agenda Económica de las Mujeres*).¹¹⁶ AGEM aims to reduce poverty and gender inequalities by developing a new focus on women’s economic empowerment and the role of women’s leadership in the governance of economic development. AGEM, which is implemented in collaboration with UNDP, began its first phase in 2003 and is now completing the second phase. AGEM has project coordinators in each of the member countries of COMMCA. The President pro-tempore of COMMCA sits on AGEM’s Regional Executive Committee. The effectiveness of the regional work of the AGEM programme is closely linked to COMMCA. AGEM supported one of the thematic areas of priorities outlined in COMMCA’s strategic plan, namely the emphasis on women’s economic autonomy.

MOU: At the beginning of the second phase of AGEM, a letter of understanding was signed between UNIFEM and COMMCA in order to clarify the responsibilities of each party. There is no formal agreement that frames UNIFEM’s overall cooperation with COMMCA outside of AGEM-specific initiatives.

Key Strategies: UNIFEM has used the following strategies to support COMMCA:

- Making technical contributions to COMMCA through its research (AGEM);
- Providing political and technical advice to the Ministers, as requested;
- Providing “institutional memory” and other support to COMMCA presidency pro-tempore;

- At the national level, AGEM aims to strengthen NWMs in their own governments and develop linkages with other sectors in society (academia, NGOs, private sector, etc);

UNIFEM has not provided direct funding to COMMCA.

RO Context

External context: integration process and gender equality

The key issues for the context of COMMCA – and the UNIFEM partnership with COMMCA- include: the variable – and often weak- institutional framework for promoting women’s human rights and gender equality at the national level; an integration process that has advanced slowly and in limited areas, and with little participation of women; a women’s movement that is not always an ally of the NWM and has limited forms of expression/articulation at the regional level. These issues are briefly expanded upon below.

- During the 1990s, Central American countries began to develop their gender equality legislation and other policies, as well as to establish NWM. Although the NWMs have formally committed themselves to mainstream gender equality, NWMs’ power in the government differs in each country, and most of the time, women’s institutes/ministries are not seen as key actors inside governments. Sometimes NWMs risk disappearing as governments change. In this context, the effective influence of NWMs in regional intergovernmental bodies varies considerably from one government’s mandate to another and from one country to another.
- Women did not have strong participation in the integration processes of the 50s and 60s. However, the creation of SICA, and its reforms of the Central American institutional framework, began to introduce a normative language on gender equality, from the perspective of a regional intergovernmental body. The *Tratado de San Salvador*, establishing the institutional framework for social integration in the region (1995), articulated the need for developing the potential of men and women, and introduced principles of no exclusion, non violence, and no discrimination on the basis of sex. Although the language has been there since the early years of SICA, the changes in policies, programmes, and resource allocations to change practice have been slow to materialize. In addition, women’s participation in

¹¹⁶ The project is entitled “Creando capacidades para el análisis de género de las economías de la región y condiciones para el posicionamiento de la agenda de las mujeres en la nueva etapa de la apertura comercial.”

important decision-making on regional processes is still limited.¹¹⁷

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- SICA advances in integration have been in the area of economics and customs issues, with social areas still lagging behind. However, the Heads of State recently approved the *Agenda Estratégica Social* (December 2008) which, when fully resourced, could provide opportunities to give impetus to a social agenda that includes gender equality. One of the important developments referenced by respondents was the recent efforts to strengthen the subsystem for social issues, known as the SISCA. It now has three divisions, with greater staff, and with interest and resource generation potential to support programming that could include the gender dimension.
-
- There are also certain characteristics of civil society and the relationship with NWM that form part of the context in Central America.
 - At a national level, the relationship between NWM and civil society organizations, especially from the women's movement, varies across countries. It may also change within any one country, depending on the government in office. It is not unusual, however, to have tension in the relationship. The facilitation of fora for dialogue at national level is often required in countries in the region. This role has at different times been played by UN Agencies.
 - Regionally, the reform of institutions brings some opportunities for engagement of civil society, this has been primarily through the organizations recognised as members of the *Consejo Consultivo*, the official body for civil society participation within the SICA Framework. The *Foro de Mujeres para la Integración Centroamericana* (FMIC) represents women's organisations in the *Consejo Consultivo*. The FMIC has taken steps in strengthening its influence in trade negotiations, placing emphasis most recently on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the EU. The AGEM supported these efforts. Although FMIC is the recognised interlocutor, it is not representative of the full spectrum of women's organizations.
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- ### COMMCA Context
- The following features of COMMCA are important to point out in understanding its evolution.
- It is a relatively young entity, but formally recognised in each of the member countries. Its Technical secretariat was established only two years ago.
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- Like other Ministerial bodies in the SICA, COMMCA's effectiveness is affected by the rotation of the Presidency Pro-tempore, who provides the leadership of the Council. This rotation takes place every 6 months, so that it is aligned with rotation of the Presidency Pro-tempore of SICA.
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- In addition to its Member States, COMMCA includes observers (Mexico and Dominican Republic) that facilitate cooperation among states in the region.
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- As noted above, there is differential institutional capacity among the NWM that are members of COMMCA, largely a result of their status in the government and the resources at their disposal. Ministries of Education do not risk disappearing with a change in government priorities, whereas NWM in the region do face this risk. The differences in institutional arrangements for gender equality and women's human rights also reflect varying levels of commitment of the member states.
-
- Changes in Member state governments and leadership of NWM affect the membership and leadership of COMMCA
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- COMMCA has had three main partners. The AECI has been a significant partner for COMMCA, providing multi-year funding through a regional project. UNFPA also supports the COMMCA, primarily by providing support to the President Pro-Tempore. UNIFEM has provided support through AGEM and its continued engagement as a technical advisor.

117 Amariles Erazo, Fabiola, Carolina Escobar Sarti, Fabrizio Feliciani, "Evaluación Externa Intermedia de la Segunda Fase del Programa Regional. Creando capacidades para el análisis de género de las economías de la región y condiciones para el posicionamiento de la agenda de las mujeres en la nueva etapa de la apertura comercial," Informe Preliminar, Diciembre 2008.

UNIFEM Context

The context for UNIFEM's relationship with COMMCA is provided by the AGEM and a desire to strengthen the Central American institutional framework for NWM. The AGEM allowed for UNIFEM to have coordinators in each of the COMMCA countries. The AGEM and COMMCA relationship fall within the subregional office for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

UNIFEM is considered by the members of COMMCA, SICA, and other partners to be able to add value because of its:

- research contributions that inform COMMCA advocacy;

- technical specialization in gender equality and women's human rights;
- expertise in methodologies and ability to facilitate exchanges with other agencies.

Results

As noted above in the section on context, COMMCA is in the early stages of its development and it is still early to see effects in SICA and at the national level. The purpose of this section is to highlight a few of the contributions that have been made to the region by COMMCA. We highlight a few particular examples from specific collaboration with UNIFEM, but many of the changes reported have been the result of collaboration and contribution of a number of actors. AECI, in particular, deserves recognition in this regard.

Exhibit 3.2 Some Key Results of the UNIFEM–COMMCA Partnership

Type of Change	Examples	Comments
Changed policies and practices regarding GE/WHR	<p><u>Regional level:</u></p> <p>The existence of COMMCA as a political body in the SICA institutional framework is an important achievement of the Ministers. It provides credibility and support to NWM and their policy proposals at the country level.</p> <p>The Protocol of Tegucigalpa gives COMMCA Ministers the ability to prepare themes for discussions by the Central American Presidents. They have requested a special presidential summit in 2009 on Gender, <i>Integration and Development</i></p> <p>COMMCA and its Secretariat are reported to have contributed a gender equality/Women's Human Rights perspective to SICA policy documents such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The strategy for climate change 2. Regional health strategy for Central America and Dominican Republic 3. Strategy for Democratic Security in Central America and Mexico), especially Component 4 on violence against women <p><u>National level:</u></p> <p>The study on Domestic Workers was used by the Asociación de Trabajadoras Domésticas (Astradomes) and parliamentarians in Costa Rica to argue in favour of a law for domestic workers (due to be passed in April 2009). A law to restrict their daily working time to 8 hours was approved.</p>	<p>The leadership has been provided by the Ministers. UNIFEM and other development partners, such as AECI, have made contributions.</p> <p>COMMCA Secretariat is housed in the office of the General Secretary. From a strategic point of view, this is a positive development and allows the Secretariat to position COMMCA within the SICA.</p>

Type of Change	Examples	Comments
<p>New knowledge on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights</p>	<p>Knowledge production informs NWMs on gender issues and enables them to have a regional perspective. Moreover, that forces them to compare results between countries, and could lead to integrated solutions in the region.</p> <p>AGEM studies were presented to COMMCA and provided inputs for advocacy. Of particular note is the AGEM research on domestic workers, which is noted above for contributing an evidence base for advocacy in Costa Rica.</p> <p>COMMCA also did studies on trafficking and a mapping of gender equality</p>	
<p>Enhanced capacities Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights</p>	<p>COMMCA developed a Strategic Plan 2006-2009 that articulated its priorities</p> <p>The establishment of a small Technical Secretariat for the COMMCA in 2007 in the office of the SICA Secretary General.</p> <p>A common position paper presented by COMMCA to the preparatory meetings for the X Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNIFEM provided technical input to the paper).</p> <p>Communications capacity in the form of the maintenance of web site and a newsletter AGEM/ COMMCA, with support of UNIFEM (an intern helped with this work).</p> <p>Although there is no systematic engagement, COMMCA has had its first dialogues/ meetings with civil society organizations, with support from AECI-UNIFEM</p>	<p>These capacities also were supported by AECI.</p> <p>The establishment of the Secretariat not only can allow the work of the Council to advance, but it also has symbolic importance because COMMCA is formally incorporated into SICA, and as noted above, it is integrated at a strategic level.</p>

Sustainability

The sustainability of GE initiatives in SICA depend in part on the continuity and consistency of approach that can be provided by COMMCA. The challenges of sustainability of initiatives are significant when referring to a ministerial body with the degree of rotation in its membership and presidency that COMMCA has.

Because of the frequent rotation of the President of COMMCA, one of UNIFEM's roles has been to support the transitions and to help serve as COMMCA's organizational memory.

The key will lie in the role that the Secretariat can play in supporting these processes. The Secretariat has a difficult role of managing the processes and relationships within SICA, as well as the political dynamics that will be inherent in any such body.

The AGEM project – the main channel for UNIFEM cooperation with COMMCA – has played a key role in providing technical support to COMMCA Secretariat and a research /evidence base for policy-making, in addition to supporting COMMCA with the organization of meetings and regional conferences. The linkage with AGEM has brought a number of benefits to the partnership. However, it also raises questions about sustainability of the partnership. Now that AGEM is coming to an end, UNIFEM will need to reconsider how best to give continuity to the relationship outside of specific project funding.

Conclusions

The rationale for UNIFEM's support to COMMCA is that the existence of such a Council strengthens the Central American institutional framework for NWM. In other words, at the national level there are intangible and symbolic benefits of such a regional political body for enhancing credibility of the NWM. Stakeholders interviewed all confirmed the importance of COMMCA as a political space in the region that still needs to be strengthened.

COMMCA is in early stages of development. It is premature to expect extensive results at the regional and national level in terms of a more favourable policy environment for gender equality and women's human rights. COMMCA has not yet been able to widely influence the bodies and institutions in SICA. Capacity development of COMMCA has been at the centre of these first phases. The strategic plan and establishment of the Secretariat are important steps in this direction.

AGEM has been the principal channel for the relationship between UNIFEM and COMMCA. AGEM is known and generally appreciated for its contributions on the economic agenda for women in the region. UNIFEM's relationship with COMMCA benefited from the close link to the implementation of AGEM. The fact that UNIFEM was implementing a programme on women's economic agenda enabled UNIFEM to have staff members in each of the countries, enhanced network capacity nationally and regionally, and increased research/technical capacity in order to respond to COMMCA ministers' requests for technical assistance. This programme also gave possibilities to link national initiatives with the SICA regional platform.

UNIFEM has been pointed to by the ministries interviewed, as a natural partner, who can support governmental institutions for GE/WHR in Central America – regionally and at the national level. By this, they suggest that UNIFEM engagement with government – *la institucionalidad*—is key in the promotion of GE/WHR.

Next Steps

This section provides a brief overview of possibilities for cooperation and reflection with regard to UNIFEM-COMMCA in the future.

- **COMMCA capacities:** UNIFEM's engagement in the next year can help support a revitalization of the COMMCA. Part of this revitalization support could include technical/financial support for an update of the COMMCA strategic plan. Similarly, there is a need for UNIFEM – or other partners- to continue to strengthen the Secretariat so it can implement and monitor the strategy and manage the political processes of COMMCA. One suggestion that emerged from the study is that a UNIFEM focal point in the COMMCA Secretariat would allow UNIFEM to better technically support the COMMCA, as well as provide a neutral voice that can help to make processes more fluid. This would have resource implications for UNIFEM.
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- **Cooperation agreement UNIFEM-COMMCA:** As COMMCA moves forward, a framework agreement that outlines the collaboration between UNIFEM and COMMCA in broad terms (outside of any particular project or programme) could be beneficial. This would confirm the continuity of UNIFEM commitment with COMMCA, independent of project funding (such as what it now has for AGEM). This would also potentially have resource implications for UNIFEM, which would need to be considered in the subregional strategy.
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- **Articulation of COMMCA's strategy with projects implemented at national level:** COMMCA member countries may not always have the resources/capacities to implement the priorities of the regional Strategy/Plan of Action at the country level. COMMCA – with UNIFEM and other partners support – could help to make greater linkages between projects that are being implemented at national level in the region (by UNFPA, others) and the work of COMMCA. In same way that AGEM helped to support COMMCA, other projects implemented at the national level could be presented and articulated regionally through the COMMCA.
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- **COMMCA engagement with civil society.** UNIFEM has supported dialogue between COMMCA and women's organizations. Given the challenges in the relationships between government and civil society in most countries in the regions, it is difficult to create regional spaces for civil society that could be the counterweight to SICA. Thus, UNIFEM can build on its historical relations with the women's movement to continue to be a "facilitator" of dialogue between COMMCA and civil society.
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- **SICA opportunities in 2009/2010:** The multiannual plan for SICA is now being developed. At the end of 2009, a special meeting of the Presidents on the theme of Gender, Integration and Development is planned. UNIFEM support to the process will be important and the meeting itself can be an important forum for advocacy. Similarly, the recently approved *Agenda Estratégica Social* provides another opportunity for UNIFEM and COMMCA to support integration of gender equality and WHR in the social integration agenda.
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- **Expanding UNIFEM strategy beyond COMMCA in order to influence the SICA.** COMMCA has been the pillar of the UNIFEM strategy at the regional level via SICA. However, if UNIFEM would like to work through the regional platform to support change at a country level, it should pursue a more diversified strategy. Changes will come much too slowly if the focus is exclusively on COMMCA. COMMCA should continue to be a partner, in that the Council still has need to be strengthened as a Council and needs to increase its capacity to negotiate and influence the regional integration system. At the same time, UNIFEM may want to pursue relationship with other instances in the Integration System – SISCA, SIECA, and others. A number of respondents indicated that if UNIFEM would like to influence the integration agenda in terms of gender equality and women's human rights, it would need to engage not only through COMMCA, but through the other bodies and institutions of SICA. Key entry points may be provided in the strategic social agenda that is now being implemented through SISCA. Again, there would be resource implications to a more diversified strategy at the regional level.
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- **UNIFEM sharing of experiences on COMMCA/REM/ REMMA:** UNIFEM has been working with COMMCA in Central America, REM (Mercosur) and REMMA (Comunidad Andina de Naciones), which are all ministerial bodies linked in different ways to regional integration intergovernmental organizations. The strengthening of such a "political" space is certain to have different characteristics than strengthening a gender unit within an RO, which has been an approach that has been tried with other ROs and in other regions. For example, it seems that such an approach requires UNIFEM to have strong working relationships with each of the NWM. UNIFEM plays an advisory role to the Ministers – on both technical and political matters. It also, at times, must be able to mediate or provide conciliatory points of view when there are disagreements among the ministers or when the regional political context begins to limit interaction among the NWM. There is something that can be learned from the UNIFEM LAC experience over time with COMMCA, REM, etc. We would encourage UNIFEM to pursue such ongoing monitoring, documenting, and learning from these experiences.
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- **Stronger relationships between UNIFEM and each NWM.** UNIFEM is called on to support the institutional framework for gender equality at the national level. The respondents at the ministries/institutes all suggested that there was room to strengthen UNIFEM's relationships with each of the NWM. There was a call for ongoing engagement beyond project-specific support. As noted above, UNIFEM's relationships with individual NWM is also a key determinant in its ability to fulfil an effective role at the regional level with COMMCA.



Appendix I

SICA Bodies and Institutions

Bodies	
Main bodies	Meeting of Presidents
	Council of Ministers
	Executive Committee (CE-SICA)
	General Secretariat (SG-SICA)
Other bodies	Meeting of Vice Presidents
	Central American Parliament (PARLACEN)
	Central American Court of Justice (CCJ)
	Consultative Committee (CC-SICA)
Institutions	
Secretariats (directly related to SICA General Secretariat)	General Secretariat of the Central American Educational and Cultural Coordination (SG-CECC)
	Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA)
	Executive Secretariat of the Central American Monetary Council (SE-CMCA)
	Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA)
	Central American Secretariat for Social Integration (SISCA)
	Executive Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Health in Central America (SE-COMISCA)
	Technical Secretariat of the Council of Ministers for Women in Central America (ST-COMMCA)
	Executive Secretariat of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development General Directorate for Environment (SE-CCAD)
	Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SE-CAC)
Specialized Institutions	Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE)
	Controller Regional Council of SICA (CFR-SICA)
	Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP)
	Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America (CENPROMYPE)
	Real Estate Board of Registration in Central America and Panama (CRICAP)
	Central American Council of Consumer Protection (CONCADECO)
	Central American Superior Council of Universities (CSUCA)
	Commission for the Scientific and Technological Development in Central America and Panama (CTCAP)
	Central American Committee for Cooperation on Hydrocarbons (CCHAC)
	Central American Electrification Council (CEAC)
	Regional Commission of Electricity Interconnection (CRIE)
Bodies	
	Ente Regional Operator (EOR)
Specialized Institutions (cont'd)	Regional Technical Commission of Telecommunications of Central America (COMTELCA)
	Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA)
	Central American Commission for Maritime Transportation (COCATRAM)
	Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC)
	Regional Committee on Hydraulic Resources (CRRH)
	Dominican Republic and Central American Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation (FOCARD-APS)

Bodies	
Specialized Institutions (cont'd)	Council of Social Security Institutes of Central America and Dominican Republic (CISSCAD)
	Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP)
	Coordinating Unit of the Central American Organisation of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA)
	Central American Isthmus Council of Sports and Recreation (CODICADER)
	Permanent Central American Commission for the Eradication of Production, Trafficking, Consumption and Illicit Use of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances and Related Crimes (CCP)
	Tri Plan Commission Trifinio (CTPT)

Source: SICA website

