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SUPPORT

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
AT ITS PREVIOUS SESSIONS

Women in development

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is prepared in accordance with Governing Council decision 89/27 of 30 June 1989. It reviews the extent to which Governing Council decisions on women in development are being implemented throughout the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its analysis is based largely on responses to a questionnaire sent in November 1989 to all UNDP field offices and relevant headquarters units.

The report identifies five fundamental means of improving the gender responsiveness of UNDP operational activities: the training of government, executing agency and UNDP staff; field office support; inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration; policy development; and institutional strengthening. It examines performance and requirements in each of these areas.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is prepared in accordance with Governing Council decision 89/27 of 30 June 1989. It reviews the extent to which Council decisions on women in development are being implemented, in preparation for the fifth country programming cycle, in project assistance and in personnel policies. The report identifies five fundamental means of improving the gender responsiveness of UNDP operational activities: the training of government, executing agency and UNDP staff; field office support; inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration; policy development; and institutional strengthening. It examines performance and requirements in each of these areas.
2. The analysis in the report is based to a great extent on responses to a questionnaire sent in November 1989 to all UNDP field offices and to relevant headquarters units. The responses have been analysed and are available separately on request. A data base has also been created on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire against which future UNDP progress can be measured in implementing its mandate on women in development.
3. The responses to the questionnaire indicated a growing awareness of the importance of addressing gender issues throughout the programming and project cycles. They also indicated the importance of this awareness being shared by government officials, executing agency staff and project personnel, as well as by UNDP staff.

II. FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMMING CYCLE

A. National policies on women

4. National development plans, priorities or objectives provide the frame of reference for UNDP country programmes. During the current cycle, a number of UNDP field offices have provided significant assistance to Governments through their women's bureaux and other government units in developing plans for women. As noted, however, in the report of the Administrator to the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session (DP/1989/24), it is also important that UNDP provide assistance to national planning ministries seeking to develop more gender-sensitive national plans.
5. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) responded to such a request from the Bangladesh Minister for Planning in late 1989. A mission undertook a review of the Government's draft five-year plan to assist in increasing its responsiveness to women's needs and to broaden their potential contribution to the country's development. The mission's recommendations covered administrative and accountability mechanisms and statistical requirements. It identified women-in-development factors for consideration in the key sectors of the economy, and developed an investment programme to address both institutional and non-institutional constraints on the economic integration of women. It also identified a series of complementary strategies for the UNDP field office.

Following the success of this mission, similar requests have now been received from other Governments and RBAP has made provision for further missions.

B. Mid-term programme review

6. The mid-term reviews of the ongoing programmes often initiate the preparation of the next programme. A significant proportion of field offices and headquarters units reviewed or expressed the intention to review the extent to which gender issues had been addressed in the current programme during the mid-term review. The procedures planned or actually adopted varied. Where the adequacy of the procedures were assessed, however, they were often considered to lack depth in the analysis and recommendations. It was felt that an adequate exercise would require a greater commitment to, and understanding of, gender issues in programming and projects on the part of Governments, project personnel and UNDP and executing agency staff.

C. Fifth cycle programming

7. As UNDP country programming shifts towards a more comprehensive programme approach, in response to Governing Council decision 89/20 of 30 June 1989 and General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989, the systematic analysis of national development requirements and resources entailed in the development of the country programme will need to be increasingly gender sensitive. The macro-economic factors affecting women will need to be identified and programmatic approaches developed. Increasing technological sophistication, greater monetization of economies, the commercialization of agriculture, distributional inequalities and other macro-economic factors not only affect women directly but also affect them differently from men. Structural adjustment and debt alleviation programmes have had a significantly greater adverse impact on women than on men. These are correlated with an increasing number of households headed by women and an increasing number of women and their children below the poverty line. These linkages need to be understood and responded to in programming at the country, regional, inter-regional and global levels.

8. A special effort will need to be made by Governments and field offices, with the full support of all concerned at headquarters, if gender issues are to be seriously and adequately addressed during preparations for the next programming cycle.

D. Human development

9. The Human Development Report 1990 1/ shows that the measurement of human development is gender sensitive: a country's place on a human development index may change significantly when data on women, rather than aggregate data on the whole population, are used. If UNDP is to integrate its concern for human development, the Programme will require a particular focus on women within the framework of the next programming cycle. Such a focus could assist Governments and UNDP to develop more gender-responsive programme priorities and projects. This

exercise could use country studies and strategies prepared by Governments, by the World Bank and by other agencies, bodies and organizations within the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

III. PROJECT ASSISTANCE

10. The assumption that development which benefits men will automatically benefit women has long been discredited. Women's lives are different from those of men. As a consequence, women have different skills, knowledge and needs. They fit into and contribute to communities differently from men. Hence, there are particular situations in which project assistance needs to be provided specifically for and directly to women. However, all project assistance should recognize the differences in men's and women's lives and should build on these differences. The identification and development of gender-sensitive project assistance, whether women specific or integrated, is not an easy task.

A. Projects specifically for women

11. A number of important and effective women-specific projects have been initiated at UNDP headquarters. The women-specific projects in the global and interregional programmes either address women-specific concerns or are designed to integrate gender concerns into broader sectoral programmes. Projects have been initiated in the regional programmes designed to raise the productivity of women in sectors where they play a leading role or to address specific needs such as those for literacy or for social programmes to alleviate poverty. At the country level, most women-specific projects have been initiated and funded by UNIFEM and UNFPA.

12. Women-specific projects will continue to be needed for as long as gender inequalities and discrimination continue; access to basic goods and services is gender differentiated and economic and development factors have a differential impact on women and men. The vast majority of development flows, however, are not directed specifically towards women and the challenge remains to ensure that women participate in, contribute to and benefit from all development assistance.

B. Gender-sensitive projects

13. Initiatives in support of women have been most effective where they have linked the analysis of women's development requirements to the use of project and programme assistance to strengthen the capacity of both the country and UNDP to address those requirements. For example, a comprehensive effort has been undertaken in Honduras to ensure that gender issues are effectively addressed. Initially, UNDP and UNFPA, together with the Government, developed a country-wide strategy to strengthen the actions of the United Nations system in the area of women and development. An umbrella project was then designed, with the assistance of UNIFEM, to address the needs identified in the strategy. Project components

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included the development of manuals and guidelines; the training of field personnel and government counterparts in project design, management and evaluation; the generation of base-line data on women for project design and evaluation; the improvement of national statistical systems and the strengthening of research capacity; and, the development of mechanisms to improve project design.

14. The number of women project personnel and the number of women who benefit from overseas training and fellowship programmes should be increased. General Assembly resolution 44/171 of 19 December 1989 calls on the operational system of the United Nations to establish procedures to collect and report gender disaggregated data concerning project personnel, including consultants, as well as beneficiaries of its programmes. Some field offices, together with national Governments, have set targets to ensure equitable gender distribution of project personnel and beneficiaries; other offices bring distributional imbalances to the attention of Governments for their action. Those countries where a commitment to the integration of women in development is strongest have the most equitable participation of women in these activities across all sectors.

15. The UNDP also provides assistance to Governments in monitoring the flow of development assistance and determining its beneficiaries. An important instrument in this process is the National Technical Co-operation Assessment and Programmes (NATCAPs) exercise. Modifications in the NATCAP software to allow all data to be entered, analysed and disaggregated by gender will be finalized by the end of 1990.

IV. PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. Recruitment of UNDP staff

16. There is a long-standing commitment on the part of UNDP not only to increase the number of women at the professional and senior managerial levels but also to assist women professionals to sustain and develop their careers.

17. Significant increases in the number of women recruited have been achieved, especially since 1986. Currently, over 25 per cent of professional staff are female. In 1988/1989, 50 per cent of entry-level career track professionals entering UNDP through the management training programme were women.

18. A particular effort is being made to recruit senior women. There are few women in senior managerial positions (6 per cent), but the number is increasing. Seven out of 112 resident representatives (6 per cent) and 17 out of 101 deputy resident representatives (17 per cent) are women. Two thirds of these women are posted in Africa. The outside recruitment of senior women will not be at the expense of qualified staff members so as to ensure a continuing career path for women professionals within the organization.

19. The Division of Personnel has adopted a range of means for identifying women candidates. All recruitment advertisements state that UNDP is an equal opportunity employer and in some cases encourage applications from women. Formal and informal search techniques are employed, including the use of field offices and women's

networks and organizations. Recruitment missions are briefed. Governments sponsoring Junior Professional Officers have been asked to nominate more women candidates. Field offices have been requested to achieve a gender balance in national programme staff. Interview panels receive a briefing on gender sensitivity in interviewing. A pilot applicant data base is being used which includes a women in development sensitivity variable for all applicants. These techniques have resulted in a significantly improved capacity to identify and recruit women and gender-sensitive staff.

B. Career development of women staff

20. Once recruited, the careers of women staff members have to be well managed. A successful career in UNDP requires that staff members rotate among geographical locations, different functions and occupational groups and through increasing levels of responsibility. In order to retain qualified women, policies and practices sensitive to the particular problems faced by women in sustaining and developing their careers are being put in place.

21. The ability of both men and women to develop their careers is affected not only by organizational policies but also by their socially constructed roles and allocated responsibilities. While 88 per cent of male professional staff are married, only 40 per cent of the female professional staff are married. The remainder of the female professional staff are almost all either single (42 per cent) or divorced (15 per cent). These figures and the imbalance they demonstrate are not unique to UNDP professional women. However, the demands a career with UNDP places on staff members, for example, the need to serve in a variety of field offices, compounds the difficulties of married women and underlines the complexities that single staff of both genders have in meeting representational functions for UNDP in developing countries. A review of terms and conditions of all such staff is needed.

22. The policies and practices being introduced include training in the management of women in the work place and the institution of gender-sensitive conditions of service and entitlements. The latter include assistance with spouse employment in the field; concurrent reassignment of career couples to serve at the same duty station; greater flexibility in the timing of assignments, to accommodate the spouses' professional situation or children's educational requirements; the negotiation of spouse work permits with Governments and reciprocal arrangements with other field organizations; visit entitlements for single staff in the field; more flexible maternity leave provisions; the introduction on a pilot basis of flexi-time and compressed work week provisions for staff with child or elder care responsibilities; and staff counselling and self-help groups. Training for senior management staff, to be introduced in 1990, will address gender-related issues in the work place. Gender sensitivity is listed as a dimension of the new performance appraisal system currently being introduced.

C. Recruitment of consultants, volunteers and project staff

23. Recruitment figures for women in these categories remain low. In 1989, 20 per cent of the experts and 14 per cent of the consultants recruited by the Office for Project Services (OPS) were women. Over 40 per cent of these women were recruited for women-specific projects. Only 18 per cent of the consultants recruited by UNDP were women and 25 per cent of those recruited under L-series contracts were women. Seventeen per cent of serving United Nations Volunteers (UNV) were women, an increase of 1.8 per cent from 1988. The target for 1990 is to exceed 20 per cent of women volunteers.

24. While recognizing the implication of short supply in the above fields of recruitment, there is a need to develop means of identifying women in these categories and of determining and evaluating the gender sensitivity of all consultants, experts and volunteers.

V. GENDER-SENSITIVE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

25. Governing Council decision 89/27 recommended greater decentralization of women-in-development activities to the field. At the same time, many field offices have sought to improve the gender sensitivity of their operational activities. As a result, an increasing number of requests have been received for country level training. Expertise on women in development has been sought from national institutions and organizations, from UNIFEM and from the Division for Women in Development of UNDP. There has also been a greater concern with inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration at the country level.

A. Training

26. The successful implementation of Governing Council directives on women in development requires that a sensitivity to and knowledge of gender issues should be an integral part of the professional competence and commitment of all UNDP and executing agency staff, project personnel, local and international experts, consultants and government staff. Increased gender competence can best be brought about by formal training combined with support services such as procedural instructions, guidelines, reference materials and on-the-job training.

27. Since the inception in 1987 of UNDP training courses on women in development, about 600 people, including UNDP staff, executing agency personnel and government counterpart staff, have been trained. In 1988 and 1989, UNDP had a full-time staff member solely responsible for such training, and it is intended to maintain this capacity on a full-time basis for most of 1990. Despite this valuable resource, overall less than 15 per cent of national and international professional UNDP staff, excluding Junior Professional Officers, have attended specific training courses on women in development. If the professional competence of UNDP staff is to be increased, significantly more gender-specific training courses will need to be conducted.

28. At the same time, there is also a need to ensure that the subject of women in development is integrated throughout all other training courses and is not presented as a brief independent module. An important first step towards achieving this objective is being made in April 1990 with the integration of women-in-development concerns throughout the curriculum of a regional workshop on programme management and evaluation.

29. A training strategy for women in development is being developed which will, inter alia, identify local training resources and work with them to develop their capacity to provide appropriate, operationally oriented training courses and materials. A means of managing, monitoring and evaluating such training is also being devised. There is also a need to continue to strengthen the capacity of UNDP to organize and evaluate joint training workshops with UNIFEM and with the Sub-group on Women in Development of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

30. The rate of progress in meeting all the needs in the training area will clearly depend on the availability of staff and resources. In this context, it should be noted that the requirements relating to training in regard to women in development are being balanced against the many other demands on the scarce training resources of UNDP.

B. Field office support

31. A particular expertise is required for gender-sensitive programming and project assistance. Procedural directions and staff training can help but field office competence will often need to be complemented by experts and consultants in women in development. The demand for the latter will increase significantly in the period 1990-1992 as preparations proceed for the next programme cycle and as the modality of government/national execution increases.

32. Guidelines and instructions on the incorporation of gender issues in project identification, formulation, monitoring and evaluation need to be further developed.

33. A policy will be adopted, in the field and at headquarters, to ensure that the terms of reference for all missions, including programming, design and evaluation missions, include: (a) specific mention of the need to collect, analyse and report gender disaggregated data; and (b) specific mention of the need to address gender issues. A number of field offices have already introduced this practice. UNDP executing agencies should also be approached to adopt a similar policy. Terms of reference, even where they include explicit reference to gender issues, should be supplemented by field office briefings and should be carefully monitored, since questionnaire responses indicate that, to address gender issues, explicit instructions have been ignored by missions and, at times, by Governments. In many field offices, the only activity undertaken related to women in development is the filling in of women-in-development project review forms. Too often this occurs after the project design is completed, or it is undertaken in preparation for project reviews but without subsequent discussion. In such cases, it is a pro forma activity rather than, as intended, an aide-mémoire to be used in the

course of project formulation, review or evaluation. For this reason, a significant number of field offices have noted its inadequacy.

34. In the Programme and Projects Manual (PPM) of UNDP the subject of women in development is addressed under the section entitled "Special Considerations on Projects". Women in development is not a special consideration; rather it is a needed reminder that communities, the target groups and beneficiaries of development assistance, are composed of both women and men, and that their respective and relative roles have to be taken into account throughout the project cycle. A sensitivity to gender issues is a means of improving development efficiency. The Administrator intends to review all manuals and other procedural documentation to ensure that gender issues are included appropriately in each section or document. These amendments will replace the women-in-development project review forms and will remove the issue of women in development from the category of a special consideration on its integration throughout the appropriate documentation.

35. Perhaps the most effective support that can be given to field offices both for programme development and for project assistance is technical expertise in women in development. The Division for Women in Development is placing increasing importance on field level consultations and assistance. This assistance may be provided directly by division staff, but more frequently it will be in the form of assistance in identifying appropriate experts and consultants and in the formulation and monitoring of their missions. The practice of including a person specializing in women in development or of including gender sensitivity as a requirement for other technical experts is being increasingly adopted by headquarters units, including the special funds, and by field offices. Its effective use is facilitated by the compilation of rosters containing experts in women in development or which indicate the gender sensitivity of sectoral and technical experts.

36. The Administrator is examining ways of helping field offices to identify, and where necessary to finance, expertise in women in development both for the preparation of the next country programme and for the identification, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of projects as a means of increasing the gender sensitivity of UNDP operational activities.

C. Inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration

37. Inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration occurs at the headquarters level through the mediacy of the Inter-agency Meeting on Women of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), the Sub-group on Women in Development of JCGP and bilaterally between women-in-development advisers and units of operational bodies and agencies. These mechanisms facilitate joint activities and information exchange. There is, however, a need to determine how the women-in-development headquarters units can interact to improve and monitor the gender sensitivity of operational activities. It is planned to address this issue during 1990.

38. Increasingly, inter-agency groups on women in development are being established at field level. Some of these groups have requested assistance in drawing up their terms of reference and in determining the most effective ways of operating at the field level. These issues are addressed to a certain extent in a recent report of the 1989 United Nations Inter-agency Mission on Women in Development in Pakistan, entitled "The UN System in Pakistan and WID". The Division for Women in Development will provide more support and assistance to these groups in order to strengthen their effectiveness.

D. Policy development

39. The operationalization of the UNDP mandate on women in development through policy directives, and the identification and operationalization of emerging issues of relevance to women and development are an important part of the work of the Division for Women in Development as well as of the regional bureaux. The UNDP mandate on women in development prevents the organization from supporting any initiatives or institutions where discrimination against women is institutionalized. Directives covering such situations will help to make the mandate more operational.

40. The attention of the international community is continually drawn to issues particularly affecting women: the environment, poverty, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic, economic factors and inadequate statistical systems. The implications of these issues for UNDP operational activities need to be determined and assistance provided to field offices and other UNDP programmes to ensure that they are adequately addressed in technical co-operation. The Division for Women in Development, through the Sub-Group on Women in Development of JCGP and in response to Governing Council decision 88/27 of 1 July 1988, has commissioned a paper on the operational implications of recent analyses of the impact of structural adjustment on women. Work has also been initiated in other areas. The capacity of the Division for Women in Development to provide services such as these on a continuing basis will, however, be contingent on the level of its staff resources.

E. Institutional capacity of UNDP

41. The institutionalization of the UNDP mandate on women in development centres on two initiatives: the creation of a network of focal points for women in development and the establishment of the Division for Women in Development.

42. The network of focal points for women in development was established to help UNDP to integrate a concern for women, along with men, in all its development efforts. The focal points were not meant to have responsibility solely for women-specific projects. Nor can they be responsible for ensuring that gender concerns are addressed throughout the programming cycle and for all projects. All programme staff, national and international, male and female, need to be competent to treat women in development as a professional concern.

43. The responsibility of managers, both in the field and at headquarters, is to monitor and evaluate staff performance in this matter along with all other criteria of professional competence as well as to advise and assist staff with on-the-job training in gender sensitivity. The responsibility of the focal points for women in development can be reformulated as: (a) the collection and dissemination of documentation on women in development, including research studies, statistics and other reference material; (b) the identification of national and international consultants or technical experts on women in development with expertise on the subject and the creation of a consultant's roster; (c) networking with women's organizations, researchers on gender issues, national women's machineries and interested individuals; (d) the focal points for inquiries about the UNDP mandate on women in development and related activities; (e) the facilitation of inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration with other multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental donors; (f) the identification of gender-related operational issues or problems and their discussion with other staff and headquarters; and (g) where qualified, the provision of advice and assistance to other staff on gender-related conceptual, methodological and operational issues. The overall responsibility for the operationalization of gender concerns rests with the resident representative or the bureau director who must set the tone for commitment to any policy matter.

44. The need for additional staff for the Division for Women in Development was noted in the Administrator's report to the Governing Council at its thirty-sixth session (DP/1989/24) and continues as a constraint on the range of activities that can be undertaken. As a result, the 1990 work programme of the Division places emphasis on the provision of support to field offices but even with this narrowed focus, the demand for assistance exceeds the resources of the Division to respond. Consequently, other tasks will have to receive lower priority.

Notes

1/ United Nations Development Programme (London, Oxford University Press, 1990.
