

United Nations Development Programme
Bureau for Development Policy
Democratic Governance Group

➤ QUICK ENTRY POINTS TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY ◀

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About this Resource

The Democratic Governance Group (DGG) was one of five UNDP Headquarters units to receive funds in 2005 from UNDP's Gender Thematic Trust Fund, generously provided by the Government of the Netherlands. The funds have been used to strengthen the capacity of DGG practitioners for gender-sensitive policy and programme advice.

Many insights and ideas emerged during this work, which included an electronic discussion on the 1,300-strong democratic governance network in October 2005, a learning day on gender at the annual DGG retreat in November 2005, and a gender session at a pilot course on democratic governance for UNDP Resident Representatives and Deputies in December 2005.

Some of these insights are captured in this resource, which aims to provide something more substantive than a checklist but less demanding than a programme manual. It is produced for the busy democratic governance practitioner who will - one day - read up on the subject or sign up for a workshop, but who needs to know, right now, some of the main gender issues that s/he should factor into his/her advisory services. Many people contributed their ideas over the course of this work, and they are thanked in the list of contributors.

This document has been designed so that the section on each Service Line can be used on its own without reference to the rest of the publication. To facilitate this use, a few general points have been repeated in the different sections.

There is a need for this and other knowledge products on governance, women's empowerment, and gender equality. While there is some understanding about, for example, ways to increase the number of women in politics or to promote women in the civil service, much less is known about the way in which government services respond to the gendered experiences of the women and men to whom they are accountable.

Gender-sensitive governance would get the numbers right and ensure that the institutions of government provide services in a way that promotes the human rights of women and men, based on the evidence that most women still start from a different place. Indeed, gender analysis is a powerful tool that can enable governance practitioners to understand and respond to social norms, culture, beliefs, and other factors that are normally removed from technical discussions. These are areas about which we need, and do not yet have, sufficient knowledge and expertise.

In addition to this resource, DGG is commissioning primers on different aspects of gender equality and democratic governance, including e-governance, access to justice, anti-corruption, and elections. We encourage you all to contribute your experiences and ideas through your interaction on dgp-net@groups.undp.org, and in other forums. These resources are framed by the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development, which is now informing the work of the UN development system. By adopting this approach, work on women's empowerment and gender equality can contribute to the fulfilment of human rights and human development for all.

The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development

➤ ***What are human rights?***

Human rights are set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. They have been codified in international conventions that establish minimum standards to fulfil human dignity, drawing on values found in diverse religions and philosophies. Most Governments have agreed that these conventions constitute objective standards by which they can be judged. Governments effectively give these instruments the force of law at the national level once they have signed and ratified them. In other words, human rights are not just a good thing: in many countries, they are the law.

➤ ***What is the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development?***

In May 2003, representatives of UN development agencies came together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and independent human rights experts to discuss what it means to "do" development from a human rights perspective. They adopted the Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation (see Selected Reading for the link to the full text). The three main points can be summed up as follows:

1. All development programmes should further the realization of human rights – economic, social, civil, political and cultural.
2. Human rights standards and principles must guide all development programmes during all stages, i.e. during design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
3. Programmes should help develop the capacity of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations and of rights-holders to claim their rights. Duty bearers are most often the government but also include corporations, civil society organizations, and individuals, e.g. parents' obligations to their children. Rights-holders - i.e. people striving for their rights - include individuals, communities, and nations. Indigenous peoples, for example, have won recognition of communal rights in many countries.

➤ ***What are human rights standards and principles?***

Experts have further elaborated the content of the human rights standards that are set out in the international conventions. The experts serve on the committees that monitor state implementation of the seven core conventions. These committees draw on experience to issue General Comments on the content of specific rights, such as the right to vote, to adequate food, and to adequate housing. These General Comments are very useful for development practitioners because the information can be used to design indicators for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation, for example, to understand what the standard is for the right to adequate housing and then to identify how far a country or community is from the standard.

As for human rights principles, participants in the 2003 meeting that issued the UN Common Understanding agreed that six sets of human rights principles were of particular significance for development programming:

- *Universality and inalienability*, which means simply that all human beings have all human rights and no person can be shorn of his or her rights.

- *Indivisibility*: All human rights have equal status and are not ranked in hierarchical order.
- *Inter-dependence and Inter-relatedness*: For instance, the realisation of the right to health may depend on the realisation of the right to education or to information. This is echoed in UNDP's own work as a multi-sectoral agency.
- *Equality and Non-discrimination*: All individuals are equal and are entitled to their human rights without discrimination. As development practitioners know, achieving equality sometimes requires not just non-discrimination, but also positive discrimination or affirmative action, for example investing in the capacity of and access to resources by women and men excluded due to gender, race, religion, or other discrimination.
- *Participation and Inclusion*: Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in development. For participation to be meaningful, there must be investment in the capacity of women and men to participate so that their voice is heard and used.
- *Accountability and Rule of Law*: States and other duty-bearers have to comply with the standards enshrined in human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, rights-holders are entitled to institute proceedings for appropriate redress.

➤ ***What does the shift to a human rights-based approach mean for gender equality?***

The human rights-based approach to development cooperation (HRBA) provides a coherent framework for women's empowerment and gender equality. Applying the HRBA means, among other things,

Disaggregating data and analysis to identify the immediate as well as underlying causes of discrimination against women and men, including gender, ethnicity, religion, location, disability, and age, and addressing these in development programmes;

Identifying the rights to which the most vulnerable and excluded groups of women and men are entitled, and targeting these in programme interventions;

Developing the capacity of excluded groups to claim their rights (i.e. empowerment of women and of poor women and men), as well as the capacity of those whose duty it is to meet these obligations in states that have ratified CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and other conventions; and

Including in the measurement of processes and results the capacity developed to fulfil as well as to claim human rights.

The HRBA encompasses women's empowerment and gender equality. However, a deliberate effort is needed to use gender analysis as part of the HRBA, so as to understand this pervasive form of discrimination. Otherwise, governance practitioners will ignore the backlog of discrimination against women, and the measures needed to ensure that planned development interventions do not perpetuate discrimination against either women or men.

Common Cross-Practice Questions

➤ ***Which is it: Gender Equality or Women's Empowerment?***

Both. UNDP is committed to two distinct but inter-related objectives:

Women's Empowerment strengthens women's capacity to equally access resources and opportunities and addresses the backlog of discrimination against women. The global commitment to do so is grounded in the action agendas of the four world conferences on women (1975 Mexico, 1980 Copenhagen, 1985 Nairobi, 1995 Beijing), and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women), adopted in 1979. and, by 2006 signed or ratified by 182 states.

Gender Equality ensures that both women and men have equal access to opportunities and resources in all fields so that development work neither creates nor perpetuates discrimination. To do so, we need to recognize, analyze, and address the different impact of programmes on women and men because of their gender roles (i.e. "gender mainstreaming". These roles are socially constructed and can change over time. Gender equality is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

➤ ***Why does UNDP pursue these objectives?***

As part of the UN system, UNDP is committed to promoting the realization of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter. This UN mandate has been reaffirmed in the Secretary General's reforms since 1996. UNDP is not only committed to but is also assigned to be the champion of the MDGs. UNDP began to consciously work towards women's empowerment in the late 1980s, and towards gender equality in the 1990s, recognizing that gender equality is both a means and an end.

➤ ***Why was there a shift from women to gender?***

In the early 1970s, the women in development movement called for social justice and political equality for women, radically changing the way the development community viewed women and leading to legislation to safeguard women's rights such as CEDAW. However, this approach sometimes separated women's programming from the mainstream programming that involved men, and increased women's marginalization. More importantly, it left out the critical issues of power, conflict and relationships that are at the root of women's subordination. The need to address such factors and to examine the status of women in relation to the status of men led to the gender in development approach in the early 1990s.

➤ ***Can women be as gender neutral as men?***

Yes. The 2005 review of the work of UNDP's Democratic Governance Group found that both male and female practitioners are supporting important initiatives to increase the number of women in elections, parliament, and the public service. There are also growing challenges to gender-based discrimination through analysis of budgets from a gender perspective, review of unequal citizenship and property rights, and measures to address barriers to access to justice. However, if gender was not specified in the request for advice, both men and women were gender neutral in discussing technical issues like aid coordination, employment, regional planning, budget oversight, and minorities. Work towards gender equality begins by asking this question in all areas of development: "What different impacts will this development initiative have on the situation of women, men, girls, and boys?" The next step is to seek answers, by drawing on in-house or external gender expertise. Thereafter, the findings must be factored into programme objectives and processes, and in monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

➤ ***How does one deal with resistance to taking action for gender equality?***

UNDP staff members, men and women, are - and must be held - accountable for ensuring that development programmes advance women's human rights and all human rights. There is still insufficient understanding of and resistance to the need for gender analysis and for targeting programmes based on the findings. There is also resistance to the use of affirmative action policies and quotas. This can be partly addressed by

Producing solid evidence of discrimination, whether against women or men, as the basis for programme goals and interventions, based on disaggregated data and analysis.

Elaborating the distinction between equality and equity. Giving equal amounts of money to a group of people when there is a backlog of discrimination against either sex due to their gender roles is likely to help those who are better equipped to take advantage of the funds and continue to exclude those who are not. Equity would mean giving more funding to women or men who need it to overcome illiteracy, lack of skills or credit, among others, thus taking the impact of past discrimination into account.

Sharing experience from different countries, regions, and organizations in the way that affirmative action policies and quotas have promoted gender balance and equity; if quotas are used, it is important to invest in public awareness campaigns to avoid backlash.

Underscoring that UNDP is an equal opportunities employer that has taken deliberate action to push gender balance in the organization, adopting a gender balance in management policy in 1995 and reflecting the results in updated policies.

Using the terms correctly: "gender", when referring to the way the socially constructed roles of women and men translate into differing access to power and resources, and "women's empowerment" when focusing on women's capacities to claim human rights.

Recognizing men's roles in and need for gender equality.

Providing gender analysis that is specific to the Democratic Governance Service Line.

➤ ***What if there is still resistance, or even tension and conflict?***

Resistance is natural. Promoting human rights, including women's human rights, is likely to challenge power relations and control over resources and thus lead to conflict. Gender equality is a radical agenda that should transform the mainstream rather than "mainstream" women and men into situations of discrimination. Work on gender equality also challenges the assumptions that our societies (and we as individuals) have about gender roles, thus increasing the potential for resistance and conflict. At the same time, progress towards human rights and redress for groups suffering from discrimination can help to prevent or mitigate conflict. There is a need to invest in the capacity of UNDP staff to manage actual and potential tensions and conflict.

➤ ***What about project staff and consultants?***

No matter how gender sensitive UNDP staff become, this will not have enough impact on the organization's work if consultants and project personnel are not gender sensitive. UNDP staff should ensure that gender equality is part of terms of reference and job descriptions, and request project staff and consultants to study one of UNDP's learning packages on gender.

➤ ***Is it OK to formulate projects for women?***

Yes, definitely - if gender analysis has identified that women need special investment in their capacity so as to exercise or to claim their human rights or to contribute to human development.

Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff

As United Nations civil servants, UNDP staff members are duty bearers with a special responsibility to support states and civil society in their efforts to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights. As a UNDP staff member you are responsible for promoting gender equality as well as women's empowerment, and your management is responsible for supporting you in so doing, and for holding you accountable for so doing. Ways to fulfil your obligations include:

- Investing in your own capacity to understand and implement the human rights-based approach to development cooperation (HRBA).
- Strengthening your capacity for gender analysis so as to ensure that the programmes you manage are gender sensitive, that you can draft gender sensitive consultant terms of reference, and that you are able to hold consultants accountable for products that empower women and advance gender equality.
- Ensuring that the list of people you plan to meet during your own or during consultant missions include women's organizations and government and UN gender experts, so that you as well as the consultants you field can better understand the status of women and gender relations in the country.
- Drawing on reports on gender issues and disaggregated data in the studies you commission and in the advisory services you provide, so as to better respond to the actual economic, social, cultural, civil, political, and environmental situation in a country.
- Ensuring that consultant profiles include gender expertise, and/or share materials that enhance the consultant teams' capacity for gender expertise
- Investing in the capacity of project personnel and consultants for HRBA and for gender analysis, including a requirement to take virtual UNDP courses on gender equality and women's empowerment and to be certified as having done so.
- Investing in your own capacity as well as that of project personnel to use gender-sensitive and pro-poor indicators in governance programming.
- Strengthening your own capacity and that of project staff and consultants to manage tensions and conflict that may arise as a result of efforts to promote human rights, including women's human rights, while recognizing that progress towards human rights and redress for groups suffering from discrimination can help to prevent or mitigate conflict.
- Demonstrating UNDP's own internal accountability and transparency for gender equality and women's empowerment, through your involvement in recruitment, promotion, gender sensitive work environment, and other areas.

Parliamentary Development

Parliaments enact laws, mediate the interests of different constituencies, and establish political priorities and resource allocations that directly affect people's lives, and oversee the executive branch. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Parliamentarians, as duty bearers to protect and promote human rights, including women's human rights, so that when they review national legislation and make decisions on development priorities and resource allocations, they will empower women and promote gender equality.
- Citizens and their organizations, as rights-holders, to understand gender-based discrimination and to hold parliament accountable for addressing this in a way that empowers women and advances gender equality.

Parliament's Legislative Function

- Support parliamentarians and their staff in understanding the international and regional human rights framework, including CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), and how this informs national legislation, as well as the country's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Strengthen parliamentarians' capacity to analyze the causes of discrimination in the country, including gender analysis so as to understand the way in which socially constructed roles result in different access to socio-economic and political participation by women and men.
- Work with different parliamentary committees to develop gender analysis skills in ways that are relevant to the work of each committee, e.g. committees dealing with budgets, national economic plans, security sector oversight, or law reform.
- Support legislative reform and the implementation of legislation in spheres of most relevance to gender equality e.g. access to justice, nationality, labour, family, land rights, social security, and inheritance.
- Assist parliamentarians, in the aftermath of crisis or conflict, to bring a gender perspective into peace processes and transitions; to legislate on issues of gender-based violence; to address the gender dimensions of nationality law; to ensure gender sensitivity in the composition of special bodies such as truth commissions and special courts; and to ensure that the realization of property, inheritance, and other rights is gender-balanced.

Parliament's Oversight Function

- Enhance capacity for gender analysis of budgets, drawing on disaggregated data to identify the most disadvantaged females and males, the causes of discrimination, and whether this is addressed - or perpetuated - by social and economic allocations. Study tours for parliamentarians should include countries where such analysis has been used.
- Enhance parliamentarians' capacity for gender sensitive monitoring and oversight of the executive branch's implementation of legislation particularly relevant to gender equality.
- Strengthen parliamentary oversight of the judiciary and related civil and criminal justice agencies, including the security sector, so as to understand and address barriers to accessing justice that face poor women and men, including gender-specific barriers.

- Review numbers and levels of female and male staff in parliament to address barriers to recruitment and promotion, including gender stereotypes, or absence of gender-sensitive work environments. Note that equality of representation fulfils women's individual human rights, but is not in itself a guarantee of gender sensitivity. All staff need gender training.

Parliament's Representative Function

- Support the capacity of parliamentarians and staff for engagement with civil society organizations, women's groups, and the media, particularly in work on the budget and in the passage of legislation key to gender equality.
- Help to establish and support women's caucuses or gender caucuses to identify key issues and to mobilize alliances within parliament and with civil society for action towards gender equality.
- Educate parliamentarians and staff in the reasons for women's low political participation at national and local levels within the country and around the world, and the ways in which other countries are addressing this, including quotas.
- Strengthen the capacity of political parties for gender analysis and support greater representation of women in party hierarchies and staffing, providing incentives by e.g. giving more airtime to parties that have quotas for women.
- Support parliamentarians in taking advantage of political transition after conflict or crisis and introduce formal mechanisms to enhance women's participation, e.g., in drafting constitutions, electoral design, political party legislation, and parliament's own rules.

Citizens' Capacity to Hold Parliament Accountable

- Provide knowledge about the international and regional human rights framework, including CEDAW, and the way in which it has or has not been translated into domestic law, as well as the country commitment to the MDGs.
- Strengthen the capacity for gender analysis in professional associations, academic institutions, human rights groups, the media, and women's organizations. An understanding of the factors that perpetuate discrimination will enable these groups to address the gender impact of proposed legislation in environmental, economic, political, civil, social, or cultural spheres.
- Enhance knowledge about the functioning of the parliamentary system, and ways to engage representatives so as to ensure that all legislation is gender-sensitive.
- Invest in the ability to analyze the budget from a gender perspective, and draw on disaggregated data to support arguments for restatement of priorities and reallocation of resources, in line with government's stated commitments to gender equality.
- Support the capacity of women's, human rights and other organizations to monitor the way that parliament oversees the government's stated commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment under international conventions and agreements.
- Strengthen the capacity of marginalized groups and individual women and men to understand and lobby for their rights, including by networking across groups and issues to create forces for gender equality that will influence parliaments as well as candidates.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Electoral Systems & Processes; Decentralization, Local Governance, Urban/Rural Development; Public Administration Reform & Anti-Corruption

Electoral Systems & Processes

Elections are a means for people to choose their representatives and government, and a way of conferring legitimacy on the political system. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Electoral bodies, political parties and other duty bearers to understand causes of discrimination, including gender, poverty, race, ethnicity, age, and disability, so as to empower women and promote gender equality through electoral processes.
- Excluded and vulnerable women and men voters and candidates so that they can understand the causes of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, to better advocate human rights, women's empowerment, and gender equality.

Electoral Commissions, Committees, and other Bodies

- Strengthen the capacity of electoral bodies to understand human rights standards and principles, including CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), and how these are translated into domestic legislation, as well as their country's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Invest in capacity for gender analysis so the members and staff of electoral bodies can understand how gender roles result in different access to socio-economic and political participation by women and men.
- Undertake and disseminate the results of studies on issues such as

The factors that may impact on women's or men's ability to stand for election or to vote, including e.g.

- For women, time burdens, restrictions on physical access, illiteracy, migration, and stereotyped views of women's roles, among others.
- For men, migration, army service, unemployment, and stereotyped views of men's roles, among others.
- The way that local elections potentially provide greater avenues for women and men to mobilize around issues directly relevant to their daily lives, including service delivery in health, education, housing and other key areas.
- Analyze the numbers and levels of female and male staff in electoral bodies to ensure gender balance in appointments, management, and staff. However, equality in numbers is not a guarantee of gender sensitivity, and all staff need capacity for gender analysis.
- Factor gender sensitivity into training of election workers brought in for specific periods.

Electoral Systems

- Support discussions of the ways in which issues other than technical and financial ones need to be considered when reform of electoral systems is under consideration, e.g. power dynamics, class, gender-based discrimination, poverty, ethnicity, and the way that elites can capture resources.

- Examine the ways in which some systems are better at promoting pluralism and inclusiveness, including of women as well as of youth, and enable women as well as marginalized groups to better represent their constituents.

Political Parties

- Develop capacity to understand the human rights and international law framework and the country's human rights obligations.
- Strengthen capacity to analyze the causes of discrimination in the country, including gender analysis so as to understand the way in which socially constructed roles result in different access to socio-economic and political participation by women and men.
- Invest in understanding the potential of quotas to address discrimination against women and ways quotas have been used in different parts of the world.
- Sensitize political party leadership to the need to develop the capacity of women at all levels of their organisations, and provide the requisite support.

Citizens' Capacity to Participate in Elections and Electoral Reform

- Invest in civic and voter education for women, men, girls, and boys, and use these opportunities to promote understanding of
 - The international human rights system and the country's obligations, including under CEDAW and through the MDGs.
 - How gender roles create or perpetuate discrimination against females and males.
 - The electoral system and its potential to make a difference to their lives if used well.
- Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, human rights groups, the media, and women's organizations for gender analysis so they may understand the gender issues that arise during electoral processes and support women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Invest in the political and networking skills of women's groups and allies, drawing on experience from other countries in areas such as the use of quotas at national and local levels.
- Support skills of women as well as of women and men from marginalized groups in how to run for elections.
- Strengthen the capacity of women as well as of women and men from marginalized groups to organize in effective ways to lobby their representatives for their human rights.
- Invest in the ability of women's, human rights and other organizations to monitor the government's stated commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment under the international conventions it has signed, including but not limited to CEDAW, as well as through the MDGs.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Parliamentary Development; E-Governance and Access to Information; Decentralization, Local Governance, Urban/Rural Development

Access to Justice and Human Rights

The possibility of redress when rights have been violated is a fundamental human right. Addressing the barriers faced by poor and disadvantaged groups in accessing the justice system promotes human rights and helps to reduce the potential for conflict within and among communities. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Parliament, ministries of foreign affairs, law and justice, the judiciary, schools of law, bar associations, the police, human rights institutions, community leaders and mediators, and other duty bearers to understand and address gender-based barriers to access to justice, so as to empower women and promote gender equality.
- NGOs, media, watchdog, and legal advocacy organizations to enable rights-holders, female and male, to address gender-based discrimination and claim their rights.

Legal Protection, Awareness, Counsel

- Invest in the duty bearer knowledge of the international human rights system, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the way this is reflected in domestic regulation. Strengthen understanding of the protection offered by optional protocols, such as CEDAW's. In addition, invest in duty bearer understanding of country commitment to the Millennium Development Goals.
- Invest in duty bearer capacity for gender analysis of how laws, rules, and regulations are formulated and implemented so as to understand their impact on women and men, e.g.,

Nationality laws may discriminate against women's ability to give their nationality to spouses and children, discriminating against women, men, and children in such basic rights as access to employment, education, and health.

Penal codes may give impunity for gender-based violence, e.g. honour crimes and rape.

When basic legal systems are re-built after conflict, abuses of women's rights need to be addressed and legal personnel trained to prosecute these crimes more effectively.

If law reform is focused on liberalizing markets through securing property rights and enforcing contracts, women entrepreneurs can be left out because their businesses are in the informal sector and they lack property title and access to credit.

- Support governments in harmonizing the constitution & national legislation with CEDAW.
- Strengthen duty bearer capacity to understand barriers to justice faced by women and men living in poverty, and the way the rights of different marginalized groups are affected by their gender, economic status, religion, geographic location, and other factors, e.g.

Women may especially suffer from illiteracy, lack of knowledge of the law, restrictions on travel, less access to financial resources, lack of physical security.

Men form the majority of those who face the possibility of detention without trial, torture, and forced military service.

- Enhance capacity to understand and address how the difficulty in accessing the formal system of justice makes individuals and communities turn to informal and traditional systems of justice, which may be biased against women's human rights.

Adjudication and Enforcement

- Invest, in both peacetime and in the aftermath of crisis or conflict, in
 - The capacity of the judiciary to enforce legislation on issues of gender-based violence;
 - Gender sensitivity in the composition of truth commissions, special courts, and others;
 - Promoting gender balance in the application of new or revised legislation dealing with property and inheritance rights among other areas.
- Understand and address the potential for elites, male and female, to capture resources intended for development, even among poor and marginalized communities, and the way this leads to tensions, conflicts, and violations of rights that call for redress.
- Work with institutions of law enforcement to mainstream gender into comprehensive police reform programmes, including crime prevention, investigation, operations and prosecutions, human resource, and oversight. Issues facing law enforcement include
 - Impunity for crimes of domestic violence, rape, and other assaults on women's physical security, including by members of the security forces.
 - The need for special services to deal with domestic abuse, such as hotlines and shelters.
 - Enforcing gender-balanced legislation in areas such as property rights, inheritance.
 - Ways to deal with human trafficking that protect victims, women and men.
 - The way in which the rights of migrants, male and female, may be violated.
- Strengthen collaboration between law enforcement agencies and other ministries such as public works or transport, to e.g. make public spaces safe for women and men through such measures as street lighting and safety in public transport.
- Review the numbers and levels of female and male staff in ministries of justice, the judiciary, the police, human rights institutions, and other duty bearer institutions with a view to ensuring gender balance, while also investing in gender sensitivity of all staff.

Civil Society Awareness and Oversight

- Invest in rights-holders knowledge of the international human rights system, including CEDAW, and the way this reflected in domestic regulation, as well as of the MDGs.
- Invest in the capacity for gender analysis by civil society organizations providing legal services and supporting access to justice, bar associations, schools of law, associations of women judges, human rights, and women's organizations, so that their work addresses (and does not perpetuate) gender-based discrimination.
- Enhance awareness by legal aid and watchdog NGOs, women's groups, and other organizations how to bring so they can make the voice of the marginalized heard and help excluded women and poor women and men, e.g.
 - People living in poverty need access information about their rights, including in areas of particular significance to women such as family law, the penal code, and nationality laws.
 - Women and men need the capacity to understand how the system works and how to seek redress through the formal and/or informal systems of justice.
 - Staff at legal aid clinics should be trained in dealing with gender-based violence.
- Invest in the capacity of women's, human rights and other organizations to monitor legal discrimination against women in areas of citizenship, nationality, land rights, inheritance, and others, and hold accountable the civil and criminal justice systems.

- Support constructive dialogue with representatives of religious and traditional systems of justice to address women's rights.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Parliamentary Development Public Administration Reform & Anti-Corruption

E-Governance and Access to Information

E-governance encompasses the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance government efficiency, transparency, and accountability, as well as citizen engagement and participation in democratic governance. Access to Information promotes the right to information as well as communication mechanisms that enable people, particularly poor and disadvantaged groups, to voice views and participate in democratic processes. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Government, corporations, and other duty bearers to provide efficient, effective and equitable services that respond to people's gendered experiences, empowering women and promoting gender equality.
- Rights-holders, particularly the poorest and most marginalized women and men, to hold government accountable for equal access to health, education, housing, and other services, and to participate in policy dialogue and decisions on issues that affect them.

Connectivity and Access

- Invest in the understanding by government and private sector leaders in the ICT sector of the human rights system and the country's obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Also invest in understanding of the country's commitment to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Invest in the capacity for gender analysis of government bodies and corporations working on ICT so they can understand the way in which connectivity and access to ICT can empower some but discriminate against others. For example,
 - Women and men who bear the burden of illiteracy, who lack money to travel, who have heavy work burdens, or who lack electricity, will not have access to ICT.
 - Older women and men who need more support to overcome fears of new technology.
- Respond to the way in which access to information through ICT may reach those active the public sphere, primarily men, but exclude women who are still primarily responsible for the domestic economy in many countries. For example,
 - ICT can be made available in areas where women already gather, including schools, health centres, and community groups, and training can be organized at flexible times.
 - ICT that do not require much literacy, such as mobile phones, can be provided.
- Increase the number of women involved in policy making and strategy in the ICT sector, and the numbers of women in tertiary education in this field.
- Collect and analyze disaggregated data on use, access, and production of content to underpin ICT policies and show differences in benefits to women and men.
- Ensure gender balance in numbers and levels of staff in ministries of information, telecommunications, and others, while also investing in the gender sensitivity of all staff.

Access to Information

- Strengthen capacity to develop and enforce national legislation and policies on the right to information with special provisions to facilitate access by women and those living in poverty e.g. fee waivers, assistance for illiterate women and men.

- Support implementation of right to information legislation and systems to enable women, those living in poverty and other marginalised groups to access government information.
- Encourage government to be more responsive to requests for information from civil society, including groups working for human rights and women's human rights.

E-Government

- Invest in the capacity for gender analysis of all civil servants so they may understand the way in which existing services discriminate against women or poor women and men, and factor those findings into new e-government initiatives. For example,
 - Women generally have less access to markets, credit, technology, and business networks than men, which could be addressed through e-government services.
 - Poor women and men may have different needs to access and communicate information.
- Strengthen government capacity to monitor e-government services from a gender perspective so as to understand and address factors that might impede access by women and men, including literacy, cost, distance, and restrictions on movement.

Citizen Engagement, Participation, and Networking

- Invest in the understanding by civil society groups active in ICT and access to information of the country's human rights obligations, including under CEDAW, as well as the commitment to the MDGs.
- Enhance the capacity for gender analysis by editors and journalists, particularly women journalists, professional associations, academic institutions, human rights groups, and women's organizations, so they can use ICT and access to information rights to promote women's empowerment and equality of opportunity between women and men.
- Increase journalists' awareness of development issues and ways of giving women voice, e.g. using the Millennium Declaration and Goals, and Human Development Reports.
- Support civil society organizations and media bodies, particularly those that use pro-poor interactive broadcasting communication, to raise the awareness of women on rights to information and provide accessible and credible information which women can use.
- Provide media training to community-based organisations, particularly women's groups, to enable them to communicate views in mainstream policy debates and promote programmes that address the specific needs of women and other disadvantaged groups.
- Strengthen the capacity of women's, human rights and other organizations to monitor the government's stated commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment under the international conventions it has signed, including CEDAW, as well as the MDGs.
- Invest in the capacity of women and men to use networks to quickly access and analyze information, communicate views to policy makers, and mobilize to support human rights, e.g. ICT enabled women's networks to push gender at the 2005 Millennium Summit.
- Demonstrate the potential of e-government to usefully impact the lives of women and men, particularly poor women and men, e.g., providing access to information about women's legal rights, facilitating access to credit, and supporting ongoing learning.
- Educate about the harm that can be done to human rights and to women's human rights through ICT, including human trafficking and pornography.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Public Administration Reform & Anti-Corruption

Decentralization, Local Governance, Urban/Rural Development

Decentralisation is the restructuring of authority between government institutions at the central, regional and local levels. Local governance refers to institutions, mechanisms and processes through which citizens and their groups can exercise their rights and obligations at the local level. Urban and rural development covers issues affecting dwellers in cities, towns and villages such as shelter, jobs and income, and water. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Central, regional, and local government institutions, community leaders, local government associations, and other duty bearers to provide public services and promote citizen participation in a way that reaches the poorest and most disadvantaged people and communities, empowers women, and advances gender equality.
- Women, men, and their organization to participate in decision-making about development priorities and representation, holding their government accountable for meeting human rights obligations in a way that empowers women and advances gender equality.

Decentralization

- Engender policy processes at the central and local level, e.g. equalization formulas and policy impact assessment tools, using these to assess the impact of fiscal decentralization and taxation on women, among other things.
- Understand the impact of decentralization on power relations and address the need to identify and manage potential and actual conflict, asking questions like
 - Who has power over resources in the government, community, and household? What is the role of local elites, and do they capture development resources intended for the poor?
 - How will decentralization of services impact on women? How will it impact on women and men facing discrimination due to ethnicity, religion, age, disability or other factors?
 - Will decentralization increase women's political participation? Will it expand citizen's engagement with government?
- Strengthen, in fiscal decentralisation programmes, the capacity to include gender-disaggregated indicators on human rights standards (e.g. access to health and education) and principles, e.g. participation, transparency, and accountability.
- Invest in the capacity for participatory budgeting, including gender budgeting, involving key stakeholders in resource allocation at the sub-national level.

Local Governance & Urban/Rural Development

- Invest in the understanding by local government and other duty bearers of the human rights system and the country's obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as its commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Develop the capacity of local governments and community leaders for gender analysis based on disaggregated data, so that they understand the gender-based causes of discrimination, and take action to address questions like

- Who has access to natural resources, land and property rights, credit and agricultural inputs, and other economic resources?
- Is service delivery gender sensitive?
- Strengthen local government capacity to monitor spending to see if money is flowing into services women need, such as ante-natal care, or have primary responsibility for, such as water, and services both women and men need, such as sanitation and street lighting.
- Support exchange of experience within and across countries in local government processes that have integrated gender concerns, including in quotas for women's participation in local government, underscoring ways in which it may be easier to achieve gender equality at the local level.
- Review gender balance in local government and other government bodies at the local level to promote equality, keeping in mind the need for all staff to have the capacity for gender analysis so they are able to provide equal access to services and opportunities.

Citizen Capacity to Engage and Claim Rights

- Invest in the understanding by local and community groups of the human rights system and the country's obligations, including CEDAW, and its commitments to the MDGs.
- Strengthen the capacity for gender analysis by local civil society organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, human rights groups, and women's organizations, so they can understand issues like

The way decentralization and local governance policies impact on women's empowerment and equality of opportunity between women and men.

The barriers that can be erected by stereotyped views of women's roles and limited understanding of their economic contribution, including unequal access to education, health, credit, housing, and property and other resources.

- Analyze efforts to promote local organizations, e.g. rural development community boards, from a gender perspective to assess their contribution to women's equal participation in decision-making and access to resources.
- Link the MDGs at the local level with gender equality and provide women's and human rights organizations with the tools to emphasize gender in local planning processes and budgets.
- Strengthen citizen capacity for meaningful participation, including in local elections as candidates and voters, working with women's organizations, community groups, and organizations of the poor and disadvantaged to invest in organizational, management, public speaking, and networking skills, among others, especially of women.
- Strengthen the capacity of women's, human rights and other organizations to monitor and hold government accountable for its stated commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment under the international conventions it has signed, including but not limited to CEDAW, as well as through the MDGs, e.g. through audits, gender budget exercises, public hearings, and other ways.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Electoral Systems & Processes; Public Administration Reform & Anti-Corruption

Public Administration Reform & Anti-Corruption

Public administration refers to state policies, procedures, systems, structures, staff, and other resources used to manage the affairs of the executive government and the provision of public services. Corruption is the misuse of public office or authority for private benefit, through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, or embezzlement. Development cooperation should strengthen the capacity of

- Government ministries, parliament, the ombuds office, equality commissions, women's ministries or departments, national integrity institutions, and other duty bearers to promote human rights standards and principles, reaffirm citizens' faith in the legitimacy of their institutions, and empower women and promote gender equality.
- Individual women and men, civil society organizations, and the media to monitor the provision of equitable and accountable public services and mobilize women and men to claim their rights, empowering women and advancing gender equality.

Civil Service Reform, Government Machinery, Revenue and Expenditure

- Invest in the understanding by ministries and other duty bearers of the human rights system and the country's obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Develop the capacity of public servants, women and men, for gender analysis, across the range of institutions of government, making sure to tailor interventions so that specific bodies understand and address gender-based causes of discrimination. For example, employment commission staff (women and men) may not understand how access to land and resources affect the gender composition of work, or how men's greater access to capital keeps most women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises.
- Consider, when undertaking civil service reform, different civil service models from the perspective of women's empowerment and gender equality, asking questions like
 - Which traditions and what incentives have proven to be more conducive and open to civil service careers for women, including faster hiring and promotions?
 - In which traditions are governments more willing to solicit citizen feedback, particularly that of women and men living in poverty, and to deal with citizens as rights holders rather than as "subjects" or "customers"?
 - What systems encourage civil servants to respond to civil society organizations, including over issues such as the right to information or redress for injustice?
 - Which systems, and what incentives, facilitate gender-balanced recruitment in remote and hardship areas?
- Ensure that civil service reform programmes
 - Promote gender balance, equal pay and promotion, and address gender stereotypes.
 - Develop institutions that provide equal access to services by women and men and target the poorest and most vulnerable women and men, families, and communities.
- Monitor the implications of public administration reform programmes for gender equality, including downsizing, pay reform, results-based management, performance measures, incentive systems, recruitment, training, promotion, reporting, and accountability systems.
- Assess the gender impact of new tools for public administration such as e-government.

- Provide opportunities for governments to exchange experience in women's empowerment and gender equality, for example,
 - One country now includes gender in foundation courses for all new civil servants, sending core trainers abroad for gender studies where this is not available locally.
 - Another has promoted women to senior management, gender-sensitized job descriptions and selection criteria, and publicly championed gender equality at the highest level.
- Use reform of the machinery of government - the rules, institutions, and structure of the administration - as an opportunity to
 - Address rules and procedures that still discriminate against women - and their husbands and children - such as pensions, health benefits, and allowances.
 - Revisit regulations that are still informed by the social norm that the man is the head of the household, even though economic reality is rapidly changing social reality.
- Strengthen national machineries for women so they can contribute to national capacity to meet obligations to women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Strengthen the capacity of the ombuds office, national auditors, employment commissions and other accountability bodies to monitor how public development funds are allocated and spent for gender equality and women's empowerment. Also strengthen these bodies to develop policies, monitor and deal with sexual harassment.
- Promote gender-sensitive work environment and family friendly systems such as childcare facilities, parental leave, flexible working hours.

Anti-Corruption

- Invest in the understanding of the ombuds office, auditors, and other national integrity institutions of the human rights system and the country's obligations, including CEDAW, as well as commitment to the MDGs.
- Strengthen the capacity of national integrity institutions for gender analysis, including how corruption might impact differently on women and men. UNIFEM is studying how gender shapes, among others, the
 - Opportunities for engaging in corruption exchanges, e.g. women's lack of business networks may make underhand deals less likely.
 - Impact of corruption on women and men in terms of the types of resources denied, e.g. women may not know they are entitled to resources from development programmes.
 - Currency of corruption, such as the size of bribes or demands for sexual favours, and how to factor gender differences in systems to measure corruption.

Citizen Capacity to Hold Government Accountable

- Invest in the capacity for gender analysis of civil society organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, human rights groups and women's organizations to hold government accountable for efficient, transparent, and equitable services, supporting accountability innovations like gender budgets, participatory municipal budgeting exercises, and gender-disaggregated report cards on urban services.
- Strengthen the capacity of women's, human rights and other groups to monitor the government's stated commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, including under CEDAW, as well as the MDGs.

See also Obligations & Capacity of UNDP Staff; Access to Justice & Human Rights; E-Governance and Access to Information;

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