



DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF EQUALITY

UNFPA'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON GENDER
MAINSTREAMING & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT 2008-2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Unfinished Agenda of the 21st Century.....	1
Rationale for a Gender Perspective in UNFPA Programming	2
Purpose of the Framework.....	2
Process of Developing the Framework and Key Findings	3
Definitions and Concepts.....	4
UNFPA's Comparative Advantages.....	4
Emerging Issues, Opportunities and Challenges	5
UNFPA Priorities for Gender Equality Programming.....	7
(1) Setting Policy for ICPD and the MDGs: Human Rights, Gender Equality and Culture	8
(2) Reproductive Health: Pillars of the Essential Package.....	11
(3) Ending Gender-Based Violence	14
(4) Adolescents and Youth: Starting Early on the Path to Gender Equality.....	17
(5) Emergency and Post-Emergency Situations	18
(6) Men and Boys: Partners for Equality	20
(7) Strategic Linkages	21
Operationalization and Follow Up of the Strategic Framework.....	23
1) Capacity Development	23
2) Strengthening UNFPA Accountability	26
Annex 1: Glossary of Terms.....	28

INTRODUCTION: UNFINISHED AGENDA OF THE 21ST CENTURY

At the dawn of the 21st Century, humanity continues to witness massive human rights violations in the form of discrimination and violence against half of the world's population. The unequal status, freedoms and opportunities afforded to women and girls exist to a greater or lesser degree in every society and country of the world and regrettably, all too often taken for granted as 'normal' aspects of society and human relations. The widespread and deleterious effects of gender inequality on individuals, families, communities and countries remain largely invisible and underestimated. Despite a solid evidence-base demonstrating the centrality of women's empowerment and gender equality to poverty reduction and development, and to unraveling the world's most pressing global challenges, including HIV and AIDS; and despite universal promises of equality made at the highest levels of government (most recently at the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit), gender equality remains an unfinished agenda for the 21st Century.

A critical gap in fulfilling the promise of gender equality and women's empowerment lies in the area of reproductive health and rights. As affirmed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, a woman's ability to make autonomous, informed decisions about sexuality and reproduction, free of any form of discrimination, coercion and violence, is central to her enjoyment of human rights. And a woman's exercise of her reproductive rights is key to her political and economic empowerment, and thus to unleashing her full potential and capacities as an agent of poverty reduction and development. Yet, across the world, gender inequality persists and millions of women and adolescent girls are unable to exercise these rights, thereby undermining the important role they could play in poverty reduction and development efforts.

UNFPA's contribution: UNFPA is one of the leading United Nations and international development agencies with a strong mandate, country-level presence and operational capacity to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Its core mission of furthering sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for all is a pillar of poverty reduction, gender equality and development. As such, UNFPA is accountable for progress on gender equality from an ethical, as well as a results-based programmatic and financial perspective.

"Advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes."

ICPD Programme of Action, Principle 4

Addressing and promoting gender equality is at the heart of UNFPA policies and programmes across its operations on different continents. This has been particularly marked since the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action – in which governments agreed that a gender perspective should be an integral and cross-cutting aspect of all follow-up efforts.¹ While UNFPA's sustained commitment and efforts on gender equality issues (such as gender-based violence) have contributed to placing them high on public and policy agendas, UNFPA's experience with gender equality programming needs to be revisited as gender remains a challenge not only for the organization, but for the international development community as a whole.

Countdown to the MDGs: In the countdown to 2015 for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN System is also expected to contribute to the improvement of the lot of the world's most vulnerable populations. UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2008-2011 encapsulates the agency's critical contributions to poverty reduction and to achieving the MDGs.² Not surprisingly, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is both a goal in itself and central to achieving all the other goals in both the MDGs and UNFPA's Strategic Plan. UNFPA is therefore challenged to re-double its efforts on gender equality programming.

¹ Beijing Declaration, Paragraph 38: "We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the following Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programmes...".

² "Gender equality advanced and women and adolescent girls empowered to exercise their human rights, particularly their reproductive rights, and live free of discrimination and violence", UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

RATIONALE FOR A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN UNFPA PROGRAMMING

UNFPA's resolve to embark on a reinvigorated gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment approach falls squarely within the organization's efforts to develop a holistic human rights-based, gender-responsive, culturally-vested approach. UNFPA has already launched programmes to build capacity in two of these aspects of programming. A concerted effort on gender equality programming is thus not only timely, but central to fulfilling the human rights of women and advancing gender equality and placing them at the forefront of all UNFPA programmes.

Adopting a systematic gender perspective with a *results-oriented and evidence-based approach* would increase impact of UNFPA programmes, especially in the area it most invests in: reproductive health. To illustrate, a common assumption is that since reproductive health services primarily benefit women, there is little need to be concerned with gender mainstreaming or women's empowerment strategies, or with the engagement of men. Yet gender-related attitudes and barriers to autonomous sexual and reproductive decision-making by women, or to shared rights and responsibilities with men, are well-documented and a major reason why sexual and reproductive health problems persist on such a widespread scale.

Thus, while it is often considered as an 'add on' or peripheral to programming, ignoring a gender equality perspective leads to missed opportunities for improving and saving lives, for achieving results, and to poor utilization of available resources. Fully employing a gender mainstreaming approach, on the other hand, indubitably adds value by identifying key gender factors in a given sociocultural, economic and political context, and systematically opens up new approaches and good practice to address them. UNFPA-supported programmes have much to gain if a gender equality perspective is strengthened, by:

- Improving **effectiveness**, by ensuring that gender-blind approaches or built-in discriminatory biases, be they legal, cultural, social, or economic in nature, do not stand in the way of achieving results (i.e. in terms of service access and utilization); and ensuring that opportunities are seized to secure optimal results (i.e. transforming gender attitudes and power relations);
- Improving **efficiency**, by maximizing the use of existing resources and investments, especially in areas where UNFPA spends the bulk of its resources (i.e. reproductive health, HIV prevention); and/or can leverage support from national policies and budgets (i.e. through influenc-

- ing leading development and funding frameworks); and
- Enhancing **sustainability**, through improved results. The proven success of programme interventions is key to sustaining political and community will, as well as to ensuring continued funding to build on and expand existing programmes. Quality programming and results hinge on integrating a gender equality perspective. UNFPA's ability to mobilize additional resources will be strengthened if it is recognized as a leader in programming for ICPD and its linkages to ongoing efforts to realize the MDGs, both of which demand a gender equality perspective.

PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

This Strategic Framework has the following aims:

- To reaffirm UNFPA's policy³ that promoting gender equality requires a **dual approach** to programming consisting of both mainstreaming gender and supporting explicit components focused on women's empowerment;
- To **identify strategic priorities** forming the core of UNFPA's gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment efforts, with a view to maximizing the Fund's results in the medium term; and
- To lay out the principal elements of **an operational plan** for implementation and follow up of the Framework, with emphasis on capacity development and accountability.⁴

The overriding aim of this Framework is to contribute to the attainment of the organization's highest-level goals, as reflected in the Strategic Plan. It is intended as a first step in providing strategic and operational guidance for its implementation, as recommended by the assessment of the organization's previous four-year plan.⁵ This will

³ UNFPA's first policy on gender mainstreaming was introduced in a circular (29 November 1997), *Each Staff Person's Responsibility: Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in UNFPA*, as a result of the Agreed Conclusions adopted by ECOSOC in September 1997. This provided a definition of gender mainstreaming and called for translating the concept into practice across all sectoral areas of the UN System. Currently, the Policies and Procedures Manual (2005), Section 4 on Gender, provides the most current guidance for UNFPA-supported programmes.

⁴ Also in line with United Nations Development Group (2006). *Enhancing the UN's Contribution to National Capacity Development: A UNDG Position Statement*, a new framework for UNCTs, October 2006.

⁵ UNFPA (2007). *Assessing the Implementation of the MYFF 2004-2007*. Dalberg Global Development Advisers. See page 23, "Recommendation 9: Identify strategic interventions as a guide for country office programme options".

be achieved through the implementation of a capacity development strategy and workplan to implement the recommendation of the gender equality and women's empowerment framework. UNFPA's strengthened ability to deliver gender equality results will be critical to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, especially in the light that gender equality is both a goal and mainstreamed throughout its expected results.

For purposes of clarity, it is important to note that the Framework is not intended to provide comprehensive guidance, nor an inventory of, UNFPA's ongoing work on gender equality issues.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK AND KEY FINDINGS

Background: This Strategic Framework has drawn from an internal needs assessment and consultative process undertaken in 2005/2006 that included meetings and interviews with selected UNFPA staff, as well as staff from other UN agencies; a consultants' report and draft papers; a workshop with Country Technical Services Teams (CST), Headquarters and Country Office staff (July 2006, New York); and desk reviews of Country Office annual reports and Gender Advisers' mission reports, as well as results of the ICPD+10 global survey.⁶

Findings: To date, UNFPA has applied a gender perspective with varying degrees of success. The key findings of the internal assessment point to:

- Uneven levels of gender mainstreaming across the organization;
- Insufficient skills and expertise among staff, with existing expertise distributed unevenly within the organization and critical gaps in Country Offices and at Headquarters, as well as in key programme areas;
- A common misperception that only assigned focal points and advisers have the responsibility to address gender issues, whereas in reality gender equality is 'everybody's business';
- The need for user-friendly tools to assist staff in gender mainstreaming;
- A need for indicators on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming to be systematically incorporated in UNFPA's programme and performance evaluation systems;

- The need for more effective mechanisms for establishing and monitoring accountability on results for gender equality;
- The need for focused gender assessments to gauge and monitor progress on the quality and quantity of resources invested in gender equality programming both at the level of UNFPA-supported country programmes, as well as within UNFPA; and
- Gaps in sharing of good practice on gender equality programming within UNFPA.



⁶ UNFPA (2004). *Investing in People: National Progress in Implementing the ICPD Programme of Action 1994-2004*.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Gender mainstreaming or incorporating a gender perspective are terms that can be used interchangeably to mean programming that ultimately furthers gender equality (see Glossary of Terms). The goal of gender mainstreaming is to integrate and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in programmatic activities. This implies taking into account women's and men's perspectives, needs and rights, opportunities and challenges, at all stages of developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes.

A gender equality perspective centres on understanding the causes of discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women in a specific context, regardless of whether rooted in prevailing social attitudes and customary practices or discriminatory laws and policies, among other factors. Compounded forms of discrimination need to be taken into account based on age, race, ethnicity, education, income level, residence, religion, marital, HIV or other status. These factors serve as critical inputs to inform what the best programme strategies are for working towards gender equality. In essence, applying a gender equality perspective means looking at ways to change 'the rules of the game',⁷ by questioning and responding to the underlying values and factors for unequal status and treatment.

UNFPA policy calls for a dual approach that both: (1) mainstreams gender across all its activities; and (2) supports explicit programme components on women's empowerment. UNFPA gender mainstreaming efforts need to operate at both formal (i.e. laws, policies) and informal (i.e. customs and cultural factors) levels; and need to be applied to all programming areas, from census work and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), to reproductive health service delivery and reproductive health commodity security. UNFPA's approach also implies working with men, as well as women of all ages and from diverse backgrounds in transforming discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and practices.

Similarly, to further gender equality, human rights concerns need to be both mainstreamed and made explicit across UNFPA operations, with a focus on the poorest, most

excluded and marginalized groups. A **human rights-based, culturally-vested approach** has implications for UNFPA programmes to ensure, for example, not only that reproductive health services are made available, accessible, of good quality and culturally-acceptable but that women and adolescent girls (rights-holders) are informed of their rights to access those services; are empowered to negotiate their use of those services; have the means to access remedial mechanisms when these rights have been violated; and are enabled to make autonomous decisions regarding their health and life options. This also implies community mobilization and participation of agents of change, or gate keepers, such as cultural custodians and religious leaders to create a supportive culturally acceptable environment for gender equality. It also means that duty bearers (i.e. policymakers, service providers, lawyers, police, community leaders – most of whom are often male) are made aware of the human rights of women, including reproductive rights; have the will and capacities to meet their obligations (including in terms of allocating resources); and are held accountable for their actions, in conformity with human rights standards. It is at these levels of intervention that unequal gender relations and harmful attitudes and practices can be transformed, ultimately resulting in greater equality and improvements in the status and rights of women, and benefits to families, communities and countries at large.

UNFPA'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

UNFPA's comparative advantages in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are based on its mandate, strong field presence, partnerships, experience and expertise.

One of UNFPA's major comparative advantages is its unique approach in bringing together human rights, gender equality and cultural issues in the development of policies and programmes. The organization's developing expertise in **human rights-based and culturally-sensitive programming** is a key asset when furthering progress on gender equality – a process that requires understanding the deep-rooted sociocultural norms and beliefs on the status and roles of women and men, and fosters community ownership of the process.

UNFPA is currently one of the **leading UN operational agencies with a strong mandate in the area of gender equality**. Its **field presence** in over 140 countries and access to policymaking circles at central and de-

⁷ Goetz, AM. (1997). *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, London: Zed Press. North, D (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

centralized levels positions the organization to promote gender equality in national policy, programming and funding frameworks. It is also often the Chair and a key member of national UN Gender Theme Groups, further facilitating this function. Its **recognized contributions on key gender issues** include its lead role in furthering reproductive health and rights globally; championing efforts to tackle various forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls at policy, legal and local levels in several countries; promoting the human rights of women, including of especially disadvantaged groups such as indigenous, migrant and refugee women; and working on masculinities issues and partnering with men. UNFPA has a track record in reaching both men and women through the programmes it supports, another vantage point for furthering gender equality, in line with international calls for more attention to working with men and to developing programmes addressing and responding to their needs and perspectives.

UNFPA places a premium on coalition-building and strong **partnerships**. The multisectoral nature of the organization's mandate on population, sexual and reproductive health, and development issues has also lent itself to nurturing a broad base of partners from government and civil society, parliamentarians, women's, youth, human rights and faith-based groups, research institutions, other development and UN partners, development banks, the media and the private sector. Multisectoral partnerships, in which each development partner's efforts and outputs complement the other's, are crucial in furthering a gender equality agenda and, collectively, attaining desired outcomes. In addition, at the global level, UNFPA has also been an active member of UN inter-agency networks collaborating on gender mainstreaming.⁸

EMERGING ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Current policy shifts and trends in international development cooperation present UNFPA with both opportunities and challenges as it moves forward in strengthening its contributions to gender equality, particularly in regards to the following emerging issues:

⁸ Specifically, the UN Development Group (UNDG) Task Force on Gender Equality and the UN Inter-Agency Network on Gender and Women's Empowerment (IANGWE), which includes a network of UN country office focal points; and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance.



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Universal Access to Reproductive Health reaffirmed by World Leaders in 2005: The centrality of reproductive health to poverty reduction, gender equality and development, including for achieving the MDGs, has been widely recognized at the highest levels of government (see World Summit Outcome document, paragraphs 57g and 58c). This brings added impetus to the relevance and importance of implementing the ICPD Programme of Action with the firm gender equality perspective with which it was crafted and adopted by governments.

UN Reform: The recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence and pursuant General Assembly decisions on UN Reform, in particular on strengthening the **UN's gender equality architecture**, should intensify UN-wide emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, and enhance impact through the complementarities of each UN agency's initiatives. Related to UN reform is UNFPA's planned new organizational structure, which should carry positive implications for its work in gender equality, as it aims to reinforce country-level programming.

UN Initiatives on Human Rights: There are two major developments in the area of human rights that present opportunities for reinforcing UNFPA efforts on gender equality: the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the system-wide launch of 'Action 2' on the human rights-based approach. Both represent entry points for UNFPA's advocacy efforts and country-level operations. The 'Action 2' Plan of Action, adopted in 2004 by 21 Heads of UN Agencies, aims to strengthen the capacities of UN agencies (including UNFPA) to engage in human rights related activities at country level. It envisions training, the posting of human rights advisors in United Nations Country Teams (UNCT), and piloting of UNCT initiatives – critical venues through which the UN system can have a collective impact on furthering policy attention and protection systems for the human and reproductive rights of women.

UN initiatives on inter-faith dialogue: A series of General Assembly Resolutions in 2005 and 2006, together with initiatives focused on creating mechanisms to institutionalize the engagement of faith-based organizations, highlight an emerging interest in promoting inter-faith dialogue, understanding and cooperation within the UN.⁹ UNFPA's record in translating cultural considerations into

concrete programme elements, as well as its continued commitment to vesting its mandate proactively with a cultural lens, places it in a unique position to institutionalize the necessary and complimentary dimensions for effectively advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

New Aid Modalities: The new aid modalities of the past decade, including Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAs) and Direct Budget Support (DBS), have emphasized nationally-driven priorities and planning processes to reduce poverty and realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as donor harmonization and cooperation. Over 100 high-level representatives of governments, development agencies and the UN System committed to aid harmonization in the March 2005 *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*.

⁹ As reflected, for example, in the following resolutions: A/RES/60/160 (28 Feb 2006), "Effective Promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities", 62nd General Assembly Session, 2007; and A/RES/60/166 (14 March 2006), "Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief", 61st General Assembly Session, 2006.



UNFPA PRIORITIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING

While a gender equality perspective needs to be strengthened and mainstreamed at all levels of the organization, UNFPA has identified key entry points and priority areas for focused efforts.

These priorities respond to the key findings of the needs assessment, and centre on *strengthening country operations* where capacities need to be developed in order to ensure that women, men and young people can fully benefit from UNFPA-supported programmes. Shifts in priority-setting and capacity development at regional and global levels of the organization are also implied, given their role in supporting country operations.

The *main criteria applied in identifying priority areas in which to focus UNFPA's gender equality programming efforts are:*

- *The urgency and scope of global development priorities:* The priority areas identified reflect the urgent global challenges affecting millions of people in the developing world, which are undermining global efforts to reduce poverty in order to achieve the MDGs. For example, UNFPA's leading programme area – reproductive health – is reflected in the MDG goals, targets and indicators, and is recognized as critical to the MDGs as a whole. Equally critical in reaching the MDGs is to fashion an adequate response to the plight of internally displaced people and refugees, of the millions in emergency and post-emergency situations. Other priorities were identified but which do not appear in the MDGs, such as gender-based violence, as they were considered as falling within the scope of the problem.
- *Maximizing results by identifying leading areas of current UNFPA investment and/or strategic policy entry points:* Operationalizing a gender equality approach in those areas in which UNFPA already invests the bulk of its human, technical and financial resources is a strategic objective from a results-based perspective (i.e. reproductive health, HIV, commodities); as is leveraging high-level commitments and resources through key policy frameworks (i.e. poverty reduction and development plans, health sector reforms). These are areas in which UNFPA has great potential to deliver intended benefits to individuals, families, communities and countries; achieve optimal results; and improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes it supports.

- *The comparative advantages, strengths and role of UNFPA vis-à-vis other UN agencies and development partners, with respect to HIV prevention among women and youth; addressing gender-based violence in the health sector; empowering adolescent girls; or working with men and boys, can also be expanded.*

A global framework can only provide the general parameters of priority issues and areas of intervention. Attention to excluded groups of women and girls and the relative weight given to specific issues will depend on regional and country realities (i.e. refugee and migrant women; indigenous women in Latin America; young women and HIV in sub-Saharan Africa; disabled women and girls; sex trafficking in Asia and Europe; or in specific settings where they are practiced, prenatal sex selection, FGM/C, child marriage, etc.).

This document will therefore focus on those **priority areas of UNFPA's work in which to target efforts and undertake institution-wide, systematic capacity development on gender equality programming.**

The priorities identified all relate directly to UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2008-2011, such that implementation of this Framework should contribute to ensuring optimal organizational results and impact.

The **six priority areas** identified are:

- (1) Setting Policy for ICPD and the MDGs:
Human Rights, Gender Equality, Culture;
- (2) Reproductive Health;
- (3) Gender-Based Violence;
- (4) Adolescents and Youth;
- (5) Emergency and Post-Emergency Situations; and
- (6) Men and Boys.

In addition, four **strategic linkages** for advocacy are identified: girls' education, economic empowerment, political participation of women, and balancing reproductive and productive roles. These are critical areas for furthering gender equality and reproductive health and rights.

In the following section, these elements are outlined with regard to each priority area: the rationale behind the selection of a particular issue; key elements for operationalizing this Framework; and the expected 'added value' of gender mainstreaming for programme effectiveness. These priorities reflect opportunities for UNFPA to fill critical gaps and/or build on existing plans and ongoing work. In all cases, the proposals are aimed at identifying concrete areas of intervention that can serve to measure results and progress on gender equality programming.

PRIORITY AREA 1 SETTING POLICY FOR ICPD AND THE MDGS: HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND CULTURE

This section discusses *strategic entry points* and *cross-cutting needs* for UNFPA's work, in general, and in the area of gender equality, in particular. As such, its contents should be considered *integral to all the priority areas of intervention discussed in this Framework*. For example, sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis are prerequisites for engendering any policy or programme. National policies, laws and budgets should reflect a gender equality perspective as they are the first point of departure for setting the political and funding agenda at the highest levels. Human rights and the participation of civil society are not only fundamental guiding principles, but also need to be reflected in concrete actions at policy and programming levels.

It should be recalled that UNFPA's commitment to an integrated three-pronged approach, bringing together the dynamics of human rights, gender and culture, is also a strategic, cross-cutting dimension of all the priority areas discussed in this document. Human rights issues are implied or interspersed throughout, as are UNFPA's interventions in the area of culture for promoting gender equality, focused on outreach and mobilization of cultural agents of change (media, religious leaders, tribal elders, community leaders, folk/popular culture figures, etc.), as well as on documenting and sharing best practices in this area with key stakeholders. Hence, a human rights framework and culture-related activities permeate all areas of UNFPA's efforts to engender interventions – from data gathering to policy development and accountability mechanisms.

1.1 Engendering Data Collection, Analysis and Dissemination

Data availability is an essential first step in evidence-based advocacy, policy development and programming. It is also crucial to catalyzing policy and community commitment, as well as media coverage for awareness-raising on neglected gender issues. Strengthening capacities for sex and age-disaggregated data collection and analysis, among other key gender analysis variables (e.g. race, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, income level, religion, marital status, education) is thus a key priority. UNFPA has long held a niche position as a major provider of technical assistance and financial support in national and subnational capacity development in this area, working with statistics offices and demographic professionals. It is therefore uniquely positioned to seize

all available opportunities for **improving the availability and utilization of quantitative and qualitative data and gender analysis**, in coordination with other relevant UN agencies. This would include:

✓ **Incorporating a gender perspective in the data collection, analysis and dissemination exercises it periodically supports**, such as **censuses and national surveys**; promoting and improving the utilization of **DHS modules on women and domestic violence**; and the needs assessments it often sponsors at national and subnational levels as baselines for the programmes it supports. A critical need relates to data collection and gender analysis in **emergency and post-emergency situations**, in order to understand how women and men, girls and boys, are affected differently by emergencies, as well as by humanitarian and recovery response. A capacity-building strategy would include knowledge-sharing on recommended tools and good practices; preparing a user-friendly technical 'kit' on data collection on gender-based violence; integrating gender modules in data-related training of national counterparts and staff; and identifying other capacity development plans and opportunities, such as in the context of inter-agency collaboration and partnership with the United Nations Statistics Division on establishing *GenderInfo*, a global database to monitor gender equality issues across the MDGs and beyond.

✓ **Supporting catalytic data collection and research for advocacy, policy and programme development**, to fill critical gaps in quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. This includes attention to: especially marginalized groups of women and adolescent girls (i.e. extreme poor, people living in rural areas, indigenous peoples, married adolescent girls, migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum-seekers and disabled persons, etc.); specific gender issues, with emphasis on gender-based violence; and sociocultural norms governing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health.

1.2 Positioning Gender Equality in National Policy and Funding Frameworks, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, Sector-Wide Approaches and Post-Emergency Transition Frameworks

UNFPA places high priority on policy-oriented advocacy and technical assistance at country levels related to the formulation and follow up of leading policy and budgetary frameworks. This includes MDG follow-up plans, PRS, SWAps in the health and education sectors, and National HIV and AIDS Plans (see later section on HIV). As such, UNFPA Country Offices are already at the negotiating table on key policy and funding frameworks. This experience provides a critical opportunity to leverage additional policy attention and resources for gender equality issues of direct

relevance to ICPD and MDG implementation, in collaboration with other donor partners and the UN, including UNIFEM.

In order to achieve this priority objective, UNFPA technical assistance at global, regional and country levels of the organization should be well infused with a strong gender perspective, including in the policy-oriented materials, training workshops, knowledge-sharing and South-South cooperation initiatives becoming available to Country Offices; as well as through the documentation and dissemination of country good practices. Examples include:

✓ **Developing a component to the UNFPA MDGs toolkit focused on gender equality**, including guidance on how to develop socio-economic vulnerability profiles based on a gender analysis, and evidence-based briefs for advocates and policymakers on the linkages of specific gender issues, and especially vulnerable groups of women, to poverty reduction and the MDGs.

✓ **Developing costing and cost-benefit analysis tools for policy-oriented advocacy**, for example, as regards to the costs of inaction on gender-based violence, or the benefits of empowering adolescent girls to public budgets and socio-economic development.

✓ **Strengthening a gender equality perspective in UNFPA-supported SWAp efforts**, by expanding gender-specific components in guidance notes, knowledge-sharing assets and training workshops under development; and building the capacities of Ministries of Women's Affairs and women's groups in SWAp exercises. In addition to engagement in health sector SWAps, increased involvement in education and agricultural sector SWAps could be particularly strategic, especially in the context of rural poverty.

✓ **Strengthening capacities to mainstream gender in Post-Emergency Transition Frameworks:** Increasing capacities and commitments in this critical area include developing policy-oriented, evidence-based arguments for policy-makers; facilitating cross-country exchange of good practices; advocacy and capacity-building within UN System-wide initiatives and other relevant international fora to mobilize concerted action on gender equality; and focused training and tools on how to mainstream gender in transition policies and programmes.

✓ **Advocacy and capacity-building on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB):** As concluded by the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action (Pfa), despite progress in securing policy-level commitments to



gender equality, implementation and accountability are lagging behind. Gender-responsive budgeting is an important response to address this gap. Gender-responsive budgeting initiatives have been developed in about 50 countries at central and local levels through the efforts of governments (principally Ministries of Finance and Planning or of Women's Affairs), parliamentarians and civil society. Gender-responsive budgeting has been used to influence the formulation and monitoring of Poverty Reduction Strategies, and has the potential to strengthen the gender perspective in relation to the MDGs and SWAps. United Nations organizations, bilateral donors, and international NGOs are increasingly incorporating GRB into their capacity-building support at national and regional levels. Building on UNFPA's ongoing partnership at the global level with UNIFEM, the joint training programme being piloted for government officials and UN staff will be rolled out and expanded at country levels. In addition, UNFPA will foster partnerships with regional centres of excellence on GRB for sustained capacity development. This is a strategic and timely line of work in the context of new aid modalities and the MDGs.

1.3 Strengthening Safeguards and Accountability for the Human Rights of Women

In the context of UN reform and inter-agency collaboration, and UNFPA's roll out of a human rights-based approach, and in addition to specific actions on human rights issues referred to throughout this Framework, the following areas are highlighted below.

✓ **Increased utilization of existing international human rights standards in policy-oriented advocacy and programming:** This involves building partners' and staff capacities on how to utilize international human rights standards in the development and monitoring of national policy and funding frameworks, programmes and services, with a focus on the human rights of women and girls, including reproductive rights, the rights of adolescents and the rights of especially disadvantaged groups. A noteworthy incipient model is the development of UNCT joint reports and programmes for follow up on CEDAW recommendations, as reflected in the example of several countries in which UNFPA has participated.¹⁰ This can be expanded to other countries and convention-monitoring committees. UNFPA can also strengthen its efforts in terms of supporting the participation and capacities of civil society, especially women's and youth groups, in state party reporting processes, including in the production of CEDAW shadow reports.

¹⁰ These include Cape Verde, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Maldives, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and the Philippines (2006).

✓ **Expanding mechanisms for reproductive rights protections:** In many countries, progress is still needed in bringing national legislation, policies and practice in conformity with international reproductive rights standards, as well as in institutionalizing reproductive rights monitoring mechanisms. This includes exploring how reproductive rights can be integrated in the portfolios of national human rights institutions (i.e. national human rights commissions, congressional committees, and the offices of ombudspersons, etc.); in the policies and mechanisms for oversight of medical practice and of the work of judiciary and law enforcement systems; or in community-based systems. UNFPA can facilitate greater attention through advocacy, policy and technical support to advance monitoring and accountability systems for reproductive rights. One of the products proposed at the global level is a policy-oriented advocacy publication to provide guidance for country-level follow up, which would compile good practices based on a cross-regional stock-taking of reproductive rights protection mechanisms.

✓ **Developing the capacities of civil society for accountability:** Supporting civil society organizations, including women's groups, in strengthening their policy-oriented advocacy capacities is central to establishing accountability mechanisms to monitor commitments on the human rights of women and gender equality, including on reproductive health and rights. This envisions support for the creation or strengthening of networks that can participate in the formulation and monitoring of national and local policy and funding frameworks; of advocacy coalitions that can mobilize public opinion on the priority areas of focus reflected in this Framework; facilitating access to and utilization of data and gender analysis to produce evidence-based monitoring scorecards or 'shadow' reports of progress on public policies; and skills-building in communication strategies, including how to work effectively with the media.

1.4 Building Networks of Faith-based Agents of Change and involving them in Policy Dialogue and Advocacy.

✓ **Expanded outreach, sensitization and partnership with leading mainstream faith-based networks:** Bringing faith-based networks and religious leaders on board as leading spokespersons on equality between women and men and the elimination of violence against women and girls, and strengthening their advocacy roles and capacities in this area, can foster public mobilization and help transform attitudes on gender equality and address situations of impunity for gender-based violence.

This area of work can build on recent successful initiatives in which religious leaders have publicly declared their positions on related issues, such as FGM/C, child marriage or sexual trafficking.

✓ **Outreach to faith-based networks of women at global, regional and local levels:** Building on UNFPA's record of mobilizing people of faith and religious leaders, UNFPA will target its efforts to more systematically engage women of faith, some of whom are often already active on the same issues within their respective communities, but who lack visibility. This can be expected to ultimately increase the effectiveness of UNFPA-supported programmes. Criteria for identifying these networks would include representation of diverse faith traditions in addition to a record of activism and commitment to women's empowerment.

✓ **Integrating women of faith networks into broader networks of agents of change:** Once identified and brought on board, women of faith networks would be actively integrated into larger networks of agents of change, such as advocacy coalitions involving the media and popular culture figures, among others.

PRIORITY AREA 2 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: PILLARS OF THE ESSENTIAL PACKAGE

Gender inequality and discrimination is at the root of why so many women and adolescent girls are still unable to exercise one of the most crucial human rights for their empowerment and quality of life: their reproductive rights. Gender stereotypes and roles are also why so many adolescent boys and men remain on the fringes of sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes, despite their key role in this realm and their own needs for information and services. Another key factor is gender-based violence, a widespread human rights violation, though as yet receiving limited recognition as a significant impediment to sexual and reproductive health. These gender-specific barriers and dimensions will be addressed with greater intensity in UNFPA-supported programming.

UNFPA spends almost two-thirds¹¹ of its resources on reproductive health programmes, with particular emphasis on family planning, prevention of maternal mortality and morbidity, and prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Women are disproportionately burdened by sexual and reproductive health problems and

¹¹Figure for 2005. UNFPA Annual Report, page 26.



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consequences. From a gender perspective, an **integrated essential package of sexual and reproductive health services** is critically important: only in this way can services respond to women's sexual and reproductive health needs, to both the risk they face in contracting HIV and other STIs, as well as of unintended pregnancy. This includes enhancing women's autonomous decision-making in the realm of sexuality. It also implies integrating screening, care and referrals for women and girls survivors of gender-based violence.

UNFPA programmes stand to gain considerably in terms of results from a redoubled effort to mainstream gender and women's empowerment approaches across the sexual and reproductive health programmes it supports.¹² This effort would include *developing evidence-based engendered models of sexual and reproductive health service delivery*, to fill a critical gap in the global knowledge-base. This would entail piloting, monitoring and evaluating the models in select countries, followed by a strong dissemination component. Examples are discussed below under maternal mortality and morbidity, and HIV prevention; and similar multi-country operational research could be undertaken in other core areas of reproductive health, such as family planning and HIV prevention among youth. The following proposed actions should be considered in reference to UNFPA's *Strategic Framework on Reproductive Health*. Key UN partners envisioned in this priority area of work include UNIFEM, WHO and UNAIDS.

¹²On the enhanced results that can be obtained from engendering reproductive health programmes, see a review of 400 projects in Boender, C., et al. 2004. *The "So What" Report: A Look at Whether Integrating a Gender Focus into Programs Makes a Difference to Reproductive Health Outcomes?* Washington, DC, PRB for the USAID's Interagency Gender Working Group.

2.1. In the area of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

Maternal mortality and morbidity is an issue which touches upon both human rights and gender equality. The know-how on life-saving approaches is available and is entirely preventable; it cannot be eliminated as a public health problem because of gender-related barriers. With maternal mortality at the top of its agenda, UNFPA is well-positioned to buttress a gender equality perspective in existing operations and partnerships. UNFPA efforts will focus on the inter-related areas, as listed below.

✓ **Advancing programme models on engendering maternal mortality and morbidity reduction efforts:** As a first step, UNFPA will undertake a gender assessment of its current programming strategies to identify good practices for knowledge-sharing as well as capacity development needs. In response, an evidence-based programming framework would be developed, tested and evaluated in selected countries, and the findings widely disseminated with a menu of recommendations for mainstreaming gender in programmes to prevent and reduce maternal mortality and morbidity. This effort may serve to fill a critical gap in the global literature and programme guidance currently available, in order to strengthen service delivery approaches, especially at the community level where it is most crucial.

Issues to include when developing programme models: policy and legal frameworks; community-based approaches; and gender issues as they affect health sector human resource planning and management, with particular attention to midwives and nurses – the frontline workers for reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. Key issues and

strategies to consider in this regard include: raising the status and prestige of midwifery and nursing within the medical professions; promoting retention and job satisfaction, including as alternatives to emigration; addressing gender discrimination in the work place; and responding to socio-cultural dimensions, in particular the need for increased numbers of female doctors and nurses in certain cultures with high maternal mortality and where gender-related taboos lead to delays in seeking care. With strengthened staff and counterpart capacities in this area, UNFPA has many opportunities to improve gender-based approaches through various partnerships at global, regional and country levels – including the Safe Motherhood Initiative, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and the Road Map for Accelerating the Attainment of the MDGs Related to Maternal and Newborn Health in Africa.¹³

✓ **Strengthened Policy-oriented Advocacy and Programming on Maternal Morbidities, with emphasis on unsafe abortion and fistula:** Worldwide, the WHO estimates that 300 million women are currently living with pregnancy-related morbidities. UNFPA is well positioned to play a key role in global and regional advocacy, and in increasing investments and capacities for tackling maternal morbidities at national policy and programming levels. Opportunities are available, for example, to systematically strengthen health sector capacities in addressing reproductive health complications, including unsafe abortion; by building on the highly visible global campaign on obstetric fistula and ensuring a gender perspective is mainstreamed in plans for next steps;¹⁴ expanding treatment and care for women with traumatic fistula as a result of rape in conflict situations; addressing genital

¹³ Note that a planned inter-agency assessment of the Road Map in 2007 (WHO, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank) provides an important opportunity to incorporate a gender analysis.

¹⁴ These include: developing and evaluating components to empower adolescent girls and women who have undergone surgery, building on incipient UNFPA-supported examples (i.e. continued education; literacy; livelihood options; culturally-sensitive outreach to husbands, family members and communities to facilitate social integration while raising awareness on gender and reproductive health); the introduction of WHO/UNFPA quality of life assessments six months after surgery; working with local radio stations, an opportunity to build capacities on engendering health education messages and broadening discussion on gender equality at community levels; and skills-building on leadership and advocacy for fistula surgery patients, linking them to civil society networks and policymaking circles. The vision is for these women to become the voice of impoverished rural communities, and bring attention to maternal morbidities in the context of extreme poverty and gender inequality. Outputs and indicators to monitor the global campaign could be revisited for explicit attention to women's empowerment and gender equality dimensions.



prolapse resulting from obstructed labour; and through participation in the formulation of national poverty reduction plans and health SWAps.

2.2. Engendering HIV Prevention Programmes

Prevention is the first line of defense against HIV and AIDS. Ensuring a gender perspective is therefore of utmost urgency as gender inequality is fueling the pandemic. This includes responding to gender-related barriers and stigma for both women and men in prevention, outreach and services and at community levels. Interventions need to be rooted in an understanding of gender and sexuality issues in specific sociocultural and economic contexts to be effective, utilizing qualitative data analysis and research.

Given UNFPA's role as a leading global partner on HIV prevention among women and youth within UNAIDS and as a co-sponsor of the Global Coalition on Women and HIV and AIDS, UNFPA efforts will centre on the initiatives listed below.

✓ **Undertaking a gender assessment of UNFPA-supported HIV prevention programmes and developing models of good practice for upscaling:**

An assessment would be timely and complement the UNAIDS gender assessments conducted in 2007. The UNFPA assessment would build on the lessons learned from this UNAIDS exercise, but focus on HIV prevention and be framed within an integrated sexual and reproductive health perspective. It would serve to identify critical gaps and skills-building needs, and provide the basis for designing a capacity development plan for national counterparts and UNFPA staff. It could include developing a toolkit to guide Country Offices on good practice and recommended tools; facilitating South-South knowledge-sharing; and developing a training programme. A key output of this exercise would be implementing and evaluating gender-responsive models of HIV prevention in a multi-country initiative, and documenting and disseminating those findings, with a communication and media component. This effort would also serve to build capacities for effective programming with boys and men (as also discussed in the later sections on adolescents, boys and men, and gender-based violence).

✓ **Engendering National HIV and AIDS Plans:** Part of the assessment above would review how national plans of action on HIV and AIDS mainstream gender and women's empowerment approaches and what UNFPA's role has been. It would also review UNFPA's advocacy role in promoting an essential package of integrated sexual and reproductive health services within those Plans, an area of work closely related to UNFPA's data collection and gender analysis for policy development and gender budgeting activities. This work also builds on the UNFPA/IPPF/Global Coalition Report

Cards on HIV Prevention for Girls and Young Women in selected countries, intended for advocacy to monitor national policies and budget allocations. The assessment would identify what additional skills and tools national counterparts and UNFPA staff require to support them in this aspect of policy development (including a possible cost-benefit advocacy tool, and projections, on the feminization of the epidemic); and how women's organizations and perspectives are effectively brought to bear on the policy process. This exercise would also lead to the establishment of minimal standards on the critical elements that any National HIV and AIDS Plan should address from a gender equality lens, building on good practices and existing advocacy tools, and consultations with leading partners, networks and experts.

✓ **Engendering HIV prevention programmes for young people:**

This would respond to an urgent need since young people, especially young women, continue to be the fastest growing group infected with HIV globally. Investing in this age group for empowerment and prevention also holds the greatest promise for halting the epidemic. A focused effort to assess UNFPA programming approaches and capacity development needs in terms of gender equality programming would serve to identify critical technical assistance gaps. This initiative is timely since UNFPA will be developing programming guidance on HIV prevention for youth, in which a gender perspective can be extended to provide for a broader capacity development plan.

✓ A key priority on addressing the links between **sexual violence and HIV** is further discussed in the sections on gender-based violence and adolescents.

2.3. In the area of Family Planning:

Expanding universal access to family planning is not only recognized as a human right and central to gender equality and women's empowerment, but is also a key factor in reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.¹⁵ Family planning is also critical to reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and preventing HIV. Despite great progress in past decades, 201 million women still lack access to contraception. Along with poverty and marginalization, gender inequality is at the root of this gap. Engendering family planning programmes is therefore essential in the immediate and long-term, as needs continue to expand and large numbers of youth cohorts enter their reproductive years.

¹⁵ Note that the 2005 UN Millennium Project Report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Overview*, identified family planning as a "quick win" to reduce poverty and reach the MDGs.

UNFPA-supported efforts can be strengthened to systematically address gender-specific factors in family planning programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This implies ensuring that the sexual and reproductive health commodities that are procured respond to gender-specific needs; and that they are not only delivered and distributed to countries' health facilities, but that men, women and young people are told about their availability, where they can access them, and supported as they exercise their rights to family planning. Both men and women need support in changing gender attitudes and barriers that prevent them from accessing and utilizing family planning, including communication, negotiating on decision-making skills. Within the broader framework of UNFPA's work on family planning, the following inter-related components, as listed below, are especially relevant from a gender equality perspective.

✓ **Undertaking a gender assessment of UNFPA-supported family planning programmes**, to serve as a baseline for identifying a capacity development plan, good practice and innovation for knowledge-sharing, and work towards the development of targeted programming guidance in this regard. This includes establishing a minimum set of actions or checklist that all UNFPA programmes should consider as quality standards from a gender perspective.

✓ **Mainstreaming gender in UNFPA's Global Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) framework, with a focus on family planning.** Reproductive health commodity security is first and foremost about people and their health and human rights. Within this broader framework, contraceptive security is central to the exercise of the right to family planning. Commodity security efforts therefore need to respond to gender-specific factors throughout the supply-demand continuum, beginning with the integration of a gender perspective in national RHCS situation analyses, as described above.

✓ **Promoting universal access to specific commodities that are underutilized and especially strategic from a gender equality perspective, specifically, male and female condoms and emergency contraception.**

Expanding demand and use of **male and female condoms** remains challenging, and requires the systematic **incorporation of a gender perspective in condom programming** across UNFPA-supported programmes, especially in the light of its key role in this area within UNAIDS. *Female condoms* provide women with a critical option to prevent HIV. Undertaking a gender assessment of female condom programming could serve to refine strategies and programme effectiveness, particularly relevant

given UNFPA's efforts to introduce and upscale access in an increasing number of countries. This assessment could also help generate important lessons learned and know-how, as well as document good practices on women's empowerment and male support for female condom use. It would also serve to support its role as UNAIDS coordinating agency in the area of sex work.

The female condom, however, is not fully a female-controlled method, and male acquiescence is often required. Since men continue to wield sexual decision-making power, promoting universal access to and use of the *male condom* still remains an urgent, strategic, low-cost option to halt the HIV and AIDS pandemic for sexually active individuals and couples, while also offering dual protection from unwanted pregnancies. Increasing male condom use requires a concerted effort to incorporate a gender/masculinities perspective – that is, approaches that fully respond to male needs, views, misgivings, or other concerns. UNFPA will revisit existing programme guidance tools and staff training opportunities to strengthen this aspect of effective condom programming.

PRIORITY AREA 3 ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

There is widespread acceptance that gender-based violence is an affront to women, and directly affects sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and consequently affects socio-economic development. UNFPA has been a strong advocate on violence against women and girls as a human rights violation and a public health priority. In collaboration with sister UN agencies and other development partners, UNFPA looks forward to expanding resource investments and 'mainstreaming' responses to gender-based violence.

The intervention areas identified below take into account the recommendations of the 2006 *Secretary-General's In-Depth Study on Violence Against Women*, and UNFPA's role as Co-Chair with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force responsible for following up on this question.¹⁶ In addition, UNFPA will strengthen its coordination and partnership with key UN agencies, especially UNIFEM, WHO and DAW. UNFPA's contributions to end violence against women must be understood in the framework of a multisectoral, inter-disciplinary approach: Gender-based violence requires a multifaceted response that takes into account the continuum of violence across private and public spaces and the need to promote comprehensive security for women.

¹⁶ Task Force on Violence Against Women of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Gender and Women's Empowerment.



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3.1 Strengthening the Health Sector's Role, Responding to Gender-Based Violence as an Integral Part of Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS Services

Within a multisectoral framework of mutually reinforcing services, this also implies developing capacities of health systems at all levels, but especially at the first point of contact for abused women. A woman's visit to a reproductive health centre may be her *only* chance to receive support, care and information related to her options in remedying a situation of abuse. Addressing gender-based violence through the sexual and reproductive health programmes that UNFPA supports is the most critical area to which its country operations worldwide can be effective over a medium to longer-term period, especially in light of the linkages that exist between violence and poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes and the fact that both need to be addressed through the primary health care level.¹⁷

Capacity-building needs to address policy, legal and normative frameworks (e.g. from sensitizing policymakers to developing screening, care and referral protocols); institutionalizing gender-based violence in national training curricula for health professionals; on-the-job training for service providers in human rights, legal and socio-economic, as well as medical and normative aspects; equipping health

centres for quality care (i.e. separate rooms for privacy, emergency contraception, supplies and local training for legally-valid forensic examinations); fostering coalition-building at local levels among municipal authorities and civil society to establish and strengthen multisectoral networks for the range of survivors' needs, including access to livelihood options; and supporting community-based strategies that reach marginalized groups, particularly poor rural women and other key groups (e.g. migrant women, disabled women).

In addition to its efforts through the health sector and sexual and reproductive health programmes, and depending on the situation in the countries concerned, UNFPA will aim to step up its support by:

- (1) 'Mainstreaming' responses through other regular processes and programmes it supports; and
- (2) Providing support to initiatives exclusively focused on the issue, as outlined below.

3.2 'Mainstreaming' Responses to Gender-Based Violence

UNFPA is well-positioned to seize the many opportunities available to 'mainstream' responses to gender-based violence. Critical entry points include:

- ✓ **National data collection, analyses, surveys and needs assessments**, to improve data availability and knowledge on various forms of gender-based violence;
- ✓ **The formulation and monitoring of national policies and funding frameworks**, including MDG follow up plans, PRS and SWApS, and other national policies (i.e. health, education, HIV and AIDS, young people, indigenous people, migrants, etc.);

¹⁷ Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 106(q): "Integrate mental health services into primary health-care systems or other appropriate levels, develop supportive programmes and train primary health workers to recognize and care for girls and women of all ages who have experienced any form of violence especially domestic violence, sexual abuse or other abuse resulting from armed and non-armed conflict".

- ✓ Advocacy and technical support (including for data analysis) to **strengthen the role of UNCTs** in addressing gender-based violence, including through **UN Development Assistance Frameworks**;
- ✓ **Integrating gender issues and human rights education into “in-and-out of school” policies, programmes and community mobilization strategies**, from school curricula and safety measures for girls, to empowering women about their human and legal rights;
- ✓ **Emergency and post-emergency** support to policies, programmes and services, with a focus on sexual violence, and including training of uniformed personnel, in the context of Security Council Resolution 1325; and
- ✓ **UNAIDS initiatives on HIV, AIDS and sex work**, to ensure safety and protection from violence for sex workers, given UNFPA’s role as convening agency for this area.

3.3 Supporting Initiatives Exclusively Focused on Gender-Based Violence

The following are areas in which UNFPA already plays a catalytic or supportive role in various countries, and may be able to step up responses in a greater number of countries, depending on country context and the role and capacities of other UN agencies:

- ✓ Supporting the development of **national multisectoral plans and coalitions against violence against women and girls**;
- ✓ Strengthening the **capacities of civil society for establishing accountability of public policies and budgets** for addressing gender-based violence;
- ✓ Ensuring **laws against gender-based violence** are in place, or improving them through legal reforms and strengthened enforcement mechanisms;
- ✓ **Launching national campaigns on violence against women and girls**, identified as a “quick win” for achieving the MDGs by the UN Millennium Project;
- ✓ **Outreach and working with men and adolescent boys** to transform negative gender norms that perpetuate gender-based violence, create cultures of zero tolerance and non-violence, and foster male leadership and mobilization at policy, advocacy and community levels;
- ✓ **Accelerating the response to sexual violence against adolescent girls and young women**, including in emergency and post-emergency situations;
- ✓ Upscaling and engendering strategies for **eliminating harmful practices**, especially **child marriage, FGM/C and prenatal sex selection**; and
- ✓ **Developing UNFPA’s policy position on sexual trafficking**, to identify and clarify for staff and partners, UNFPA’s roles, comparative advantages and priority responses.



PRIORITY AREA 4

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH: STARTING EARLY ON THE PATH TO GENDER EQUALITY

From a strategic standpoint, investing in gender equality programming for this age group is an unquestionable priority, with evidence-based pay-offs in the long run. This is because gender attitudes and related values – including on sexuality, reproductive health and gender relations – are instilled in adolescence. Young people are more open to new ideas and perspectives than adults, and to notions about equality that can help eliminate harmful stereotypes that they may otherwise carry with them for life. From a public health standpoint, research shows that adolescents who acquire ‘good habits’ on prevention and self-care in this stage of life are more likely to retain them later in adulthood.

UNFPA has steadily been increasing the share of resources it devotes to adolescent and youth programming – a trend expected to continue – especially as calls for greater attention to youth in general, and particularly with regard to gender and HIV issues, are gaining increasing visibility and concern among adolescents and youth. Focusing UNFPA’s gender equality programming efforts on this target age group is therefore also timely. As programmes and resources devoted to young people expand, strengthened gender mainstreaming capacities can help ensure that interventions are effective and efficient. UNFPA is also playing a lead role within the UN and other global partnerships, such as the Coalition on Adolescent Girls (which brings together UN agencies – UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNESCO, US-based foundations and private sector companies); and has strengthened its UN partnerships overall, within a multisectoral framework for addressing young people’s needs and rights, including with UNICEF on marginalized adolescent girls.

UNFPA’s Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth (2006) mainstreams gender and calls for priority attention on specific gender issues. It centres on four key pillars of programming in which UNFPA will focus its gender mainstreaming and young women’s empowerment approaches: policy environment; life skills-based education; sexual and reproductive health services; and young people’s participation. *UNFPA’s Strategy on Addressing Gender-Based Violence* will also provide further discussion on several of the issues highlighted below for operationalizing a gender equality perspective.

4.1. Incorporating a Gender Perspective in Educational Systems, including school safety and curricula development

This component falls within UNFPA’s support for life

skills-based, comprehensive sexuality education. It would aim to eliminate stereotypes and biases against equal participation and treatment of girls in the classroom, and to prevent sexual harassment and abuse. Existing entry points and comparative advantages for UNFPA in this area include its three decades of experience and collaboration with Ministries of Education, NGOs, UNICEF and UNESCO on policy development, curricula reform and development of teacher training packages, as well as its programme experience in reaching out-of-school youth, parents and other adults in the community.

4.2 Stepping Up Investments in Very Young Adolescent Girls, an especially neglected and marginalized group

Socialization processes and opportunities for boys and girls bifurcate sharply in many cultures in early adolescence (10-14 years of age). For girls, especially those living in poverty, this can mean an end to schooling, marriage, sexual and reproductive health problems, higher risks of HIV infection and being subjected to sexual exploitation and trafficking; and the sometimes abrupt curtailment of prospects for self-development, with implications for the entrenchment of poverty and its intergenerational transmission. Strategies to keep girls in school through secondary education and prevention of child marriage are among the priority interventions for empowering girls. Few programmes are available that work with this younger age group, despite the strategic pay-offs of investing in gender equality *before* the effects of gender discrimination can leave an indelible imprint on the life prospects of adolescent girls.

4.3 Meeting the Needs of Married Adolescent Girls and Eliminating Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices

Child marriage is a key factor in gender inequality, girls’ abandonment of schooling, poor reproductive health, high fertility and limited development opportunities in countries and communities of South and South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where the practice is especially prevalent. Research shows that worldwide, most sexual activity among girls under the age of 18 occurs within the context of marriage, and that married adolescent girls have higher prevalence of HIV when compared to their unmarried peers. UNFPA will work to ensure that cutting-edge approaches being piloted in a few countries - with UNFPA and partner support - receive the upscaled backing they merit. Preventing child marriage for the roughly 100 million girls at risk and keeping them in school is one of the most strategic contributions to poverty reduction, gender equality and reproductive health that UNFPA can make to countries where the practice is common. Efforts to end harmful practices



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affecting adolescent girls will build on collaboration with other UN agencies, especially UNICEF and UNIFEM, and also engage youth inter-faith networks for enhanced advocacy and programme delivery.

4.4 Sexual Violence and Harassment against Adolescent Girls and Young Women

The alarming levels of forced sexual initiation and violence experienced by adolescent girls and young women require a systematic and concerted UNFPA response, especially as it is the lead agency on sexual and reproductive health and an increasingly recognized leader on young people's needs and rights, including for HIV prevention. Adolescent girls and young women face various forms of sexual violence, from sexual harassment on the streets and in school, sexual abuse and incest in the home, forced sexual relations within marriage (including in the context of child marriage), sexual abuse at work (e.g. on farms, as domestic workers), sexual violence in conflict, post-conflict and natural disaster situations, in refugee camp settings, or date rape and gang rapes perpetrated by boyfriends and peers, among others.

Sexual abuse and violence in childhood and adolescence can have life-long health and developmental effects, including recurrent sexual and reproductive health problems. UNFPA-supported programmes have much to contribute in terms of preventing and addressing sexual violence against adolescent girls and young women, including by involving boys and young men to foster non-violent, respectful behaviour (see later section), as well as by strengthening its partnerships to tackle this critical issue, including with UNIFEM (on advocacy) and WHO (on research and health service delivery).

4.5 Engendering Programmes for Adolescents and Youth in Emergency and Post-Emergency Situations

UNFPA can strengthen its role in this respect by building on its experience of working with adolescents in emergency and transition settings. In addition, as of 2007, UNICEF and UNFPA are co-leading an initiative to develop UN System-wide inter-agency guidelines focused on this age group. This provides an entry point to institutionalize a gender perspective in humanitarian and post-crises operations, including ensuring that issues of gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention are systematically addressed.

Engendering HIV prevention programmes for youth, an issue of global urgency, was addressed earlier under the HIV section.

PRIORITY AREA 5 EMERGENCY AND POST- EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

UNFPA is increasingly playing an important role in humanitarian emergencies within a UN System-wide response. In line with its ICPD mandate, and its role in addressing reproductive health needs, including family planning, maternal health care and preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. UNFPA is also playing an increasingly important role in working with young people in emergency and transition situations and ensuring that their reproductive health needs and human rights are met, as well as in sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings within the wider context of UN fieldwork, including ensuring that rape survivors receive proper protection and care; and on reaching out to men and boys – including peacekeepers and uniformed personnel – to prevent violence against women and girls and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Conflicts and natural disasters, and the humanitarian responses and transition and recovery plans that are put in place, have different impacts on women and men, girls and boys. Integrating a gender perspective is essential for effective policy and programme development in order to foster a smooth transition from crisis to development for populations in conflict- or disaster-affected countries. Transition and recovery situations can offer a unique opportunity for countries to be set on a path of gender equality and improved prospects for poverty reduction, lasting peace and development. This is because women play a key, though little recognized, role in reconstructing communities and restoring the fabric of societies and

economies. For example, after conflicts have ended and widows form a substantial proportion of the population, children and, the elderly or disabled dependents will rely on them for their survival and well-being. Women in this context need political representation, income-earning options, reproductive health services and additional supports, such as to maintain their children's education. This is especially relevant in the context of the MDGs, since humanitarian emergencies often strike countries with already high levels of poverty.

UNFPA is well placed to play a strengthened role in furthering the gender equality agenda in emergency preparedness, response and recovery, within the framework of Security Council Resolutions 1308 and 1325 (2000)¹⁸ and the World Summit Outcome (2005). UNFPA is a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force responsible for implementing Security Council Resolution 1325, and also plays a key role within the Gender and Humanitarian Assistance Sub-Working Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which brings together UN and non-UN entities working on humanitarian responses.¹⁹ Within the newly established inter-agency cluster approach, UNFPA also holds responsibilities for sexual and gender-based violence (in the protection cluster), for reproductive health (health cluster), and for gender mainstreaming (early recovery cluster). It is also a member of the inter-agency initiative, *Stop Rape Now: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict* and a champion of the follow-up work to the 2006 *Brussels Call to Action to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond*. Most importantly, UNFPA is the entity responsible for mainstreaming gender issues throughout all of the nine cluster areas. Also worth noting is UNFPA's strategy – *UNFPA Role in Emergency Preparedness, Humanitarian Response, and Transition and Recovery* – which reflects a welcome gender perspective.

UNFPA's comparative advantage and experience in terms of working with *faith-based communities* in the context of emergency situations is highly relevant as religious communities often play a key role in delivering humanitarian assistance. Actively involving them in awareness-raising,

capacity development, advocacy and mobilization efforts will therefore also form an integral part of UNFPA's strategies for promoting gender equality in emergency and post-emergency situations. While all of the priority areas identified in this Framework apply to emergency and post-emergency situations – from policy, programme and sexual and reproductive health service delivery issues, to male involvement, adolescents and youth and addressing gender-based violence – some key areas in which UNFPA is positioned to play an expanded role in building national counterpart and staff capacities is highlighted below.

5.1 Raising awareness and Mobilizing Policy Commitments to address Gender Equality and Reproductive Health issues in crises and transitions

This would involve intensified advocacy efforts aimed at policymakers and other opinion leaders, including religious figures, focused on illustrating how women and girls are affected by crisis and presenting reproductive health and gender-related interventions as elements of an effective response. Although the gender implications of conflict and natural disasters has been the subject of research, results are not easily accessible to policymakers and programme staff. Compiling and disseminating existing research, tools and resources, and developing additional advocacy, research and related training materials to fill key gaps, is necessary to meet the information and capacity-building needs of key stakeholders.

5.2 Strengthening Technical and Institutional Capacities to incorporate Gender Equality, Gender-based Violence and Reproductive Health issues into Crisis and Post-crisis responses

This includes strengthened support for data collection and gender analysis on refugees, displaced persons and other forced migrants; and for gender mainstreaming in the development of common country assessments, emergency preparedness plans, consolidated appeals, humanitarian action plans, post-conflict needs assessments and transition frameworks, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plans, security sector reform initiatives and peacebuilding programmes. Efforts would be stepped up to engender disarmament and demobilization efforts, by focusing policy and programme attention on the needs and rights of women and girls associated with armed forces. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening responses to sexual violence, including institutionalizing treatment and care for women with obstetric and traumatic fistula in the context of sexual and reproductive health services. To ensure gender and reproductive health expertise is available as part of the United Nations humanitarian, transition and peacebuilding mechanisms, UNFPA will continue to work towards establishing technical expert networks and mecha-

¹⁸ Security Council Resolution 1308 expresses concern on the spread of HIV and AIDS, especially in emergency situations, and calls for HIV prevention and related services for UN peacekeeping personnel. Security Council Resolution 1325 was a landmark endorsement of the importance of involving women in peace processes, incorporating a gender perspective in peacebuilding programmes, and protecting women during conflict situations, including from sexual violence.

¹⁹ Within the IASC Gender Sub-Working Group, UNFPA has also been responsible for coordinating the development and field testing of the UN Guidelines on Management of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Situations.

nisms for rapid deployment, and conduct training to build national capacities. UNFPA will also expand partnerships for knowledge sharing and apply research to build evidence-based programmes. A priority in this respect would consist of improving monitoring and evaluation systems, including those that focus on gender-based violence, HIV and the protection of women and girls.

5.3 Building the Capacities of Civil Society, especially Women's Groups and Networks

In line with Security Council Resolution 1325, UNFPA will continue rolling out training workshops for civil society representatives in post-conflict countries. These have received positive feedback and are in high demand. After conflict, civil society organizations are greatly weakened or dispersed, and need to be built up again – a critically important task in terms of national capacity development for furthering women's empowerment and gender equality. The contents of this training would cover institution-building, including governance and management issues, advocacy, and gender-based violence.

PRIORITY AREA 6 MEN AND BOYS: PARTNERS FOR EQUALITY

Gender biases and inequalities preponderantly and gravely affect women. They are drivers of sexual and reproductive health problems, including the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and gender-based violence. Gender stereotypes also pose restrictions and risks for men, including in terms of poor health, HIV and other STIs. They can limit men's potential and enjoyment of their roles as affectionate and supportive partners, husbands, fathers and sons, and as role models of

non-violence and tolerance. Men's own sexual and reproductive health needs, and perspectives on gender issues, have not received the necessary attention and response in order to ensure that programmes are optimally effective. Not surprisingly, the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS* and the *Secretary-General's In-Depth Study on Violence against Women*, both issued in 2006, call for greater outreach and involvement of men if progress is to be made in tackling these problems. Transforming the way boys and men are socialized and relate to girls and women is essential. As discussed earlier, adolescence is an excellent opportunity to instill norms supportive of gender equality, including to prevent gender-based violence and improve sexual and reproductive health.

Involving men and boys as partners for equality is a cross-cutting aspect of all the priorities identified in this Framework. UNFPA can build on its niche and prior work in this area, as listed below, to step up its efforts in a systematic way, in collaboration with key partners, expert institutions and other UN entities such as WHO and UNIFEM.

6.1 Take stock of UNFPA-supported National Policy and Programming Efforts to engage men and adolescent boys in promoting gender equality and sexual and reproductive health

This would consist of a desk review and gender assessment of UNFPA contributions to policy development and programming across regions; as well as an assessment of national and staff capacity-building needs. This exercise will also map expertise available on masculinities at global, regional and country levels with the aim to establish and/or strengthen technical partnerships, with a focus on programming skills related to working with young men, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, HIV prevention and gender-based violence.

6.2 Develop a Capacity Development Plan, including a knowledge-sharing 'kit' and South-South cooperation on working with men and boys

This would include the development of a global training programme for national counterparts and staff that will be tailored to regional and national priorities, in conjunction with centres of excellence on masculinities; the creation or expansion of a critical mass of capacities in each region; the compilation of existing and development of key practical tools for programme implementation and policy-oriented advocacy; and cross-country and cross-regional fertilization of good practice.

6.3 Develop Programme Models on Working with Men and Adolescent Boys

Building on UNFPA's experience and assessment of current practice in key priority areas such as gender-based violence,



HIV prevention, maternal health and family planning, as well as its record in working with male-dominated institutions such as uniformed personnel, evidence-based models would be developed in select countries to showcase good practice in gender equality programming and contribute to the global knowledge-base in this area. Targeted technical assistance and training could also focus on some countries in which the government and the UNFPA-supported programme reflect a commitment to working with men and boys at policy and programme levels.

6.4. Strengthen Advocacy and Mobilization of Men and Adolescent Boys on their role in Ending Violence against Women and Girls

As per UNFPA's strategy to address gender-based violence, awareness-raising and mobilization at global, regional and country levels would include building the advocacy capacities of male opinion leaders across a range of policy-making, parliamentary, community, media and faith-based circles.

STRATEGIC LINKAGES

Effective programming for gender equality and reproductive health and rights requires a comprehensive approach which incorporates **strategic linkages** that can facilitate and reinforce the goals of UNFPA-supported interventions; these linkages include: girls' education, women's economic empowerment and political participation, and balancing reproductive and productive roles. These are all closely correlated with sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment and gender equality. These critical linkages can enhance programme results, and UNFPA will engage them mainly through **advocacy and policy dialogue**.

It should be noted that the UN Millennium Project's Task Force on Gender Equality, a team of leading international experts, recommended **seven strategic priorities to achieve MDG Goal 3**.²⁰ Together with the six priorities identified in this Framework, the strategic linkages discussed below would enable UNFPA to make contributions to all seven of the strategic investments for gender equality, to a greater or lesser extent based on its mandate, comparative advantages and country context. Where country presence, mandate or expertise renders partners to be better placed to take the lead on promoting these strategic linkages,

²⁰These involve reducing gender inequality and disadvantage in terms of: education; sexual and reproductive health and rights; time burden; property and inheritance rights; employment and wages; political participation in parliament and local governments; and violence against women. UN Millennium Project. 2005. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. London and Sterling, Virginia: Earthscan.



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UNFPA will rather play a supportive advocacy role. In other instances, it may be in a position to establish direct programmatic linkages without losing sight of its comparative advantages.

Promoting Girls' Education through Primary and Secondary Levels

Widely recognized as one of the most critical investments that a country can make, girls' education is closely correlated with poverty, gender equality and women's empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence. The UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), a collective advocacy platform which UNFPA belongs to, is available to strengthen policy and programme linkages to increase girls' completion of primary and secondary education. At country levels, especially in the context of UNCTs and UN reform, expanded opportunities should become available for joint UN advocacy and collaboration in this critical area.

Economic Empowerment of Women and Adolescent Girls

The limited autonomy and power of women in the economic realm is a key factor in the perpetuation of women's low status, human rights violations, violence against women, limited control in sexual and reproductive decision-making, and the spread of HIV and AIDS. Cognizant of these fundamental linkages, UNFPA has been increasing its efforts in this area, for example, through ongoing collaboration with the MicroCredit Summit to integrate sexual and reproductive health components into microcredit activities targeting poor women. UNFPA can also jointly advocate with partners for policy and legal reforms on women's inheritance and property rights, and work with communities to transform social and customary practices that undermine them. UNFPA's *Framework for Action on Adolescents and*

Youth lays out livelihood skills-building as a key intervention to empower adolescent girls, including as alternatives to dropping out of school, child marriage or transactional sex. These are some examples of UNFPA efforts which would be further expanded through strengthened partnerships (including with other UN agencies), skill-building, knowledge-sharing within UNFPA and improved monitoring, evaluation and documentation of good practices.

Increased Political Participation of Women

Changing the face of politics can change the course of policymaking: A critical mass of women in politics (30 per cent or more) tends to influence public priorities. Female advocates with political power have been pivotal in positioning gender equality issues on public agendas, and in passing relevant laws and policies. Increasing the proportion of



women in politics can therefore be an especially strategic linkage to keep gender equality, the human rights of women and reproductive health and rights issues high on the agenda of public policies and budgets. Over the years, UNFPA has developed partnerships with influential networks of women political leaders, including ministerial and parliamentary groups at regional levels. In some countries, UNFPA has supported activities to strengthen the skills of women, both as educated voters and as candidates developing campaign platforms. UNFPA could seize opportunities during electoral processes more systematically – including in the aftermath of conflict situations, when constitutions are drawn up and new governments are formed.

Strengthened Policy-oriented Advocacy on Balancing Productive and Reproductive Roles and Promoting Shared Rights and Responsibilities between Women and Men

As women have entered the workforce in record numbers over the past few decades, they have received limited support in balancing productive and reproductive roles, a very neglected area of the public discourse and public policies. This has repercussions for women's equality in the workplace and in wages, as within marriage and the family; their health and right to leisure; poverty reduction and children's well-being, especially since many women are the main or sole household breadwinners; among other implications. UNFPA would enhance its advocacy and role including through strengthened data collection and analysis.

OPERATIONALIZATION AND FOLLOW UP OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

UNFPA implementation of the Strategic Framework will centre on two key axes: **capacity development and accountability**. Follow up will be required to ensure that global, regional and national programmes integrate the priorities of the Strategic Framework and that staff, at all levels, receive the capacity development support needed. Monitoring of Framework implementation will be ongoing, with a full evaluation slated for 2011.

(1) CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UNFPA needs to strengthen both its own gender equality programming capacities, as well as those of national counterparts, across the priority areas identified and presented in the previous section. All UNFPA professional staff should

have sufficient guidance and knowledge to meet increased performance expectations in gender mainstreaming and programming. If they are to be held accountable, they need the institutional support to meet their learning needs. This is the first step in ensuring that UNFPA is better able to strengthen national counterpart capacities in the area of gender equality programming. UNFPA will enhance its own gender equality programming capacity by:²¹

- ✓ Consolidating a **common vision** at all levels of the institution, including through sustained in-house advocacy from the highest levels of management and endorsement of this Framework and its operationalization as a **policy and programming priority**. This implies developing a **communications and information-sharing plan** to sustain staff attention, self-learning and mobilization;
- ✓ Expanding **internal human resources** with the necessary knowledge and skills at all levels of the organization for gender equality programming, and developing a **roster of staff** with gender expertise across thematic areas of programming at all levels of UNFPA to facilitate knowledge-sharing and South-South cooperation;
- ✓ Ongoing **planning, monitoring and evaluation** of the Strategic Framework's follow-up plan, including documentation and dissemination of lessons learned, challenges and successes;
- ✓ Establishing **partnerships**, in particular with state-of-the-art expert and training institutions at global, regional and country levels, including for programme planning, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective; and
- ✓ Mobilizing **technical and financial resources**.

In the area of **staff training**, UNFPA will:

- ✓ Institute a **mandatory staff orientation course on gender mainstreaming** for all new and current staff, building on the experience and tools of UNESCO and UNDP;
- ✓ Update **gender mainstreaming in existing staff training courses**, in which, *inter alia*, key implementation approaches, issues and institutional culture are transmitted; and
- ✓ Garner approval and expansion by management of opportunities for staff to participate in **training workshops offered by other UN agencies, partners, and/or centres of excellence**.

²¹ See UNFPA (2003). UNFPA Evaluation Report No. 20. UNFPA's Support to National Capacity Development: Achievements and Challenges, p. ix.

It should be noted that the above are in addition to trainings on gender-responsive budgeting, the human rights-based approach and culturally-sensitive programming referred to earlier, for which all relevant staff will be given the opportunity to participate.

In terms of **knowledge-sharing**, including the **development of programming tools** in priority areas as discussed earlier:

- ✓ Establish and maintain a **website of recommended tools** for policy and programming for Country Offices, by category of uses;
- ✓ Related to the effort to build a roster of existing gender expertise in the organization, to facilitate **cross-fertilization among expert and other interested staff** within and across regions (CSTs, Country Offices, Headquarters);
- ✓ UNFPA will focus on **assessing and strengthening a gender perspective in programming tools and trainings with especially strategic value**, e.g. in areas related to the MDGs and lead national policy frameworks. It could also provide **monitoring and evaluation** guidance, e.g. to standardize the application of critical gender-related questions that should guide all internal monitoring missions or external evaluators;
- ✓ Institutional and staff learning could especially benefit from a **UNFPA Thematic Evaluation on Gender Mainstreaming and/or gender assessments on critical issues**, e.g. young people and HIV prevention;
- ✓ In the development of guidance and technical tools, a special effort would be made to produce accompanying, succinct **checklists reflecting minimum quality standards from a gender perspective for specific policy and programming issues**;
- ✓ Compilation, synthesis and dissemination of **state-of-the-art good practices, model methodologies, training manuals and other tools** on specific issues of gender equality programming. This could include production of knowledge-assets (or mainstreaming gender in existing ones); and assessing which UNFPA-produced materials on gender mainstreaming to recommend and make easily accessible;
- ✓ Supporting **South-South technical cooperation** across UNFPA-supported programmes, including by strengthening the role of regional programmes in identifying and disseminating good practices in gender equality programming and facilitating exchange among countries; and
- ✓ Improving **electronic systems for programme staff** to post questions or technical information and assistance needs that can facilitate knowledge-sharing on good practice and experience across all levels of the organization.

In terms of **partnerships**, UNFPA will continue to collaborate with a wide range of established partners at national, regional and global levels. It can strengthen capacities in this regard by:

✓ **Assessing partners' gender-related capacities and capacity-building needs:** A key issue in improving UNFPA's gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment programming relates to the partners that are selected to support planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. **Developing a tool** to assess partners' capacities could assist staff in applying relevant selection criteria and prompt recommendations for strengthening their gender equality programming capacities, or exploring complementary or alternative partners for programme delivery.

✓ **Establishing new and expanding emerging partnerships:** Partnerships will be sought or further strengthened at global, regional and country levels in order to pool relevant expertise for follow up of this Framework. For example, this could include **centres of excellence** and experts in **gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, masculinities, culture and human rights**. Collaboration with **Ministries of Finance** is an emerging and increasing area of work for UNFPA within the context of new aid modalities and national development budget frameworks, including gender budgeting exercises. Economic commissions in some regions have been piloting and developing initiatives on **gender-related indicators and accountability mechanisms**, offering opportunities for strengthened partnership in this area.

A guiding principle and cross-cutting aspect of the Framework's implementation is ensuring the active **participation of women's groups** in all aspects of policy development and programming, including representatives and organizations of **young women and marginalized groups of women**. This implies facilitating their access to policymaking negotiation tables, including for PRS and SWAs; consultation on the development of UNFPA-supported programmes; and direct participation by organizations and researchers with gender expertise in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This consideration will form an integral part of UNFPA's accountability system on gender equality programming.



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Expected Results on Capacity Building

The expected results of this Framework can be considered on two inter-related levels: **improved UNFPA capacity to deliver on gender equality programming, measured in terms of individual staff and institutional systems (policies, workplans, budget expenditures, etc.); and results at the level of the Fund's outputs and outcomes, as reflected in the Strategic Plan and Global and Regional Programmes.**

The **expected results** in the medium term (2008-2011) could be summarized as follows:

- UNFPA staff and management are further inspired and committed to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment programming (as measured by increased human, technical and financial resources);
- Improved technical expertise in gender equality programming of UNFPA staff at global, regional and country levels, in priority programme areas identified in this Framework; and
- Increased utilization and application by UNFPA staff of good practices and state-of-the-art know-how in gender equality programming at global, regional and country levels.

In order to refine expected results and establish indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress, a **baseline of gender equality programming in UNFPA** founded on the Framework pillars will be undertaken.

In order to build national capacities, and with the support of global and regional level supports, Country Offices are encouraged to:

- ✓ Form *partnerships with national organizations and consultants* who are experts in gender equality to support capacity development for effective programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. Where such capacities are not available, UNFPA will advocate for UNCTs to support capacity-building of a critical mass of national counterparts in government, civil society, universities, the media, etc.
- ✓ Maintain adequate availability of *gender technical expertise for developing capacities that can result in evidence-based programme planning, monitoring and evaluation*. This can be achieved through recruitment of national expertise, where available, and/or a combination with UNFPA regional and headquarters colleagues, as well as national, regional or international centres of excellence. In all cases, a specific objective of that technical assistance should be to build national capacities in gender equality programming.
- ✓ Design *capacity development plans* for all staff (UNFPA and counterpart) directly responsible for programme management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, with explicit attention to skills-building on gender equality programming.

(2) STRENGTHENING UNFPA ACCOUNTABILITY

This Framework falls within the UN System-wide strategy on gender mainstreaming and the UN's overall accountability for advancing gender equality.²² UNFPA's strong mandate on women's empowerment and gender equality, field presence and strategic opportunities available, implies that **all UNFPA staff at all levels and across all programme areas are expected to play a role in promoting gender equality.**

UNFPA's executive level highly values accountability and thus the refinement of mechanisms that will monitor the implementation of the organization's strategy on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Specifically, this means mainstreaming gender in UNFPA's accountability system, centred on the Strategic Plan and the Performance Appraisal and Development system (PAD).

At *the highest institutional level*, UNFPA is accountable to the Executive Board of government representatives for results on the **Strategic Plan**, which has gender equality as one of three goals and reflects gender equality objectives across all other goals.

At the *Country Programme levels*, where the bulk of resources are invested and results are critical in terms of improving human lives, Country Offices are accountable for gender equality results (as reflected in the UNFPA-supported programmes and the Strategic Plan). Therefore, *gender mainstreaming and support for women's empowerment is a required standard in all UNFPA programming*. All other units of the organization are similarly responsible in their support to country offices in achieving those gender equality results, including as managers of the **global and regional programmes** and for ensuring adequate investments in gender equality.

In terms of **tracking progress and increased investments in gender equality programming**, the following proposed short-term measures will strengthen accountability:

²² See, for example, General Assembly Resolution A/59/488/Add.1 on Operational Activities for Development, which "Calls upon all organizations of the United Nations system to articulate specific country-level goals and targets to be pursued in accordance with the national development strategies and within their organizational mandates to achieve gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their country programmes, planning instruments and sector-wide programmes" (Para. 38), 17 December 2004.



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- ✓ **Annual Investment Targets:** UNFPA Senior Management envisages defined target levels of investment for gender equality programming, applicable to global, regional and country planning processes.
- ✓ **Tracking Investments:** Review existing human resource and financial reporting systems to improve tracking of investments in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. This includes exploring how reporting systems could disaggregate specific inputs related to gender for each of UNFPA's programming areas (reproductive health, population and development, gender equality and adolescents/youth).
- ✓ **Global, Regional and Country-Level Programming:** Office management plans (including outputs, targets and staff capacity-building) to reflect greater investment for gender equality and women's empowerment programming. This also entails heavier involvement of gender advisors in the design and evaluation of regional and country programmes and the completion of annual gender assessments.

A key issue related to UNFPA programme efforts, lies in the responsibilities of the UNCTs and Resident Coordinators with respect to gender equality programming. Multisectoral, simultaneous interventions on various fronts are required for gender equality programming, and this will have to be reflected in Common Country Assessments and UN Development Assistance Frameworks. The United Nations Development Group “**Gender Equality Scorecard**” (2006) offers a novel instrument under development for tracking UN System-wide responsibilities on this front.²³

Mobilizing Human and Financial Resources for Gender Equality Programming

Ensuring that a gender perspective is fully implemented across the organization's operations, as well as institutional culture requires additional investments in terms of human and financial resources.

Human Resources: In the short-term, UNFPA will strengthen capacities among existing staff, as described earlier. In the medium to longer-term, UNFPA will aim to secure a larger pool of staff with the relevant skills (including on gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming) and by augmenting the number of full-time gender technical advisors.

Financial Resources: As part of its accountability to gender equality, UNFPA will aim to increase both core and extra-budgetary resources for this programming area. This can result from a combination of possibilities, including a shift in existing budget allocations, renewed mobilization efforts and the establishment of a ‘challenge fund’ or other creative mechanisms to harness additional monies for gender equality programming.

²³ Tony Beck (2006). *From Checklists to Scorecards: Review of UNDG Members' Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality*, Synthesis Report.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Culturally-Sensitive Approach: Programming strategy that helps policymakers and development practitioners to analyse, understand and utilize positive cultural values, assets and structures in their planning and programming processes, so as to reduce resistance to the ICPD Programme of Action and/or Beijing Platform for Action. The ultimate aim being to create conditions for ownership and sustainability of development programmes, especially in the areas of women's empowerment and promotion of reproductive health and rights.

Culturally-vested: An approach in which initiatives undertaken are not only sensitive to, but firmly rooted in the cultural contexts in which they are set.

Empowerment/Women's Empowerment: The action taken by women to overcome the obstacles of structural inequality which have previously placed them in a disadvantaged position. Empowerment is a goal and at the same time a process for women's advancement aimed at mobilizing women to fight gender discrimination and achieve equality of welfare and equal access to resources and become involved in decision-making at the domestic, local and national level.

Engender: A method of ensuring that a programme, policy or development action is responsive to gender equality by designing strategies equally addressing both women and men's needs and rights.

Gender Equality: Signifies that there is no discrimination on grounds of a person's sex in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in the access to services. Gender equality may be measured in terms of whether there is equality of opportunity, or equality of results. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women can be understood as a statement on what the principle of gender equality of opportunity should mean in the course of daily life and in the context of the world of work.



Gender Equity: An approach that aims to progressively redress severe gender gaps and disadvantages by taking specific affirmative measurements through programmes, policies and projects.

Gender Mainstreaming: The definition adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) states that: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." (E/1997/L.30/14 July 1997).

Human Rights-Based Approach: "A human rights -based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress."

From Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation, OHCHR, 2006.

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