



## Strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in collaboration with the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations, is implementing a project which aims to strengthen the collaboration and synergies between different mechanisms at national level to facilitate achievement of the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The project will increase knowledge of different types of mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment established at national level since 1995; increase understanding of priorities and strategies for strengthened collaboration and synergies between mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment across regions; and increase capacity (skills and tools) of national mechanisms to collaborate at national and regional levels. The project covers all Member States of the United Nations.

As part of the first phase of the project, five regional studies will be undertaken between June and September 2009, under the guidance of the Regional Commissions. Based on these regional studies, a global synthesis report will be prepared that will highlight the key findings and recommendations. The regional as well as global synthesis studies will be widely disseminated to the national mechanisms and other relevant stakeholders. They will also be presented during the fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2010, at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTION OF INFORMATION AND DATA TO SUPPORT REGIONAL STUDIES ON NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

This questionnaire aims to assist in the collection of targeted information for the regional studies. It is intended to supplement, as necessary, information already provided by Member States to the questionnaire for the 15-year review and appraisal, in 2010, of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), circulated by the Regional Commissions, or in their most recent report under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The present questionnaire is addressed to the **national machinery for the advancement of women within Government**. The national machinery is invited to share this questionnaire with **other national mechanisms for gender equality** that exist in the country, and encourage them to provide information, as applicable. All responses should be submitted no later than 21 August 2009 to:

[Name and email of the respective Regional Commission]

**Working definition of ‘national mechanisms for gender equality’**

For purposes of this study, the term ‘national mechanisms for gender equality’ is understood to include those bodies and institutions within different branches of the State (legislative, executive and judicial branches) as well as independent, accountability and advisory bodies that, *together*, are recognized as ‘national mechanisms for gender equality’ by all stakeholders. They may include, but not be limited to:

- the national machinery for the advancement of women within Government (e.g. a Ministry, Department, or Office. See paragraph 201 of the Beijing Platform for Action)
- inter-ministerial bodies (e.g. task forces/working groups/commissions or similar arrangements)
- advisory/consultative bodies, with multi-stakeholder participation
- gender equality ombud
- gender equality observatory
- parliamentary committee.

**NOTE: Information already provided in response to the Beijing + 15 questionnaire does NOT need to be repeated under any of the following questions**

**Question 1 seeks basic information about all bodies that are recognized as national mechanisms for gender equality.**

Question 1:

Please list ***all bodies*** that are national mechanisms for gender equality, within the legislative, executive and judicial branches, as well as independent/advisory bodies. Please provide information about the mandate, roles/functions, structure, location and resources of each of the bodies listed. [Note: Information already provided in the response to the Beijing + 15 questionnaire does not need to be repeated.]

**Questions 2 – 3 refer to processes of coordination and collaboration among the national mechanisms for gender equality, and with other stakeholders; as well as to the achievements of this coordination and collaboration**

Question 2:

Please give an assessment of **coordination and collaboration** (1) among the national mechanisms for gender equality; as well as (2) between the national mechanisms with other stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, academia, research institutions, and the media, in regard to:

- (a) processes of coordination and collaboration;
- (b) achievements of such coordination and collaboration; and
- (c) how such cooperation and collaboration could be improved.

Question 3:

How does political will for the promotion of gender equality and the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy, expressed in policies and statements, **translate into concrete support for the national mechanisms** for gender equality?

**Question 4 refers to the country's overall national priorities and the role of the national mechanisms for gender equality in influencing those.**

Question 4:

Please discuss the manner in which the national mechanisms for gender equality are able to **influence the country's main political priorities** (examples might include: economic/fiscal policy and poverty eradication efforts, social policy, security policy), and related policy processes. The response should cover:

- (a) the access of the national mechanisms to these critical policy processes;
- (b) opportunities to provide comments on main policy documents/positions; and
- (c) opportunities to monitor follow-up and implementation.

Please provide concrete examples – both successes and lessons learned.

**Questions 5 – 8 refer to the potential, opportunities and challenges to achieve gender mainstreaming goals, and to enhance the effectiveness of the national mechanisms.**

Question 5:

Where do you see **opportunities for national mechanisms to strengthen the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy**, especially in regard to new and emerging issues (such as economic, financial, energy, food crises, international migration, or environmental concerns)? How could national mechanisms fully utilize these opportunities?

Question 6:

What do you consider to be the **biggest obstacles for gender mainstreaming**? What could be the role of the national mechanisms in overcoming those?

Question 7:

Please indicate the main areas of work where the national mechanisms have been **most effective** (such as, for example, women's political participation/parity; addressing stereotypes; women's economic empowerment; violence against women; women, peace and security). Among the areas identified,

- (a) where have the national mechanisms achieved the most significant results?
- (b) what strategies / processes / instruments have been applied (such as gender mainstreaming, legal reform, advocacy, stakeholder mobilization, capacity building, media relations, international/regional networking; national gender equality action plans, sector-specific strategies)?

Please provide three (3) examples and explain the reasons.

Question 8:

Where have the national mechanisms been *least effective*, in relation to:

- (a) main areas of their work (such as, for example, women's political participation/parity; addressing stereotypes; women's economic empowerment; violence against women; women, peace and security);
- (b) strategies/ processes applied and instruments used (such as gender mainstreaming, legal reform, advocacy, stakeholder mobilization, capacity building, media relations, international/regional networking; national action plans).

Please provide three (3) examples and explain the reasons. How could the role of the national mechanisms be improved to increase effectiveness?

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