

**United Nations
Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
Enhancing Participation of Women in Development
through an Enabling Environment for
Achieving Gender Equality and
the Advancement of Women**

**Procedures followed in ad hoc expert group meetings
organized by
the Division for the Advancement of Women,
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**

1. The use of ad hoc expert group meetings as part of the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in implementing the United Nations programme for the advancement of women is guided by the mandate of the Economic and Social Council set out in its resolution 1987/24¹ on the long-term work programme of the Commission:

Recommends, as part of the regular programme of work of the United Nations Secretariat in areas related to the advancement of women, [...], when regular budgetary or extrabudgetary resources are available, the convening of expert group meetings, as required by the Commission, to assist in the preparation of the work of the expert group meetings, as required by the Commission, to assist in the preparation of the work of the Commission on priority themes; the expert groups should be composed of an appropriate number of specialists, taking into account equitable geographic distribution and the involvement of non-governmental organizations, in the field or fields of study addressed under specific priority themes in order to prepare an analysis and preliminary proposals to assist the Commission in making informed, practical and action-oriented policy recommendations; each expert group meeting should be structured like the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family, held at Vienna from 8 to 12 December 1986, and should be timed so as to permit the results of the meeting to be made available to Member States in advance of sessions of the Commission;

2. In conformity with this mandate, the participants in expert group meetings are selected by the Secretary-General on the basis of their ability to provide information and ideas that can lead to recommendations that reflect what is known about a given issue and what measures can best be recommended to address it. In addition, there may be observers from the United Nations system; intergovernmental organizations; and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and academic institutions; and the private sector.

3. Expert group meetings are purely advisory to the Secretary-General and, as such, have no decision-making power nor can they bind anyone other than the experts themselves. Moreover, the way in which discussions proceed is very much shaped by the subject matter of a given meeting, since the main purpose of the meeting is to discuss a wide variety of ideas, and approaches to this can vary.

4. DAW has taken its orientation in guiding expert group meetings organized since 1986 from the practices of the intergovernmental body which it services, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The procedures followed in organizing expert group meetings are as follows:

- The expert group meeting elects its own officers and is responsible for the conduct of the meeting and its own report;
- A bureau is constituted to deal with organizational matters. It consists of the chair, vice-chair, and the rapporteur;
- The report of the expert group meeting, including its conclusions and recommendation, should be adopted by the experts by consensus at the conclusion of the meeting;

¹ para 4

- The process of discussion should allow the experts to hear the views of observers whenever the experts believe that they will be useful for their deliberations; and
- The experts determine themselves which issues need to be addressed in order to implement their mandate.

5. Guided by the practice of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the objective of having an expert group meeting that will assist the Secretary-General in making recommendations to intergovernmental bodies, whenever procedural difficulties are encountered in a meeting, an effort is made to find a solution that will satisfy all of the participants, experts and observers alike.