



**Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

Distr.: General
25 October 2006

Original: English



**Twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**
Nairobi, 5–9 February 2007

Item 4 (d) and 6 of the provisional agenda*

Policy issues: coordination and cooperation with civil society

**Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations
Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council**

**Progress report on the implementation of Governing Council
decision 23/11 on gender equality in the field of the environment**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to the mandate given to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to integrate further gender equality and environment activities into the programme of work of UNEP.

The report provides a summary of progress made to date by UNEP in addressing the issues of equal participation in decision-making, gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes, the assessment of the effects on women of environmental policies, as well as implementation aspects, as stipulated in Governing Council decision 23/11 on gender equality in the field of environment.

A comprehensive plan of action on gender mainstreaming has been prepared and approved by UNEP to ensure the full implementation of decision 23/11.

* UNEP/GC.24/1.

I. Introduction

1. The first Global Women's Assembly on Environment: Women as the Voice for the Environment was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, from 11 to 13 October 2004. The meeting was attended by some 150 participants from 65 countries. Following that conference, UNEP published "Women and the Environment" in 2004 and included a feature focus on "Gender, Poverty and Environment" in the 2004/2005 GEO Year Book.
2. At its twenty-third session, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme adopted decision 23/11 on gender equality in the field of the environment. Over the last two years, a series of activities have been conducted to fulfil this mandate. In particular, project proposals were developed, alliances with international organizations working on gender and the environment were developed and a comprehensive implementation plan, the UNEP Gender Plan of Action, was formulated. The UNEP Gender Plan of Action contains clear guidelines and timelines for the practical and effective inclusion of gender perspectives in environmental policies and programmes, describes measures regarding resource mobilization and human resources management, and outlines activities and methodologies to strengthen capacities and accountability systems for all staff. A series of workshops will be held in the coming weeks, including in all regional offices, to share and adapt to each division and region the UNEP Gender Plan of Action. Other activities described in the present paper will complement the approach, in particular by building the capacity of staff to undertake gender analysis and apply methodologies to both policy and programmatic work.
3. In accordance with the request of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in its decision 23/11, UNEP communicated the decision to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The decision was included in the official documents of the Commission on the Status of Women. UNEP was represented at the fiftieth session of the Commission, at which discussions were held on the equal participation of men and women in decision-making. In addition, UNEP will report to the Commission on the Status of Women on the situation with regard to gender equality and the environment and progress in the implementation of decision 23/11 after the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council.

II. Legislative mandates

4. The global policy context provides UNEP with a number of legislative mandates to address gender equality in the field of the environment. These mandates were set out in decision 23/11 as follows:
 - (a) Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration;¹
 - (b) Paragraph 20 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration² and goals 3 and 7 of the internationally agreed goals of the Millennium Declaration;
 - (c) Paragraph 20 of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.³
5. Mandates also stem from the following UNEP policy tools:
 - (a) The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which requests UNEP to integrate specific gender-mainstreaming strategies, as well as education and training for women, in formulating relevant policies, and to promote the participation of women in environmental decision-making;
 - (b) Governing Council decisions 17/4 of 21 May 1993, 18/6 of 26 May 1995, 19/7 of 7 February 1997 and 20/9 of 5 February 1999 on the role of women in environment and development.

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.

² General Assembly resolution 55/2 of September 2000.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap.I, resolution 1, annex.

6. In addition, following the adoption of decision 23/11, the Secretary-General of the United Nations issued a report on the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, in which he indicated that attitudes and real progress, in every aspect of gender equality and women's empowerment, have lagged behind policy.⁴

7. In adopting the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁵ world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁶ and recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality.

8. In a letter dated 16 January 2006 to all heads of United Nations entities, the Secretary-General outlined general requirements for the development of a United Nations system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming. In developing the policy and strategy, the High-level Committee of the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination was asked to work in cooperation with the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. UNEP is closely associated with this conceptual work.

III. Equal participation in decision-making

A. Government survey

9. In order to determine the current status of gender and environment in governmental practices and to collect examples of governmental methods of work conducive to women's participation in environmental decision-making, UNEP, in partnership with the Women's Environmental and Development Organization, developed and circulated a questionnaire to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva and ministries responsible for the environment worldwide. The goal of the questionnaire is to share good examples of gender-sensitive environmental initiatives among Governments and all stakeholders. The questionnaire covered policy and organizational issues and explored other pertinent gender-mainstreaming elements such as resource allocation, training and capacity-building, gender impact assessment in national environmental policies and programmes, as well as the use of gender-specific indicators in environmental sectors. In addition, in a section relating to the enhancement of women's leadership in environment, the questionnaire invited Governments to share good examples of their gender-sensitive environmental initiatives.

10. As of 19 October 2006, UNEP has received responses from the following countries: Canada, Colombia, Congo, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxemburg, Mali, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Philippines, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam. Once a sufficient number of responses has been received, a survey analysis will be conducted and the results will be widely disseminated. UNEP expects that the analysis will be utilized to develop a concrete plan for technical assistance to countries, to build capacities and develop gender policies and plans of action.

B. Young women's mentorship programme

11. Decision 23/11 mandates UNEP to "develop a mentorship programme to encourage young women to take an active role in environmental policy formulation and decision-making". To achieve this goal, UNEP, in collaboration with the Women's Environmental and Development Organization, undertook a broad-based and global consultation process with 55 individuals, civil society and youth entities, particularly focused on the global South, and developed a mentorship project proposal. This proposal, entitled "Wings on Waves: A Mentorship Programme to Build Young Women's Environmental Leadership", aims at creating a cadre of young environmentalists who will take on leadership roles in policy and programme development in the coming decades. The implementation of

⁴ *Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/60/170).*

⁵ General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005.

⁶ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

the proposal will depend on the availability of additional extrabudgetary funding. The UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information, which coordinates the “Tunza” youth programme, will be actively involved in the mentorship programme. The project will also establish close links with relevant UNEP programme areas. Once funded, the pilot project would run during two cycles of 16 months each and would include activities to enhance the leadership in environment and sustainable development of 48 young women from around the world, including through field visits, a summer school and mentoring via the internet, the launch of 48 local leadership initiatives on environment and sustainable development from a gender perspective, and the establishment of an active worldwide network of young women leaders working on environmental and sustainable development issues.

C. Learning from case studies on gender, women, and the environment

12. In accordance with the call in decision 23/11 for “the sharing of good examples of gender-sensitive environmental initiatives,” UNEP developed, in partnership with the Women’s Environmental and Development Organization, a project to develop case studies on gender, women and the environment. The primary goal of this project is to build the capacity of a specific audience – mid-level policy and program implementers – to integrate gender, women and environment into their work by developing a catalogue and analysis of existing experiences. The implementation of the proposal will depend on the availability of additional extrabudgetary funding.

D. Gender disaggregated data

13. At the United Nations Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, Governments agreed to develop or reorganize their national information systems to compile and disseminate statistics on women and men to improve the handling of gender issues. Two decades later, the lack of reliable national statistics on gender issues persists in many parts of the world. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Statistics Division) addressed the limited progress in gender statistics in a report entitled “The World’s Women 2005: Progress in Statistics”. The report recommends that action should be taken:

- (a) To strengthen national statistical systems;
- (b) To mainstream gender in all aspects of production of statistics;
- (c) To develop and improve concepts and methods, where inadequate.

E. Gender balance in UNEP activities

14. UNEP is in the process of addressing this issue and plans will be formulated for the collection of gender-disaggregated data. UNEP, with support from Governments and the United Nations Statistics Division, will make strides in this regard in the course of the next biennium and develop and disseminate gender-disaggregated analyses, data and information, on UNEP issues and activities, including at the regional level.

15. All UNEP divisions, as well as regional and out-posted offices, have made considerable efforts to strengthen further the involvement of women in their activities and to ensure gender balance in participation in capacity-building and training courses, in policy dialogue and in legal capacity-building initiatives. The Environmental Law Branch of the UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law, for example, has undertaken training specially designed for women and women’s groups on development and enforcement of environmental law. Through these activities, in strengthening the legal expertise of women, the Environmental Law Branch has assisted Governments in promoting the equal participation of women and men in legal and policy formulation, as well as in implementation activities.

16. The need to reach parity in representation at the Global Civil Society Forum has been explicitly underlined in invitation letters for regional consultations and for the global yearly event. UNEP award schemes such as the Champions of the Earth award take gender balance into consideration. For example, in 2006, three of the Champions of the Earth winners were women or organizations led by women. A directory of women environmentalists was successfully developed on the UNEP website to give public recognition to their role in sound environmental management and regeneration (http://www.unep.org/women_env).

IV. Gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes

A. Gender sensitivity in project cycle management

17. The UNEP Programme Coordination and Management Unit led the Programme's efforts to improve gender sensitivity in project cycle management. The revised project manual issued in 2005 includes an improved approach towards gender in project management. The gender sections in the main text and the annex provide practical guidance and steps for developing and implementing UNEP projects in a gender-sensitive manner. In addition, UNEP conducted 18 project management training sessions from April to June 2006. Approximately 300 UNEP staff members from headquarters and offices away from headquarters participated in the one-day training course, which covered gender sensitivity and poverty alleviation and other project management-related subjects. Although brief, this was the first attempt to increase sensitivity to the benefits and necessity of considering a gender perspective throughout project cycle management. Currently, all UNEP proposals are required to indicate how project managers will handle gender issues in their projects. Efforts are being made to strengthen gender perspective in project design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For example, the UNEP Division of Global Environmental Facility Coordination has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender in its activities, such as analysing gender mainstreaming in the land degradation focal area and developing a checklist on how to mainstream gender throughout the project cycle and through regular reporting.

B. UNEP Gender Plan of Action

18. In June 2006, UNEP held a Senior Management Group Workshop on gender mainstreaming, which considered and adopted a Gender Plan of Action. This framework document, developed in collaboration with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), stipulates that all relevant environmental policies, programmes and initiatives of UNEP should be gender-sensitive and employ a conceptual framework that incorporates gender equality and equity. The gender-environment linkage, identified through methodologies such as gender analysis and gender mainstreaming, reveals the distinct needs and roles of men and women in relation to the environment. The Plan of Action calls for high-level and sustained commitment to internal capacity-building on gender mainstreaming, utilizing various strategies including organizational workshops and training, changes in policy and practice, and accountability for implementation, as well as resource mobilization and human resources management. The Plan of Action follows the model of the "Web of Institutionalisation"⁷, which proposes that the conditions under which gender can be institutionalised are represented by at least thirteen elements, each representing a side of power in the institutional context. These elements are not seen as a listing of variables or entry points, but are linked and inter-related, as a web or ecosystem. UNEP adapted the concepts to its own organizational landscape and determined that four interactive spheres, i.e., policy, organizational, delivery and constituency, would permit the meaningful integration of gender mainstreaming strategies into its Programme of Work.

19. The Plan of Action contains objectives, action steps, a timeline and indicators of success. A step-by-step strategic approach was developed to adopt a UNEP gender policy, allocate sufficient resources, ensure that all UNEP policies are gender-sensitive, establish a group of UNEP gender focal points, build the capacity of UNEP staff system-wide through formal gender mainstreaming training, to include a gender component in their programmes and activities, and weave gender criteria in project elaboration and review. This landmark process was made possible thanks to an earmarked contribution from the Government of Sweden.

20. An important outcome of the Gender Plan of Action is the establishment of a new position of Senior Gender Advisor in the office of the Executive Director. The position is established to increase the internal capacity of UNEP and foster external partnerships and to work, inter alia, with senior management and staff to address issues of equity and opportunity in a deliberate and explicit manner. UNEP expects to have the Senior Gender Advisor appointed in 2007.

⁷ Caren Levy. *The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: The "Web of Institutionalisation"* (Working Paper No. 74. Development Planning Unit, University College, London. United Kingdom, 1996, reprinted July 1999).

C. Post-conflict assessment work

21. The post-conflict assessment work of UNEP is one of the first areas to have mainstreamed gender, in particular in regards to the assessment methods currently being developed by the Post-Conflict Branch for the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). In addition, gender training comprises part of the preparatory activities carried out before missions are undertaken. The guide for decision-makers and practitioners entitled "Environmental Considerations of Human Displacement in Liberia" was reviewed from a gender perspective. In Afghanistan, where the gender balance of the UNEP international team is close to 50 per cent, all international and national staff have received gender training and all publications are screened from a gender perspective. As part of the current assessment of the situation in Sudan, consultations are being undertaken with relevant women's groups and non-governmental organizations during the collection of field data to ensure the inclusion of gender dimensions. Prior to the post-conflict assessment of environmental damage in Lebanon, the UNEP international, multidisciplinary team of experts received gender training to mainstream gender issues within the collection of field data.

22. As requested in decision 23/11, an account of lessons learned about the gender-related aspects of environmental issues in conflict situations will be provided, on the basis of the above activities, at a later stage.

23. UNEP contributes on a regular basis to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and keeps the office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women informed of new developments in its efforts to contribute to gender mainstreaming in all post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes.

V. Assessment of the effects on women of environmental policies

A. Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

24. In August 2006, a task force was established to review the modalities of implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building. The implementation of the findings of the task force will greatly transform the approach of UNEP to service delivery as UNEP reinvigorates its partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and others. In accordance with the Bali Strategic Plan and the work of the task force, gender mainstreaming will feature prominently in activities, including through assisting Governments to build capacity for gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, the 2008–2009 UNEP Programme of Work has been adapted to respond to new needs and to build mechanisms to adjust programmatic approaches. The entire UNEP staff will be actively engaged in this endeavour, which will require, among other things, additional cultural change within the Programme.

B. Research and exchange programmes with scientific institutions

25. Pivotal to a better understanding of gender and environment interlinkages and synergies are research and exchange programmes with scientific institutions in the context of the Decade for Education and Sustainable Development. The UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit has made efforts to streamline gender issues in the conception, planning and implementation of its activities. In addition to developing gender-sensitive publications and toolkits, and to enhance the involvement of women in its workshops and training courses, the Unit released materials to promote equality between men and women in their behavioural patterns in relation to the environment (www.unep.org/training).

C. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

26. A project proposal was developed to improve environmental management and expand gender equity and women's rights through collaboration with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other relevant human rights bodies. This proposal seeks to use the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a legally-binding treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, to increase the recognition of the gender-related aspects of environmental issues from a human rights perspective. The project will be implemented internally subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

D. Way forward

27. UNEP will implement the Plan of Action in 2006, 2007 and 2008 in close collaboration with the internal network of gender focal points and external partners.

28. Actions include the appointment of the Senior Gender Advisor, the elaboration of a policy for UNEP on gender and the environment, and the establishment of measures ensuring that all new and emerging policies, projects and programmes – from design to evaluation - are gender-sensitive. To this end, UNEP has started holding workshops in every region and division and will strengthen gender-specific capacities of all UNEP staff through formal training and continuous research, experience sharing and learning. Accountability mechanisms will also be set up.

29. In this context, UNEP will collaborate with women's groups, gender-environment organizations, scientific institutions, the Network of Women Ministers of Environment, Ministries of Environment, Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other UN organizations.

30. A strategy for human resources management to integrate gender into Human Resources will be developed. It will include a training programme specially targeted at women.

VI. Conclusion

31. UNEP is dedicated to intensifying its efforts and undertaking further multifaceted activities to ensure the full implementation of decision 23/11, in the context of the strengthened commitment of senior management and staff to gender equality and enhanced coherence and collaboration with other United Nations entities within the framework of the United Nations reform process. Accountability, results-based management, capacity-building and specific interventions aimed at women's empowerment will contribute to the success of the UNEP Gender Plan of Action. Although challenges remain, UNEP is now positioned to address gender as an issue that goes to the core of its identity. UNEP has already secured a common understanding and ownership of gender equality among its management and staff in order to embark on the path of institutional and cultural evolution, including in its programmatic and substantive activities. This approach will bring about accountability and gender sensitivity in the articulation of all UNEP policies and in the formulation and implementation of UNEP projects and programmes – opening avenues for better communication, integration and collaboration between UNEP staff members and UNEP partners. The cost of failing to focus on gender issues would be enormously high and would reduce not only the culture of cooperation but also productivity and economic benefits for all. UNEP recognizes that progress for women is progress for all and that women's empowerment is an effective tool to combat poverty, hunger and environmental degradation.
