



UNEP Gender Plan of Action

Developed by the United Nations Environment Programme
with the help of the World Conservation Union and the
Women's Environment and Development Organization
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I. Introduction and justification

1. The importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental and poverty eradication policies has been recognized in a wide range of global agreements and forums, including chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992); the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002); paragraph K of the Beijing Platform for Action (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995); the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the World Summit for Social Development (1995); the Millennium Declaration (2000); and the requirements and agreements set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
2. The Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved in isolation. It is not possible to achieve environmental sustainability (goal 7) while poverty (goal 1) and inequities between men and women (goal 3) continue to exist. While the majority of national reports on the Millennium Development Goals submitted until now have failed to link environmental sustainability with gender equality and equity, successful implementation going forward will require an integrated and holistic approach.
3. A series of internal mandates within the United Nations system also call for gender equality and equity, including the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/1999/19 entitled "Departmental focal points for women in the Secretariat", which includes the terms of reference for departmental focal points; substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (2004 and 2005); the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly (2005 World Summit) (A/RES/60/1, paragraphs 58,59 and 116); Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/31 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system; Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women and peace and security; and the Security Council Presidential Statement made at the 5294th meeting, 27 October 2005, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Women and peace and security" (S/PRST/2005/52).
4. The multilateral environmental agreements on climate change, biodiversity, and desertification, and also the Commission on Sustainable Development, have had limited success in integrating and implementing gender equity as a cross-cutting issue. While the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa is uniquely inclusive of a gender approach, the gender perspective of Agenda 21 has been unevenly upheld throughout most of the convention texts and implementation mechanisms. A renewed momentum towards gender mainstreaming is needed for all of these decision-making bodies.
5. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) itself has a specific mandate and niche in the field of environment and development. UNEP has played a pioneering role in linking women and environment, for example, in holding a special session on women and the environment at the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985. The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Governing Council of UNEP all highlighted the role of women in environment and development. After the appointment of a gender focal point in 1999, UNEP submitted a report to the Governing Council at its twentieth session on the role of women in environment and development (UNEP/GC.20/10). The UNEP programme of work 2004–2005 included a commitment to make gender a cross-cutting priority in all of its programmes. In the domain of international environment governance, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building 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". In 2004, pursuant to the Global Women's Assembly on the Environment: Women as the Voice for the Environment, Governing Council decision 23/11 on gender equality in the field of the environment underlined the need to improve UNEP internal capacity in these respects.
6. Gender equality and equity are prerequisites to poverty eradication and sustainable development. The livelihoods of rural and indigenous peoples and those of communities living in poverty are often closely tied to the environment. In these communities, women play a leading role in caring for their families and communities, in sharing their intellectual and social capital, and in protecting and managing natural resources. In many societies, both women and men are agents of change, but their contributions do not receive equal recognition. Gender equality between women and men has a cumulative effect of improved environmental management and protection and poverty alleviation for communities.

7. Gender mainstreaming has been the primary methodology for integrating a gender approach into any development or environmental effort. Gender mainstreaming is intended to bring the diverse roles and needs of women and men to bear on the development agenda. Rather than adding women's participation and a gender approach onto existing strategies and programmes, gender mainstreaming aims to transform unequal social and institutional structures in order to make them profoundly responsive to gender. Achieving gender equality and equity is a matter of shifting existing power relationships to benefit those that are less empowered.

8. To date, many efforts to mainstream gender have been limited to minimalist and short-term technical interventions that have failed to challenge inequitable power structures. Gender disparities remain among the deepest and most pervasive of all inequalities. According to the 2005 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, gender continues to be "one of the world's strongest markers for disadvantage" and reducing inequality would be instrumental in making progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (UNDP Human Development Report 2005). Such inequalities span all sectors and are equally pervasive in the environmental sector.

9. At present, progress on gender mainstreaming in general has stalled and some policies are at risk of being reversed. The environment sector is among those in which gender mainstreaming has taken place in a fragmented, superficial and inconsistent manner. Environmental policies that do take gender into account have only been partially implemented.

10. All relevant UNEP environmental policies, programmes, and initiatives should employ a conceptual framework that incorporates gender equality and equity. The gender-environment linkage, made visible through methodologies like gender analysis and gender mainstreaming, reveals women's and men's distinct needs and roles in relation to the environment. The women-environment linkage is an equally important framework that reveals gender inequality – discrimination against women – and seeks to redress the imbalance of power and decision-making authority between women and men by giving as much attention to women's knowledge, relationship to the environment and natural resources, advocacy, and organizing strategies, as to men's.

11. Governing Council decision 23/11 calls on the Executive Director of UNEP to "develop and promote a set of gender-equality criteria for the implementation of programmes", and "apply the United Nations Environment Programme gender-sensitivity guidelines". This can only be achieved through a high-level, sustained commitment to internal capacity-building on gender mainstreaming, utilizing various strategies, including organizational workshops and training, changes in policy and practice, and real accountability for implementation.

II. Methodology

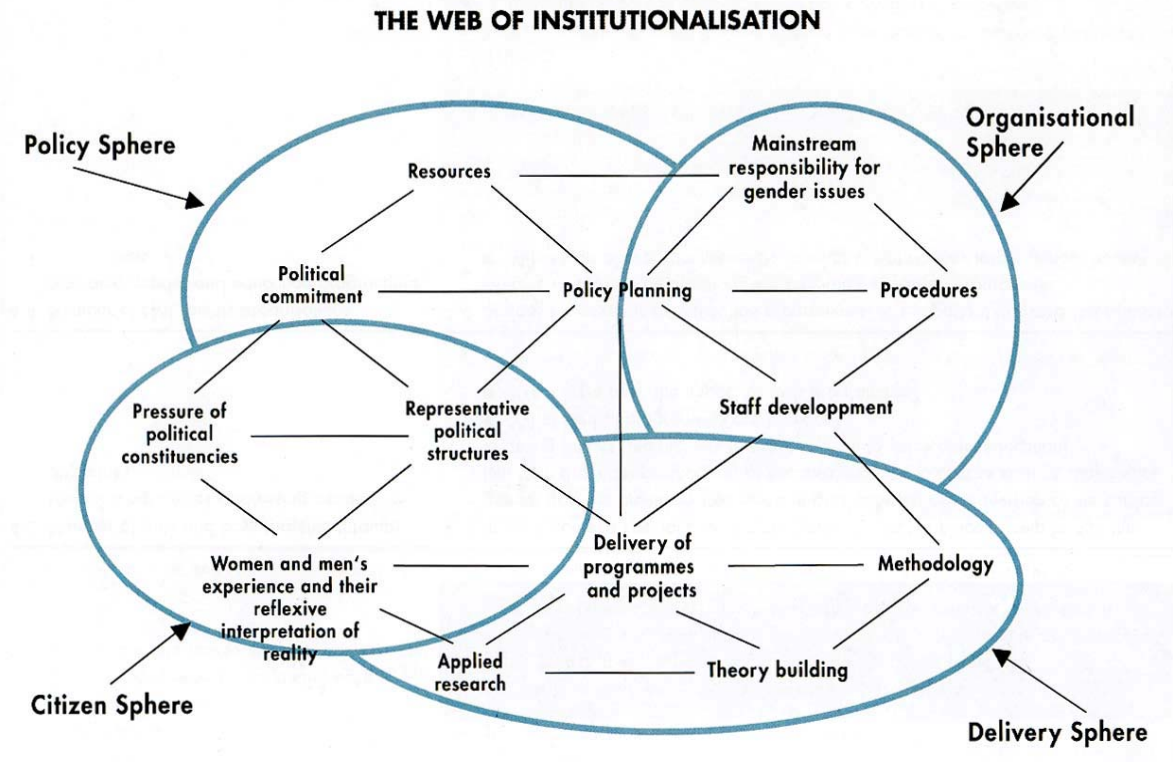
12. The UNEP Gender Plan of Action is the result of a series of inputs. It has been drafted on the basis of an analysis of the current performance of UNEP in the area of gender and the environment, including interviews with UNEP senior staff and an analysis of more than 40 internal documents. It is also based on a review of the implementation of plans of action of similar institutions and international partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNDP, World Conservation Union (IUCN), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

13. The Gender Plan of Action was reviewed at a senior management workshop held at UNEP headquarters on 30 June 2006, and was subsequently presented to UNEP staff at a meeting on 3 July 2006. At the workshop, UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, expressed his full commitment to implementing the Plan of Action, stating that gender mainstreaming at UNEP was required by numerous mandates and that undertaking such work was not optional.

A. “Web of institutionalization”

14. The Plan of Action follows the model of the “web of institutionalization” developed by Caren Levy.¹ Levy proposed that the conditions under which gender can be institutionalized are represented by at least thirteen elements, each representing a site of power. Given the power relations underlying these elements, both opportunities and resistance may occur when change and transformation take place.

15. These elements are not merely a list of variables or entry points. They form a web in the sense that they are linked and interrelated in a particular way and ultimately reinforce each other. Sustained institutionalization of gender issues requires the coexistence of all of the elements. Putting into place only one or a group of elements will almost certainly be insufficient to sustain gender equality and equity as a regular part of development practice in the long term. Moreover, in order to mobilize equality and equity, each element has particular techniques and actions associated with it.



16. These elements are put into place, operated and shaped by different agents or groups of people in a range of interrelated spheres of activity. These spheres are: policy, organizational, citizen and delivery. Given the specific characteristics of UNEP, the “citizen” sphere will here be referred to as the “constituency” sphere. The constituency sphere concerns UNEP member States, Governments, civil society, major groups and stakeholders, including women and men at the grassroots level.

17. The critical point is that an individual may only be able to influence some of the elements, depending on his or her role, position and power to influence change at a particular point in the web. Putting all the elements in the web in place requires collective action through cooperation, consultation, negotiation and conflict resolution between relevant actors at different levels (local, national and international).

¹ Levy, C. *The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning: The “Web” of Institutionalisation*. Development Planning Unit, University College London. Working Paper No. 74. United Kingdom. 1999.

III. Gender Plan of Action

18. The present Gender Plan of Action defines the role that UNEP will play in stimulating and facilitating efforts, both in-house and with partners at the national, regional and global levels, to overcome constraints and take advantage of opportunities to promote gender equality and equity within the environmental sector.

19. The Plan forms part of the continuing response of UNEP to the global commitments of recent decades and the recommendations of international forums, in compliance with major mandates within the United Nations system. It is also a reflection of the increasing awareness that gender equality and equity are important prerequisites for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

20. The Plan pursues three strategic objectives:

(a) To ensure that human equality, equity and rights are well respected across gender; that positions are improved to create an equal balance between women and men at all levels, especially in decision-making positions from grade P5 to D2; and that there is active and balanced participation by both women and men throughout UNEP policies and work;

(b) To promote equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men in the environment sector at national, regional, and global levels; and

(c) To increase the quality and efficiency of UNEP work in environmental conservation and promotion of sustainable development.

21. The Plan outlines a framework for integrating a gender perspective within all UNEP divisions, branches, units and activities during the period 2006–2010. It establishes strategies with reachable targets and proposes instruments to address gender concerns in UNEP technical areas. UNEP substantive activities under the present Plan of Action are concentrated in four spheres: policy, organizational, delivery and constituency.

A. Policy sphere

22. The policy sphere is concerned with the establishment of a gender policy within UNEP; mainstreaming of gender equality and equity in UNEP policies, including sectoral and other transversal policies; allocation and spending of UNEP resources; and statements of political commitment by the leadership within UNEP. The actions and activities foreseen under this sphere are described below.

1. Securing high-level commitments to gender equality and environment

23. The UNEP Executive Director, Senior Management Group, and other top representatives must demonstrate strong leadership on the topic of gender equality and environment.

2. Elaborating a gender policy for UNEP

24. The political commitment of UNEP must be translated into a concrete policy. The policy should be developed in a participatory manner in consultation with managers and global and regional staff. Securing the support of sister institutions throughout the United Nations system, such as UNIFEM, will be of particular importance. The policy should be accompanied by a dissemination and communication strategy in order to ensure that the policy is understood by all UNEP staff and communicated to all partners. Accountability mechanisms and performance indicators will be critical to the successful implementation of the policy and should, therefore, be developed as part of the policy.

3. Allocating sufficient resources

25. Political commitment must translate into adequate resources to support the policy and the Plan of Action. The allocation of resources from the Environment Fund provides an indication of the importance accorded to a subject within UNEP. Resources from the Environment Fund in excess of those currently allocated must be guaranteed to ensure that a basic structure exists with sufficient funding to promote gender equality and equity throughout UNEP. Gender mainstreaming would thereby be assured a non-discretionary, fixed budget line and will not rely only on extra-budgetary resources.

26. Mainstreaming gender across UNEP implicates divisions, units, branches and project budgets. A gender-sensitive budget analysis should, therefore, be carried out across all divisions.

27. The UNEP Resource Mobilization Unit should develop a fund-raising strategy in order to gather additional extrabudgetary resources that will support the promotion of equality and equity.

4. Ensuring that all new policies are gender-sensitive

28. The proposed senior gender advisor should revise all new policies or policy statements produced by UNEP to ensure that gender considerations have been included. This procedure must be mandatory in order to make certain that gender-specific elements are integrated into existing and new policies as much as possible.

29. Gender criteria should also be incorporated in UNEP efforts to create environmentally sensitive lending practices within financial institutions.

B. Organizational sphere

30. The organizational sphere addresses gender equality and equity in UNEP procedures, staffing, institutional capacity, job responsibilities, staff development and related equal opportunity policies. There are seven recommended actions under this sphere.

1. Establishing a senior gender advisor position

31. In order to strengthen UNEP gender-environment expertise, there is an urgent need to appoint a senior gender advisor at a very high level in the organization. The senior gender advisor should be a senior expert with a substantial track record in both gender and environment. This person should not have other responsibilities within the institution. The senior gender advisor should be the gender focal point for UNEP with respect to gender mainstreaming. Resources from the Environment Fund should be assigned to establish and sustain this position.

32. Some of the responsibilities of the senior gender advisor would be:

- (a) Gender analysis of UNEP work;
- (b) Guidance to managers and staff on how best to integrate gender in their work;
- (c) Awareness-raising and training;
- (d) Monitoring implementation of processes aimed at mainstreaming gender into UNEP work;
- (e) Revising and supporting divisions' programmes;
- (f) Supporting gender budgeting exercises and promoting gender-specific data and procedures within divisions;
- (g) Guiding and supporting UNEP constituencies and stakeholders on gender-environment linkages;
- (h) Ensuring that gender criteria are included in new project proposals and policies;
- (i) Disseminating gender-environment information;
- (j) Evaluating progress made in mainstreaming gender into UNEP work and developing follow-up and corrective actions;
- (k) Reporting to the Governing Council on progress in the advancement of gender equality and equity;
- (l) Establishing alliances with structures addressing gender within the United Nations system.

2. Forming a group of gender focal points

33. Each division should assign a person to act as a gender focal point. Gender focal points should be both women and men, and the composition of the gender focal points group should be gender-balanced. In addition, gender focal points should be designated in the six regional offices. The gender focal points should devote part of their working time to the promotion of gender equality and equity, provide support to the staff of their division or office, and monitor the execution of the Gender Plan of Action. The group of gender focal points should advise and support the senior gender advisor.

3. Implementing the Gender Plan of Action

34. The Plan of Action needs to be implemented at two levels: at UNEP headquarters and within the UNEP regional offices. All divisions must promote gender equality and equity, and develop indicators of success and allocate resources to the promotion of gender equality in all workplans. Each regional office should develop and implement its gender plan of action independently. Regional offices should seek the support and guidance of sister institutions within the United Nations (e.g., UNIFEM), gender-environment experts and civil society organizations in each region. The senior gender advisor should report annually on the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action, as may be required by the UNEP Governing Council and senior management.

4. Strengthening gender-specific capacities of all UNEP staff

35. Gender workshops or training courses must not be stigmatized as specialized courses reserved for “gender specialists” or for women alone. All programme staff, policy advisors, and senior managers must develop the capacity to promote gender equality and equity. UNEP should increase staff understanding of gender mainstreaming and its implications for their work. Training must be targeted on specific issues, such as gender and coastal management or gender and climate change, and also address general topics. Training must be systematic, continuous, and adapted to the duties and responsibilities assigned to each person within a division or project.

36. In the case of projects undertaken in the field, traditional training in gender has not been particularly effective in bringing about the required changes in sustainable development and environmental interventions. A learning-by-doing or experiential learning approach has, however, greatly helped programme and project staff to incorporate gender issues within the project and programme cycle, to distil lessons from the field, and to support bottom-up policy development.

37. The senior gender advisor should work with the Staff Development and Training Unit to develop the capacity-building process.

5. Ensuring gender equality and equity within the management of UNEP human resources

38. UNEP must comply with United Nations equal opportunities requirements with respect to its entire staff. To that end, various measures should be implemented, including the following:

(a) Gender sensitivity and some gender expertise should be a requirement for all new staff, especially programme staff, policy advisors and senior managers. The competency assessments of division directors should include knowledge of gender issues;

(b) Sensitivity to gender equality and equity should be a criterion in all UNEP job descriptions;

(c) Gender sensitivity should be included in the terms of reference of new consultants;

(d) In each division, directors should be held accountable for achieving a gender balance in all categories, posts, and levels. (At professional and higher levels, recruitment and selection of staff should include 50 per cent female representation. A fifty-fifty gender balance should also be reached at the general service level);

(e) Although gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity is a major consideration in assessment of individual performance through the United Nations Performance Appraisal System, UNEP senior managers should strengthen and broaden the criteria and requirements included in the Appraisal System. At the medium-term review and at the final annual evaluation, the Appraisal System should include an item on managers’ actions to achieve gender equality and equity;

(f) The “Women Preparing for Leadership” training programme should be made more accessible to UNEP global and regional personnel. There should be close collaboration with the Staff Development and Training Unit, in order to coordinate action and seek resources;

(g) Sexual and emotional harassment guidelines and regulations for UNEP should be elaborated. Since the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has prepared draft guidelines in this respect, the UNEP human resources department should seek support from that office;

(h) Efforts should be made to increase awareness of and support for the right to maternity and paternity leave in order to avoid gender-based discrimination.

6. Increasing awareness of the responsibility of all staff for gender mainstreaming

39. The execution of the present Plan of Action and the mainstreaming of gender within UNEP divisions, offices and branches is not solely the responsibility of the senior gender advisor. Gender mainstreaming must be the responsibility of each and every UNEP staff member and will require widespread commitment. In order to define staff roles in implementing the Plan of Action, a manual or handbook setting out staff responsibilities should be developed by the senior gender advisor, in close cooperation with relevant units. This would provide a platform to measure responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming. Successful accountability should be accompanied by rewards and incentives. The Executive Director should empower the senior gender advisor to develop a system of incentives for compliance and sanctions for non-compliance with the gender policy and the Plan of Action.

7. Ensuring that reporting and evaluation include a gender perspective

40. Gender analysis and the collection of gender-disaggregated data should be incorporated in the reporting, monitoring and evaluation of UNEP projects and programmes. In coordination with each of the divisions, the senior gender advisor will develop a “gender scorecard,” as developed by other United Nations entities. In addition, all existing monitoring and evaluation processes will be required to mainstream gender. The Human Resources Management Service or the Programme Coordination and Management Unit, working with the Division of Early Warning and Assessment, will take the lead in developing and promoting gender-disaggregated statistics and analyses. This whole process should be carried out in close collaboration with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

C. Delivery sphere

41. The delivery sphere deals with mainstreaming gender equality and equity in the formulation and implementation of programmes and projects. It is also concerned with the way in which gender is addressed in the underlying theory, methodology and applied research upon which interventions are based. Five recommendations emerged as relevant to this sphere.

1. Collecting and disseminating gender-environment methodologies

42. The senior gender advisor should build and adapt a body of knowledge on methodologies, tools and instruments. Instruments that enable gender mainstreaming should be adopted and promoted, including gender analysis frameworks, checklists, examples or case studies, gender-disaggregated data collection, monitoring instruments and indicators. These instruments and methodologies should be developed so that they can be tailored to specific topics and provide guidance to particular initiatives or processes in areas such as biodiversity, oceans, water, chemicals, climate change, poverty, post-conflict, disasters, risk management.

43. The senior gender advisor should establish alliances with specific organizations, institutions, secretariats, non-governmental organizations and donors, including Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (HIV/AIDS), ENERGIA Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, FAO (forestry and land use), Gender and Water Alliance (water), Institute for Sustainable Regional Development (disaster management), IUCN, LIFE (energy), Practical Action (formerly the Intermediate Technology Development Group) (technology development), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (desertification), University of Rhode Island (coastal management), Women in Europe for a Common Future (environmental health), and Women’s Environment and Development Organization.

2. Linking gender, environment and poverty reduction

44. The senior gender advisor should develop or enhance guidelines on integrating gender equality and equity into national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, with particular attention to the root causes of inequality and inequity between women and men.

3. Generating knowledge on gender and environment and gender mainstreaming in environmental projects and programmes

45. UNEP programmes, country offices and projects, and also UNEP partners and allies, generate knowledge that could substantially strengthen UNEP work and related gender-environment endeavours. UNEP should document and disseminate the experiences of women and men in environmental management in response to the request set out in UNEP Governing Council decision 23/11 to “promote the sharing of good examples of gender-sensitive environmental initiatives”. In addition, UNEP should examine the linkages between conflict, gender and the environment and give “an account of lessons learned about

gender-related aspects of environmental issues in conflict situations” and “apply its conclusions to the post-conflict assessment work” as requested in decision 23/11.

4. Ensuring that gender criteria and gender sensitivity are incorporated in the elaboration of projects and programmes

46. Where gender criteria are not applicable, project proposals should explain why. The gender guidelines included in the UNEP project manual should be updated and fully implemented. To support the application of the guidelines, the senior gender advisor should become a member of the project appraisal group.

5. Collaborating with scientific institutions to promote scientific exchange programmes on gender and environment

47. Such collaboration would serve as an input to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The Environmental Education and Training Unit of the Division of Environmental Policy and Implementation should incorporate gender issues in the global, regional and national campaigns related to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Moreover, the gender perspective in the scientific work of UNEP should be enhanced through the development of, or support to, specific gender-environment science projects, e.g., biodiversity, chemicals, or global environmental change.

D. Constituency sphere

48. The constituency sphere concerns UNEP member States, Governments, civil society, major groups and stakeholders, including men and women at the grassroots level. This sphere is extremely important for the regional offices because the partners with whom they work or are allied predominantly operate in this sphere. The influence of UNEP on this sphere would be mainly achieved through the implementation of the recommendations in the other three spheres. Five additional recommendations are, however, important.

1. Cooperating with the Network of Women Ministers for the Environment and gender-environment organizations

49. The Network of Women Ministers for the Environment and specialized non-governmental organizations could form part of a supporting body for gender issues within UNEP. The Network could also support gender-related statements made to the multilateral environmental agreements and the Commission on Sustainable Development, and support the inclusion of women in official delegations to meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to environmental agreements and sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. UNEP should seek the guidance of the Network of Women Ministers for the Environment on engendering and collecting additional resources to implement the Gender Plan of Action.

2. Providing technical assistance to ministries of environment to develop gender policies and plans of action

50. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the current status of gender and environment and to collect examples of governmental methods of work conducive to women’s participation in environmental decision-making, UNEP is conducting a survey on gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes. Based on the results of this survey, there will be a need for follow-up at the regional level supporting the mainstreaming of gender within ministries. Some regional offices serve as secretariats to regional environment ministers’ forums and therefore have an opportunity to strengthen capacity on environment-gender issues at the government level.

51. It is especially important for UNEP to establish alliances and develop proposals with those organizations that have been supporting similar processes in other regions, in particular, IUCN, which has supported the ministries of environment of Mesoamerica.

52. In cases where UNEP is supporting legislative development in developing countries, it is imperative that gender considerations are taken into account. The UNEP gender focal point or recognized local organizations must be consulted.

3. Developing a mentorship programme for young women.

53. UNEP has commissioned the Women’s Environment and Development Organization to develop a project proposal on mentorship for young people. The execution of the project will contribute directly to the implementation of decision 23/11 and will also respond to the recommendations of the 2004 Women as the Voice for the Environment conference. The project will complement the long-term strategy on engagement

and involvement of young people in environmental issues endorsed by the Governing Council of UNEP in its decision 22/18 II.

54. The primary goal of the mentorship programme will be to empower young women to take an active role in environment and sustainable development policy formulation and decision-making, in view of the fact that they are often marginalized or eliminated from such processes to a greater extent than young men. The initiative will strengthen young women's capacities and skills by means of coaching in the environmental sector and experience-sharing. The development of this programme does not negate the need for gender and leadership training for men.

4. Supporting the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and the Commission on Sustainable Development in relation to gender mainstreaming

55. In order to support gender mainstreaming in these forums, UNEP must strengthen its alliances with civil society, networks and non-governmental organizations with experience in gender mainstreaming, for example ENERGIA Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, IUCN, LIFE, Women in Europe for a Common Future, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, and Women's Environment and Development Organization. A consolidated advocacy strategy should be put in place to this end. Some of the aspects of the strategy might include the sharing of lessons learned and procedures developed by some of the conventions (e.g., the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification); supporting the equal participation of women and men at meetings of conferences of the parties to environmental agreements and sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development; elaborating position papers on relevant themes; improving the balance of women's and men's participation at meetings of conferences of parties by supporting the creation of women as a major group (such as the indigenous group recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity); and other initiatives.

5. Strengthening alliances with United Nations sister organizations

56. At present, UNEP regularly reports to other United Nations entities. The senior gender advisor should strengthen cooperation with other organizations within the United Nations system, including ILO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDP, UNIFEM, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and World Health Organization (WHO) in order to share information, support advocacy processes, and to request technical assistance when required.

57. UNEP should also enhance collaboration with other United Nations bodies on human rights, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, in order to use the provisions of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to increase governments' recognition and enforcement of commitments to gender-environment from a human rights perspective.

IV. Implementing the Gender Plan of Action

TARGETS	ACTION STEPS	TIMELINE	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
POLICY SPHERE			
Secure high-level commitments to gender and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop with Executive Director and Senior Management Group Endorsement by SMG of the Gender Plan of Action Meeting with staff to communicate the Plan of Action Communication of the existence of efforts to promote gender equality and equity to UNEP managers and staff Executive Director's communication on UNEP efforts to promote equality and equity within the United Nations system, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Governing Council and the Network of Women Environment Ministers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jun/Jul 2006 Jun 2006 Jul 2006 Jul 2006 Jul 2006 onwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop and staff meeting First communication by Executive Director to staff and the media emphasizes commitment to gender equality and equity as a key UNEP priority Annual reporting to the Governing Council on progress toward gender mainstreaming Number and frequency of communications to UNEP managers and staff about the importance of gender Inclusion of gender on the agenda of senior management meetings Percentage of women and men recruited and hired by Executive Director
Elaborate a gender policy for UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review similar policies in United Nations sister organizations, international institutions and non-governmental organizations Develop a draft policy on gender and environment Facilitate internal consultations within UNEP and UNIFEM Approve the policy Develop and finalize accountability mechanisms and performance indicators for the Plan of Action Develop a dissemination and communication strategy within the organization and with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 2006 Nov/Dec 2006 Nov/Dec 2006 Jan 2007 Jan 2007 Jan 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaboration of a gender policy in a participatory way All personnel are aware of the gender policy Gender policy reflected in UNEP policies and programmes Scorecard system in place for measuring progress toward equality and equity Dissemination and communication campaign undertaken
Allocate sufficient resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify available resources in the Environment Fund Conduct a gender-sensitive budget analysis with all divisions Develop a funding strategy to raise additional extra-budgetary resources Submit the gender projects stemming from Governing Council decision 23/11 for interdivisional review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director to determine by Apr 2007 and annually Mar 2007 Nov/Dec 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of the Environment Fund budget allocated for the promotion of gender equality and equity Budget line allocated for the establishment of the post of senior gender advisor Increased resources for gender programming at country, regional, and global levels Increased support from donors including mobilizing and allocating resources to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender in UNEP Percentage of new projects on gender-environment and of projects in which gender has been integrated
Ensure that all new UNEP policies are gender-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new and emerging policies to be reviewed from a gender perspective Establish a procedure for gender analysis of all new policies Establish gender criteria for UNEP initiatives with financial institutions on environmentally-sensitive lending practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately June 2007 Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage and quality of policy documents and guidelines that include gender equality and equity as an integral component Percentage of new policies reviewed by the senior gender advisor

ORGANIZATIONAL SPHERE			
Form a network of gender focal points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of terms of reference for gender focal points • Divisions assign gender focal points • Regional offices assign gender focal points • Formally allocate gender focal points time in their employment contracts to address gender equality and equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before Mar 2007 • Before Mar 2007 • Before Mar 2007 • Before Mar 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender focal points established in all divisions and regional offices • Gender focal points group as a whole has gender balance • Contracts allocate gender focal points time for the promotion of gender equality and equity • In-house gender expertise available to support gender mainstreaming in all core priorities
Operationalize the Gender Plan of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisions and regional offices to carry out exercise to include Gender Plan of Action in their work • Involve, when appropriate, senior gender advisor, United Nations sister organizations, and civil society in the development or adaptation of gender plans of action • Notify the Executive Director and the senior gender advisor of regional gender plans of action • Communicate and disseminate division and regional gender plans of action • Senior gender advisor to prepare a consolidated report to be presented to the Governing Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Ongoing • By Mar 2007 • By Mar 2007 • Oct before regular sessions of the Governing Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender integrated into workplans, 2008–2009 • Six offices with gender plans of action adapted or elaborated • Actions carried out to promote gender equality and equity in divisions' and regional offices' annual programmes of work • Gender analysis set as a prerequisite for programme approval • Annual consolidated report by senior gender advisor • Gender equality becomes a cross-cutting theme with increased visibility, capacity and aligned resources
Strengthen gender-specific capacities of all UNEP staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior gender advisor to cooperate with the Staff Development and Training Unit to develop a UNEP- wide gender capacity–building plan • Implement training plan • Regularly monitor how gender training has impacted the work of the trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 2006 • Jan 2007, ongoing • Jan 2007, ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP-wide gender training plan in place • Funds assigned to support training • Gender training and workshops integrated into staff and management training programmes • Managers and staff capacities enhanced in gender mainstreaming at all levels • Qualitative assessment of all gender training programmes
Ensure gender equality and equity within UNEP internal human resources management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for human resources that includes gender equality and equity • Implement the strategy to integrate gender into human resources • “Women Preparing for Leadership” training programme made more accessible to UNEP global and regional personnel • Develop and apply sexual and emotional harassment guidelines and regulations, working closely with the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues • Increase awareness of and support for the rights to maternity and paternity leave in order to avoid gender-based discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 2006 • Jan 2007, ongoing • 2007 and ongoing • 2007 and ongoing • Immediately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency assessments of managers and staff • Percentage of women and men recruited and hired • Percentage of women and men at different levels within UNEP • Accountability system for gender-balanced recruitment by directors • Gender criteria included in the terms of reference, competency assessments and performance assessments of new consultants • Percentage of women participating in “Women Preparing for Leadership” training programme • Sexual and emotional harassment guidelines and regulations in place • Policies on maternity and paternity rights are disseminated and implemented

Increase awareness of the responsibility of all staff for gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a manual that includes staff responsibilities for gender mainstreaming • Communicate responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming • Establish a system of incentives, rewards, and sanctions to promote gender mainstreaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 • 2007 • 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual developed • Accountability system for gender mainstreaming in place • Incentives, rewards, and sanctions system for gender mainstreaming established
Ensure that reporting and evaluation includes a gender perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the gender scorecard processes developed by other United Nations bodies • Develop a gender scorecard for UNEP • Senior gender advisor to collaborate with the United Nations Office at Nairobi Human Resources Management Service, the UNEP Programme Coordination Management Unit and Division of Early Warning and Assessment to develop and promote gender disaggregated data, statistics and analyses • Collaborate with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 • 2007 • 2007–2008 • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scorecard created • Organizational performance on gender reviewed and scored, and new targets established • Sex-disaggregated data available • All monitoring and evaluation processes incorporate the impact on gender and contribution to the equal empowerment of women and men
DELIVERY SPHERE			
Collect and disseminate gender-environment methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish alliances with specific organizations and institutions to identify methodologies • Adapt and process methodologies, tools, and instruments • Make methodologies available throughout UNEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 • 2007 and ongoing • 2007 and ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliances established with key organizations and institutions • Personnel using new methodologies
Link gender, environment, and poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate a clear gender perspective in the existing poverty and environment work of UNEP • Develop and implement guidelines on integrating gender equality and equity in poverty reduction strategies and in national sustainable development initiatives • Integrate a gender approach in UNEP early warning (and post-conflict) assessment work, implementing the recommendations made by Hartmann and Seager (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • 2007 • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines established • Number of poverty reduction strategies using the guidelines • Number of national sustainable development initiatives incorporating gender • Gender is fully integrated in UNEP poverty and environment • Recommendations on UNEP early warning and assessment work are implemented
Knowledge generation on gender and environment and gender mainstreaming in environmental work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a fundraising exercise in order to execute case study projects on gender and environment • Include gender in post-conflict environmental assessments activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Mar 2007 • September 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources assigned for the implementation of the activities stemming from Governing Council decision 23/11

Ensure that gender criteria are included in the elaboration of projects and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and enhance the gender criteria in the Project Manual and establish gender sensitivity in projects as a mandatory requirement Assign the senior gender advisor as member of the Project Appraisal Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2006 To be determined by Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All applicable projects and initiatives mainstream gender (or explain why gender criteria do not apply) Mandatory and enhanced gender criteria in the UNEP Project Manual The senior gender advisor participates actively in the Project Appraisal Group
Collaborate with scientific institutions to promote scientific exchange programmes on gender and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior gender advisor works with the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation Education and Training Unit to define a process for incorporating gender issues into campaigns related to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Programmes of UNEP scientific committees integrate gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2008 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific campaigns related to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development incorporate gender equality and equity Gender is integrated in programmes of UNEP scientific committees, and scientific exchange in the area of gender-environment is enhanced
CONSTITUENCY SPHERE			
Cooperate with the Network of Women Ministers of Environment and gender-environment organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support regular meetings of the Network prior to sessions of the Governing Council Propose that the Network acts as a supporting body to the UNEP senior gender advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network assists with programme advice and securing new funds
Provide technical assistance to ministries of environment to develop gender policies and plans of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced outreach on survey Process and analyse the survey on gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes Develop a strategy or project to support ministries of environment in the promotion of gender equality and equity in conjunction with the regional offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 2006 Dec 2006 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of the survey analysed and documented Percentage of ministries of environment that have developed gender policies in the environmental sector
Support the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements in gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility to develop an advocacy strategy for the multilateral environmental agreements Promote the participation of women so as to create more gender balance, both in delegations and in civil society organizations Funding exercise to support the advocacy strategy in conjunction with other organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007–2008 2007–2008 2007–2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy strategy in place for multilateral environmental agreements Increased participation of women to achieve a gender balance in national delegations and civil society major groups Increased resources for advocacy
Strengthen alliances with United Nations “sister organizations”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director communicates with United Nations sister organizations to share Plan of Action and gender policy and define possible areas of collaboration at all levels Regional offices enhance alliances with United Nations sister organizations Executive Director sends memorandum to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to enhance alliance and coordinate execution of gender-environment initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately Immediately 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters sent to United Nations bodies Memorandums of understanding developed with other United Nations bodies at all levels Dialogue between UNEP and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

V. Conclusion

58. UNEP has achieved some important milestones in promoting gender equality and equity, and there is overall awareness at the managerial level that steps should be taken to integrate gender into UNEP work. The present Gender Plan of Action is the first attempt, however, to mainstream gender comprehensively throughout the organization. UNEP is at a considerable advantage in this respect, because the methodology outlined in the Plan of Action draws on recommendations resulting from other experiences in gender mainstreaming both inside and outside the United Nations system. Thus, in implementing the Gender Plan of Action, UNEP will learn from and build on previous successes and challenges.

59. The present Gender Plan of Action recommends a number of actions to be taken by UNEP in the realm of gender equality and environment. There are some specific conditions that may prevent the comprehensive mainstreaming of gender equality and equity in UNEP, and other conditions that would facilitate the success of gender mainstreaming. Both sets of conditions are outlined below to inform the implementation of the present Plan of Action.

A. Conditions that prevent gender mainstreaming²

60. The following conditions may obstruct efforts to mainstream gender equality and equity in UNEP activities:

- (a) A hostile or indifferent institutional culture;
- (b) 'Ghettoization' of gender;
- (c) A failure to highlight the construction of male as well as female gender identities, and the impact of changing gender roles and relations on men and masculinity, in any gender mainstreaming initiative;
- (d) A failure to connect organisational (internal) gender mainstreaming efforts to broader political, social, economic and environmental realities;
- (e) Framing of gender mainstreaming as a single and finite target, rather than a long-term undertaking, requiring extensive capacity-building and organisational change; and
- (f) Inadequacies in indicators, data, and analysis that reveal the gendered dimensions of issues or that support gender-disaggregated information.

B. Conditions that facilitate successful gender mainstreaming

61. The following conditions may facilitate efforts to mainstream gender equality and equity in UNEP activities:

- (a) An institutional culture that is open to gender perspectives and willing to undertake the self-assessment necessary to overcome obstacles to the mainstreaming of gender perspectives;
- (b) The presence of external and internal pressures to undertake gender mainstreaming and responsiveness to those pressures;
- (c) Identification of gender-mainstreaming as a cross-cutting responsibility;
- (d) An understanding that gender mainstreaming is a continuous and evolving undertaking;
- (e) Careful and consistent use of available gender-differentiated data, indicators and analysis and deployment of adequate resources to support their collection;
- (f) Accountability (including real consequences) for failures to implement agreed gender mainstreaming policies and practices routinely; and
- (g) Political commitment to the goal of securing gender equality and equity on the part of the Executive Director and the leadership at the highest levels.

² Adapted from Seager & Hartmann, 2005.

62. The present Plan of Action is not a static document and will continue to evolve according to changing institutional, political, and global and regional realities. It is most likely that the United Nations reform process will, once completed, require the Plan to be revisited and updated. The Plan will serve as a direct input into annual programmes of work developed by the various UNEP divisions, offices, branches, and units, and these programmes of work are expected to integrate elements of the Plan gradually. Future versions of the Plan will be developed in consultation with organizations working on gender, environmental organizations, gender-environment experts, and other entities that could enhance the Plan's methodologies, scope, and implementation. The UNEP Governing Council and Committee of Permanent Representatives will play an important role in following and supporting this process.

Gender-related terminology

Access

Access to resources implies that women are able to use and benefit from specific resources (including material, financial, human, social and political ones).

Control

Control over resources implies that women can obtain access to a resource as and can also make decisions about the use of that resource. For example, control over land means that women can access land (use it), can own land (can be the legal title-holders), and can make decisions about whether to sell or rent the land.

Empowerment

Empowerment implies people – both women and men – taking control over their lives by setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing their self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome. Empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.

Gender

The term gender refers to the social roles and relations between women and men. This includes the different responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. Unlike the sex of men or women, which is biologically determined, the gender roles of women and men are socially constructed and such roles can change over time and vary according to geographic location and social context.

Gender-blind

An approach/strategy/framework/programme may be defined as gender-blind when the gender dimension is not considered, although there is clear scope for such consideration. This is often as a result of lack of training in, knowledge of and sensitization to gender issues, leading to an incomplete picture of the situation being addressed and, consequently, to failure.

Gender-neutral

An approach/strategy/framework/programme may be defined as gender-neutral when the human dimension is not relevant, and thus gender is not an implication.

Gender analysis

A tool to assist in strengthening development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to make programmes and projects more efficient and relevant. Ignoring gender issues has resulted in gender-blind development strategies that have caused many development programmes and projects to fail in reaching their principal goals and delivering the desired benefits to the target population and have sometimes led to unintended negative impacts.

Within the UN system, gender analysis has been established as a basic requirement for the gender mainstreaming strategy. The current situation of rural women and men in relation to different issues and problems and the impact of agricultural and rural development policies, legislation, and projects and programmes on women and men respectively – and on the relations between them – should be analysed before any decisions are made.

Gender analysis should go beyond cataloguing differences to identifying inequalities and assessing relationships between women and men.

Gender analysis helps us to frame questions about women and men's roles and relations in order to avoid making assumptions about who does what, when and why. The aim of such analysis is to formulate development interventions that are better targeted to meet both women's and men's needs and constraints.

Gender equality

Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender equity

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

Gender mainstreaming

In UNEP, gender mainstreaming involves ensuring that attention to gender equality is a central part of all environmental and sustainable development interventions, including analyses, policy advice, advocacy, legislation, research, and the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.

Gender mainstreaming has been defined by the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2 of 18 July 1997, as *"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 social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"*

Resources

Resources are means and goods, including those that are economic (household income) or productive (land, equipment, tools, work, credit); political (capability for leadership, information and organization); and time.

Annex II

Acronyms

ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCN	World Conservation Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization
