

Draft Strategy Note – Gender Issues

I. Analysis of needs and FAO's comparative advantage

1. Rural men and women play different and complementary roles in agriculture, rural development and food security at household and community levels, but pervasive patterns of inequality between men and women and low levels of women's empowerment continue to impede progress in defeating hunger. FAO is called upon to give a higher priority to gender issues in order to overcome gender inequality, which the IEE characterizes "as a major economic and social loss as well as...an injustice and a brake on achieving household and community food security" (IEE, para 646). Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) cannot be achieved without equal opportunities for men and women and without women's economic empowerment.

2. *Comparative Advantages*

- a. FAO has decades of experience and lessons learned working with a variety of partners in addressing gender issues in food security, agriculture, fisheries and forestry in an integrated and multidisciplinary way. FAO has demonstrated having the capacity to address gender issues within emerging development challenges such as HIV and AIDS, rising food prices and climate change. Its comparative advantage lies in its ability to assemble multidisciplinary expertise, create normative products, test methodologies in the field *and* provide policy advice regarding the gender aspects of rural development, agriculture and food security.
- b. FAO has a unique niche in the UN system, with its mandate and experience to address gender in rural livelihoods, rural poverty and hunger reduction.
- c. FAO has solid technical expertise, embodied by its professional staff at headquarters and in regional offices, in addressing gender issues in rural areas through both advancing knowledge and building capacity on gender issues.

II. Overall vision and major objectives

3. *Vision*

Member countries will look to FAO as the authoritative source of policy advice on gender issues relating to rural livelihoods, agriculture and food security and recognizing it as a centre of excellence in building capacity on mainstreaming gender issues.

4. *Objectives*

- a. Contribute to member countries' efforts to reduce hunger and rural poverty by reducing gender inequalities in the access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas.
- b. Application of gender-sensitive approaches by all FAO units in their policies, programmes and projects.

III. Outcomes

Outcome	Activities/issues
A. Improved evidence-base for more informed and effective policy-making	Normative and country-level work will continue to be undertaken to gather the new information and data that are needed as the basis for policy advice, capacity building and effective gender mainstreaming. Emphasis will be given to improving capacity in the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated statistics, including household surveys and agricultural censuses. The gender aspects of priority issues for FAO will be researched, including rural employment, health issues including HIV and AIDS, climate change and bioenergy.
B. Gender-sensitive agricultural sector and food security policies	Focus will be given to the pilot ONE UN (as of 2008) countries, progressively moving to the others. Relevant stakeholders will be enabled to ensure that food security and agriculture sector initiatives promote women's empowerment and effectively reduce gender inequalities in the access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas.
C. Strengthened partnerships among divisions and with	As suggested by the IEE, partnerships with other organizations will be strengthened, in order to maximize resources, enhance cooperation, to mutually benefit from each other's lessons learned, knowledge and

Outcome	Activities/issues
other organizations	normative products and to work as ONE UN [such as the gender mainstreaming strategy for Avian Influenza developed in collaboration with other UN agencies in Vietnam]. Partnerships are planned in: capacity building (IFAD, WFP, World Bank); tools, methodologies, lessons learned (UN, OECD networks); normative products (IFAD, WFP, World Bank, UNESCO, ILO); ONE UN (a One-UN pilot country, i.e. Tanzania, Mozambique, preparing its report to CEDAW may be selected for developing a ONE UN strategy ensuring that rural women's equity issues will be addressed as a whole).
D. Trained staff with upgraded skills at FAO headquarters and in the decentralized offices	Member countries, FAO headquarters staff, and FAO decentralized offices will have a better understanding of gender concepts and how to address gender-based inequality in their work to reduce hunger and rural poverty. Capacity building has been budgeted within the quick wins/early implementation of IEE. Plans are being developed for staff training in gender and women's empowerment for FAO staff at HQ and field offices, in line with the recommendation by the IEE (Para 649). Gender focal points will be appointed at a senior level and will be trained as needed. The terms of reference of senior staff will be changed to reflect their accountability for gender mainstreaming.
E. Increased awareness and accountability in all FAO units	Both member countries and FAO staff will be aware that a gender sensitive approach to policies and projects leads to better, more effective programmes that have more buy-in and are more likely to reach their goals and deliver results. They will be more aware that gender equality contributes to improved economic performance and poverty reduction. The IEE recommends that The Gender Plan of Action be fully integrated into FAO's programme cycle and reported on as part of that cycle (Para 649). This is already underway. The Gender and Development Plan of Action 2008-2013 is embedded in the work of all FAO technical and operational divisions and monthly reporting to the Director-General has begun and is ongoing. Each division has developed a set of indicators to monitor their own gender mainstreaming objectives and to eventually evaluate impacts.

IV. Implementation features

5. FAO addresses gender issues with member countries and within the organization through a strategy of gender mainstreaming. This strategy involves a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action and making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of all stages of programme and policy design. Gender mainstreaming is also a process of institutional change. While FAO has made progress in integrating gender issues throughout its work, important challenges remain. A lack of understanding of the usefulness addressing gender issues to obtain development objectives sometimes results in unwillingness to mainstream them.

6. FAO's main policy instrument for gender mainstreaming is the Gender and Development Plan of Action, the latest version of which (2008-2013), was developed in a year-long participatory process with all technical divisions. This document is not a gender strategy separate from the other work of FAO; rather, the GAD-PoA is a compilation of the gender strategies embedded in the workplans of the technical and operational divisions of FAO.

7. Adequate expertise in gender issues in FAO's regional and sub-regional offices is essential for the implementation of this strategy.