

**52nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
25 February to 7 March 2008**

Interactive expert panel

**Capacity-building for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the
development, implementation and evaluation of national economic policies
and programmes and budgets**

26 February 2008

Moderator's Summary

1. At its fifth meeting, on 26 February 2008, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive expert panel discussion on “Capacity-building for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national economic policies and programmes and budgets”.
2. The panel, moderated by Enna Park (Republic of Korea), Vice-Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, was composed of the following experts: Marème Cissé Thiam, Director of Female Entrepreneurship in the Ministry of the Family, Female Entrepreneurship and Microfinance, Republic of Senegal; Olga Filippova, Social and Gender Policy Expert, Department of Social and Economic Policy of the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic; Purnima Mane, Deputy Executive Director of Programmes, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Julia Benn, Manager of the Statistical Policy, Analysis and Outreach Section of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Co-operation Directorate; and Shireen Lateef, Director of Social Sectors, South East Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB).
3. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed in the Beijing Platform for Action as a strategy for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, which required concerted efforts at all levels, and across all sectors. Participants reaffirmed that efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, through gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions, required both financial resources and strengthened capacity to effectively implement policies, plans and programmes at all levels.
4. Participants recognized the need for political will at the highest level to ensure a commitment to gender equality, and to build capacity for gender mainstreaming across all sectors. Providing sufficient and sustainable resources to efforts to achieve gender equality was seen as a joint responsibility across government. Participants pointed to the need for legal and policy frameworks to establish institutional structures and capacity to promote gender mainstreaming across all sectors. Changes in organizational cultures through systematic awareness-raising, as well as the development of practical tools, such as gender-sensitive guidelines, checklists, and indicators, were also required to increase the capacity of stakeholders to implement gender mainstreaming strategies.

5. The central role of national machineries for the advancement of women in supporting the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy was recognized. For national machineries to effectively engage in the development and implementation of national economic plans and policies, they needed to be strategically located, and given sufficient authority, capacity and financial resources. Participants noted that many national machineries remain marginalized in national government structures and are hampered by a lack of resources and political support. This limits their ability to advocate for, support and monitor policies and programmes on gender equality; to ensure sufficient attention to resource needs for gender equality and empowerment of women in national budgets; and to collaborate effectively with other ministries, particularly ministries of finance, to promote gender mainstreaming in national economic policies and programmes and budgets.

6. Participants identified a number of mechanisms through which capacity could be developed to increase attention to gender perspectives in national economic policies and programmes and budgets. These included legislation to promote gender equality and women's human rights; gender-responsive budgeting initiatives; gender-sensitive lending practices;

development of mechanisms and tools to institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors, and at all levels; and building capacity to improve the budgetary process itself through the use of a standardized system of codes and indicators to enable monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the budgetary process. Participants also called attention to the need for participatory and transparent budgetary processes, including the involvement of civil society; and monitoring of results, including through external assessments.

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mainstreaming. Participants suggested that the gender equality policy marker could be applied to other development partners, including international financial institutions, regional development banks and the United Nations system, as a useful measurement tool.

16. On adopting the gender mainstreaming strategy, the Asian Development Bank developed mechanisms to make implementation of gender mainstreaming in lending more visible. Project gender action plans (GAPS) were developed as a tool for channelling resource allocations across a variety of sectors to address gender equality throughout its loan portfolio. Earmarks in project lending helped to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in sector-level implementation, and the involvement of women in the implementation of projects.

17. The role of partnerships at national, regional and international levels to strengthen technical assistance and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming across all sectors was stressed, including for national machineries, gender focal points, sector specialists, and women's organizations. In the Asian Development Bank, for example, capacity-building efforts are not only targeted to national machineries but also focus on institutionalizing and strengthening gender policies and this implementation in sector agencies. The goal is to facilitate closer partnerships in implementing sector plans and projects, and to raise the visibility of national machineries in sectoral programmes.

18. Participants recognized that women's organizations and networks play an important role in advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women; keeping critical issues in the national agenda; and promoting accountability for, and monitoring implementation of, commitments made on gender equality at national and global levels. The importance of building capacity of women's organizations to engage in participatory processes related to gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming, and to hold governments accountable on gender equality commitments, was noted.

19. Participants also emphasized the role of United Nations entities in providing technical assistance to governments to achieve policy commitments and implement the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. Participants also identified trust funds and thematic campaigns within the United Nations as strategies for mobilizing funding for specific gender equality issues. Participants further noted the need to systematically mainstream gender perspectives into United Nations financial management systems.