



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2012

Original: English

For action

United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

Annual session 2012

5-8 June 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

Summary

This report is submitted pursuant to Executive Board decision 2011/13, which, inter alia, requested UNICEF to report on the progress of its gender equality work, in line with the medium-term strategic plan, at the 2012 annual session of the Executive Board. This report may be read in conjunction with the annual report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2012/3) and the related data companion.

* E/ICEF/2012/9.



Introduction

1. An assessment of UNICEF efforts to integrate gender equality and gender mainstreaming shows that a number of key foundational systems have been laid during the past two years. These include significant strengthening of leadership commitment, accountability, and systems and data for monitoring progress. At the staff level, knowledge and understanding have increased and gender-focused programme activities are thriving in a number of regions and sectors as well as across sectors. At the same time, important limitations and challenges are evident: recalibrating and deepening measurement and monitoring; exploring avenues for ongoing resource investment and leveraging; and strengthening commitment at all levels of leadership. Staff need to not only appreciate gender equality and mainstreaming as ideal concepts but also acquire concrete skills and applications to implement these concepts across a wider range of programmatic activity. Building skills and capacity and harnessing resources to not only widen but deepen gender equality as a core content of UNICEF work remain significant challenges.

2. UNICEF has renewed its focus on equity; this has placed gender equality at the centre of the ongoing discourse on identifying key bottlenecks and barriers and creating an enabling environment to achieve results for all children, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable and marginalized. This equity focus provides a unique opportunity for addressing the remaining gaps while building upon the recent achievements in integrating gender equality into the work of UNICEF.

3. Section I of this report provides the background to the UNICEF Strategic Priority Action Plan (SPAP) on Gender Equality (2010-2012). Section II describes the organization's progress in implementing the SPAP; it outlines gains made and challenges faced in 2011 towards meeting the benchmarks included in the SPAP, based on baseline figures presented in the report on progress of gender equality work in UNICEF submitted to the Executive Board in 2011. Section III looks into key factors that have enabled or hindered the achievement of gender equality results and that should be taken into account as the organization moves forward. Section IV, outlines the way forward, as UNICEF completes the current SPAP and begins to develop a new action plan, taking into account some of the key opportunities and processes that can be leveraged in realizing this work.

I. Background

4. Since updating its Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women in May 2010, UNICEF has been implementing a three-year SPAP on gender equality based on the policy. The SPAP lays out eight areas of change to transform UNICEF into an organization of excellence committed to promoting gender equality: (a) accountability and strategic framework; (b) capacity and knowledge; (c) leadership, influence and advocacy; (d) programming; (e) 'doing what we advocate' (in UNICEF institutional practices); (f) partnerships; (g) financial resources; and (h) communications. It covers all aspects of UNICEF work, including in emergency and development contexts as well as advocacy and operations. Responsibility for the SPAP rests with all parts of the organization, and regional offices and headquarters divisions have been reporting on its implementation since it was launched. The Gender Equality Task Force (GETF), chaired by the Director of

Policy and Practice, monitors the implementation of the SPAP and reports to the Executive Office and the Global Management Team.

5. The SPAP identifies a number of benchmarks under the eight areas of change against which progress and performance are being monitored. This report presents data and information based on the various mechanisms and tools the organization has since put in place to monitor the organization's performance.

6. UNICEF has also participated in the piloting of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) to implement the Chief Executives Board (CEB) Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women, led by UN-Women. Existing monitoring mechanisms will enable the organization to effectively report against the performance standards identified. In February 2012, a special session was organized, in collaboration with UN-Women, for UNICEF staff to report on the piloting experience and on improving the reporting framework. The United Nations SWAP is expected to complement the UNICEF SPAP by reinforcing the focus on all aspects of gender equality across the organization.

7. As 2012 marks the last year of the SPAP, a review, overseen by the GETF, will be conducted on progress made and challenges faced over the period of the SPAP, with a view to developing a new action plan. As was the case with the current SPAP, the new plan will be developed through a consultative process, engaging all parts of the organization, to achieve and strengthen ownership and commitment.

II. Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Priority Action Plan

Focus of gender integration activities in 2011

8. During the initial year (2010) of implementing the SPAP, the primary effort was to build systems, data collection mechanisms and tools. Efforts in 2011 focused on ensuring their effective use. Key areas of emphasis included the following: assuring the quality of country programme documents; maintaining organizational investments in country-programme gender reviews; improving gender analysis; increasing the familiarity of staff with the gender policy; promoting application of the gender policy; ensuring effective application of the Gender Equality Marker; and strengthening the integration of gender in performance reviews. New tools and guidance were introduced to further enhance staff capacity. Information-sharing with regional and country offices, to insure greater responsiveness and accountability, were also key elements of the SPAP implementation in 2011. Regional offices were informed of progress against SPAP benchmarks to encourage greater attention to areas requiring further effort to accelerate progress.

9. UNICEF continued to build partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the area of gender equality, particularly with UN-Women. UNICEF worked closely with the UNDG Task Team on Gender to improve country-level performance on gender-equality results. In addition, UNICEF collaborates closely with Plan International, a leading organization working to promote the rights of girls, and is taking part in the Because I am a Girl initiative.

10. A review of data and information gathered against SPAP benchmarks indicates that 2011 has seen some notable achievements in promoting gender equality.

However, progress has plateaued in some areas, where further efforts will be required to reach some of the benchmarks by the end of 2012.

Measurement and benchmarks

11. In developing the SPAP, 19 benchmarks were identified to track progress. Setting a limited number of mostly quantitative measures was a practical approach for collecting data on key aspects of the plan across the organization without overly burdening resources, systems or staff capacity. To the extent possible, existing mechanisms, such as country office annual reports or global tracking systems, were used for data collection and analysis. At the same time, monitoring questions were added to the country office annual reports and new mechanisms, such as the survey on self-assessment of gender mainstreaming, were set up to gather relevant data. Many of the measures have been rolled out and are providing meaningful analysis on the progress of the SPAP. However, a number of challenges have emerged as the capability of these benchmarks to provide consistent and credible information at multiple points in time becomes increasingly evident.

12. To date, 13 of the 19 benchmarks have been operationalized across the organization. This means that data are not readily available to assess six benchmarks. These have tended to be measures that require tracking by existing mechanisms, mainly divisional, country or regional reporting. It has been difficult to overcome some of the definitional and logistical challenges for collecting data on these six measures. Of the 13 benchmarks on which data are available, the quality is mixed and several continue to be further refined. Trend data on a few markers present particular definitional and interpretive challenges, suggesting that, in order to make these benchmarks meaningful, a broader range of qualitative tools may have to be employed, in conjunction with more carefully defined quantitative measures. Such information is also necessary for illuminating the underlying reasons for the shifts that are occurring as well as the quality and depth of these shifts. Going forward, UNICEF will determine the best options for ensuring that benchmarks provide consistent, robust and more qualitative information without unduly expending time and resources.

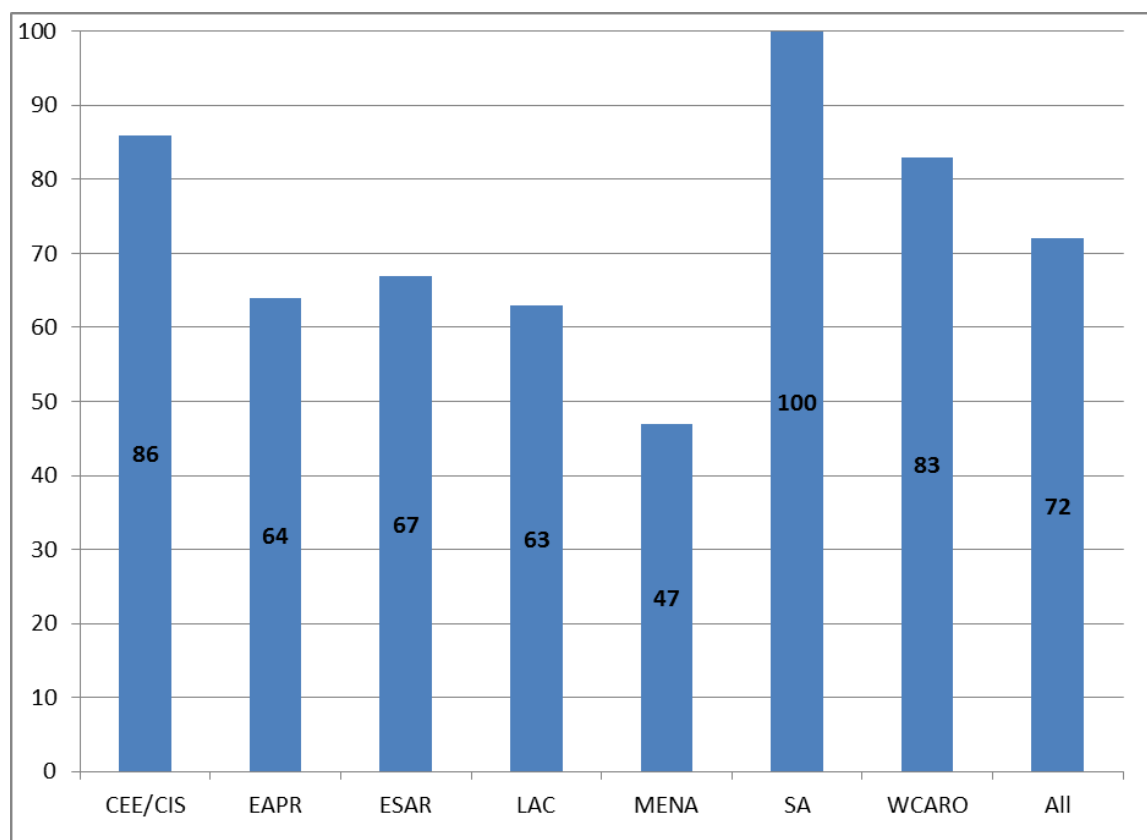
13. The findings on benchmarks, consolidating the eight areas of change, are organized under three overall categories: (a) institutional systems, norms and processes; (b) staff capacity and (c) gender integration in programmes.

A. Institutional systems, norms and processes

Gender reviews of country programmes: progress on track but regional variation and follow-through on action plans must be addressed

14. Following a programme instruction issued in 2006, an Executive Directive was issued in 2009 requesting UNICEF representatives to ensure that gender reviews of country programmes are carried out at least once in a programme cycle. Since then, the number of reviews carried out has risen significantly. As of 2011, 72 per cent of all country programmes have been reviewed from a gender perspective over the last four years, meeting the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) target of at least 70 per cent of all country programmes reviewed by 2013 and nearing the benchmark set in the SPAP of 75 per cent by 2012. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the percentage of country-programme gender reviews by region.

Figure 1
Percentage of country programmes for which a gender review was conducted in the past 4 years, by region



15. Annual report data indicate that South Asia has done particularly well in ensuring that gender reviews of country programmes were carried out, with all countries having completed reviews. Most country programmes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) and in the West and Central Africa region have also carried out gender reviews. Additional efforts are required in the other regions, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where slightly less than half of all country programmes have been reviewed from a gender perspective.

16. Country offices have followed up on gender-review findings and recommendations by developing action plans to improve their performance in mainstreaming gender across programmes. Some have also organized gender-training workshops to build capacity of staff and have sought external gender expertise to operationalize the action plans.

17. However, the development of actions plans and follow-up work on recommendations emerging from gender reviews are not being carried out systematically. In October 2011, a core package of guidance and tools to conduct gender reviews was produced to assist country offices in this process, incorporating the development of an action plan and monitoring framework within the gender-review process. The package is based on the International Labour Organization

(ILO) Gender Audit model and seeks to build organizational ownership for gender-equality initiatives in country offices through consultation and critical analysis and to sharpen organizational learning on gender equality through a process of team-building, information-sharing and reflection, within the framework of participatory self-assessment methodology. To better ensure follow-up on recommendations, the package also recommends strategic points in time to conduct the reviews, to link with country programme review processes, such as the mid-term review. Further guidance is being developed for country offices, to be used in conjunction with or in place of the core package in cases where offices opt to carry out an external, independent evaluation or are involved in conducting a joint gender review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or with the United Nations country team (UNCT).

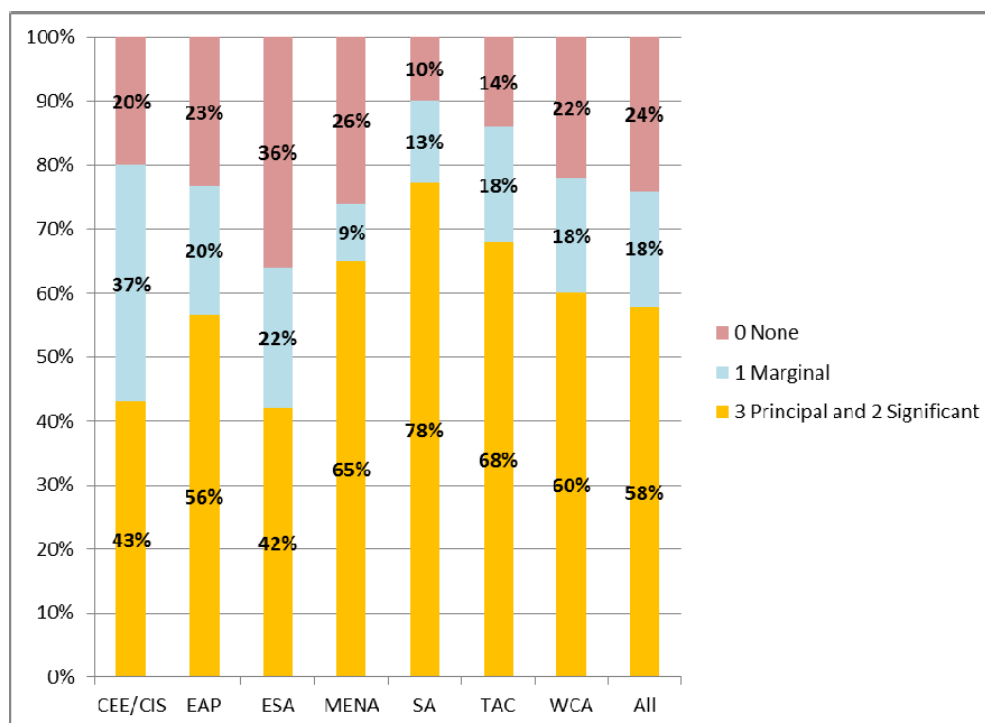
Management support for gender issues at the country level: difficult to determine from existing measures

18. Gender equality figured on the agendas of country management team (CMTs) most frequently in country offices in the South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific regions, where on average some three agenda items per year explicitly focused on gender equality or gender mainstreaming. In Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and West and Central Africa, an average of two agenda items focused on this area. In 2011, gender equality featured as the main topic of public statements made by UNICEF representatives most often in Latin America and the Caribbean, with close to 13 statements per country office during the year, followed by approximately 8 statements per country office in South Asia and 7 statements per country office in West and Central Africa. These are benchmarks that need further refinement since the nature of agenda items or statements is likely to be much more important than the number. In the new action plan, qualitative information will be sought, to add more depth and provide context to the quantitative data currently collected; this will help to better understand the nature of the representatives' statements and the gender issues discussed in CMT meetings, and to assess their potential impact.

Gender Equality Marker: target for resource allocations met but regional and sectoral variations remain a concern

19. The past year, 2011, marked the first full year of implementation of the UNICEF Gender Equality Marker (GEM) in regional and country offices. The GEM tracks financial allocations and expenditures that are made to advance gender equality or the empowerment of girls and women, based on the expected contribution of intermediate results to this goal. Application of the GEM requires rating programme budget-funded intermediate results against a four-category scale that ranges from '0' (not expected to contribute to gender equality in any significant way) to '3' (advancing gender equality as a principal objective of the result). During the course of the first year, a review was conducted to assess the accuracy of ratings. Based on this assessment, the GEM guidance note was revised and additional resources developed, to assist staff in applying the marker. In addition, the impact of the results identified as advancing gender equality as a principal objective are being analysed, to identify actions to enhance UNICEF capacity to consistently achieve gender-equality results.

Figure 2
Regional breakdown of programme budget expenditures, based on GEM ratings



20. According to data based on the GEM, the SPAP target of ensuring that at least half of programme budget-funded intermediate results make a ‘principal’ or ‘significant’ contribution (categories 2 and 3)¹ towards gender equality has been met (50 per cent). The introduction of the marker has contributed to greater awareness of the importance of ensuring that gender concerns are addressed by intermediate results, based on the findings of situation analyses of children and women. It is important to note, however, that only 11 per cent of programme budget-funded intermediate results were classified as making a principal contribution towards gender equality and that 30 per cent of the intermediate results make no contribution to gender equality at all. Moreover, progress across regions has been uneven, with some regions having surpassed the target set (South Asia, with 67 per cent of intermediate results contributing to gender equality, and West and Central Africa, with 66 per cent) while others, such as CEE/CIS (39 per cent) and Eastern and Southern Africa (41 per cent), require further efforts to meet it.

21. In terms of expenditures to advance gender equality or the empowerment of girls and women, 58 per cent of programme budget expenditures in 2011 were assessed as contributing principally or significantly to gender-equality results. The SPAP target for 2012 is 75 per cent of programme budget expenditure. There are some regional variations in this indicator as well, with one region going beyond the target (South Asia 78 per cent), some regions nearing it (Americas and the Caribbean 68 per cent and MENA 65 per cent), and others well below it (CEE/CIS

¹ These are results assessed as having ‘advancing gender equality or the empowerment of girls and women’ as a principal objective or that make a significant contribution towards this goal.

44 per cent and Eastern and Southern Africa 42 per cent). For some regions, the pattern of expenditures is consistent with progress on gender reviews, while for other regions, this is not the case. This is an area for further exploration through qualitative data.

22. The MTSP key result areas (KRAs) with consistently high proportions of expenditures (over 60 per cent) for intermediate results that were identified as contributing principally or significantly to gender equality tended to be concentrated in three focus areas: education, HIV and AIDS, and child protection. Consistently missing in the principal or significant categories were KRAs in the areas of child nutrition and health, two of the largest technical areas of UNICEF work. It is encouraging, however, that expenditures on cross-cutting issues and policy-oriented activities show relatively high rates (50 per cent or more) of expenditures on activities with significant or principal focus on gender equality. Some KRAs for activities in humanitarian response and water and sanitation are also showing 50 per cent or higher expenditures on gender equality. At the same time, a principal focus on gender equality in expenditure tends to be a rare event in most KRAs, with only five KRAs crossing the 20 per cent threshold, and only one crossing the 40 per cent threshold.

23. UNICEF continues to support implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker to track funding allocations to gender-responsive humanitarian action at global and country levels. In collaboration with IASC and the Gender Capacity Stand-by Project, UNICEF organized a series of five training workshops on the marker for staff from headquarters and regional offices; training is ongoing at the country-office level.

Key assignments and performance appraisals: gender not yet institutionalized as a key component

24. One third of all respondents to the UNICEF annual survey on self-assessment of gender mainstreaming indicated that their key assignments included specific mention of gender mainstreaming. This represents an improvement from 2010, when the figure was 24 per cent, but is still far from the target of 80 per cent of staff reporting explicit attention to gender mainstreaming by 2012. Furthermore, only 6 per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that they had discussed gender equality at length with their supervisors, the same percentage as in 2010. When this question was posed to supervisors, only 12 per cent indicated that they had discussed gender equality at length with their supervisees during performance reviews, reflecting no change since 2009. UNICEF will assess whether the poor performance on this benchmark is because of how the concept is defined and measured in the survey, requiring another means, beyond self-reporting, to more accurately evaluate progress in this area, or whether specific steps need to be taken to build capacity among staff who have supervisory responsibilities to identify and develop gender assignments for their supervisees and to assess their performance.

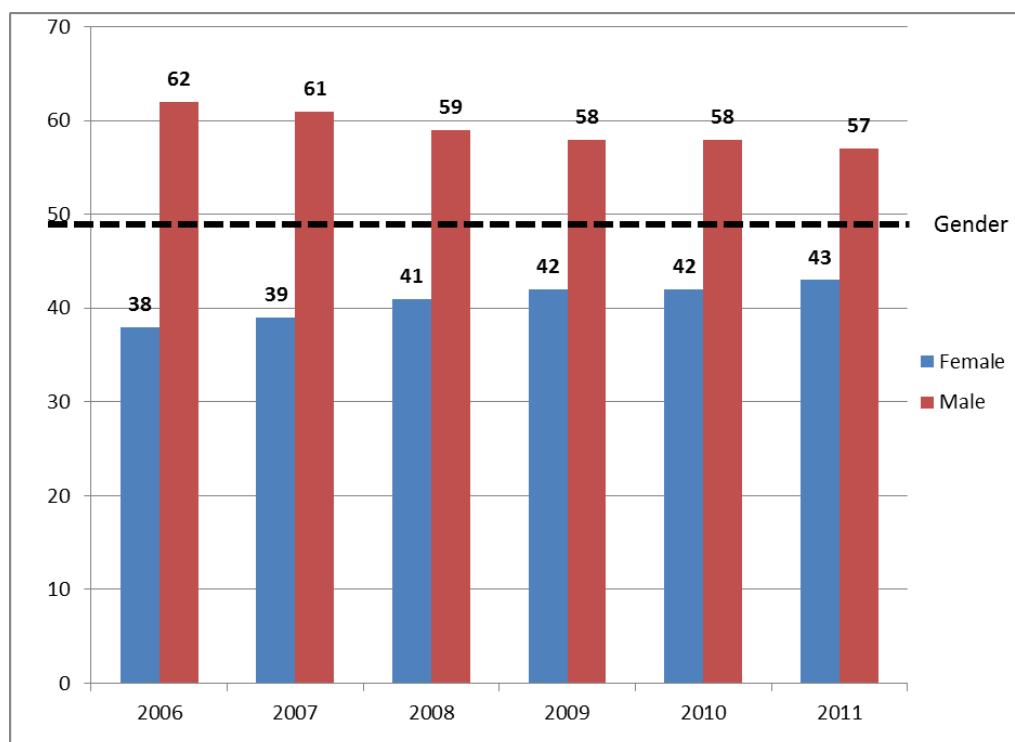
Gender parity in staffing: positive trends overall, but greater efforts required at the D1 and D2 levels

25. UNICEF has set a specific senior management staffing target of '50 per cent of female staff at P5 levels and above globally' by 2013. Gender parity is monitored by the Senior Staff Review in considering senior staff appointments. While women

continue to be underrepresented in senior-level posts (P5 and above), progress has been made in moving towards gender parity, and current trends indicate that the 50-per-cent target could be met by 2013. In 2006, only 38 per cent of senior-level positions were occupied by women; this has now increased to 43 per cent. However, progress at the D1 and D2 levels is less encouraging: the proportion of women at the D1 level has remained largely unchanged, at 41 per cent, for the past five years, and progress on gender parity at the D2 level has been uneven, with the proportion of women rising from 41 per cent in 2008 to 45 per cent in 2009 and 2010, but dropping to 38 per cent in 2011.

Figure 3

Percentage of male and female staff in senior-level posts (P5 and above)



Response to sexual exploitation and abuse by staff: mixed progress and variation by region

26. In line with the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and the associated IASC implementation guidelines for the field, UNICEF has set a benchmark in the SPAP for all country offices to have, by 2012, mechanisms in place to address cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by UNICEF staff and implementing partners. The greatest progress has been made in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, where 18 out of 21 offices now have mechanisms in place, compared with 14 offices the previous year. In the other regions, there has not been much change since the previous year, with approximately half of the offices in the MENA region and 60-70 per cent of offices in the remaining regions having

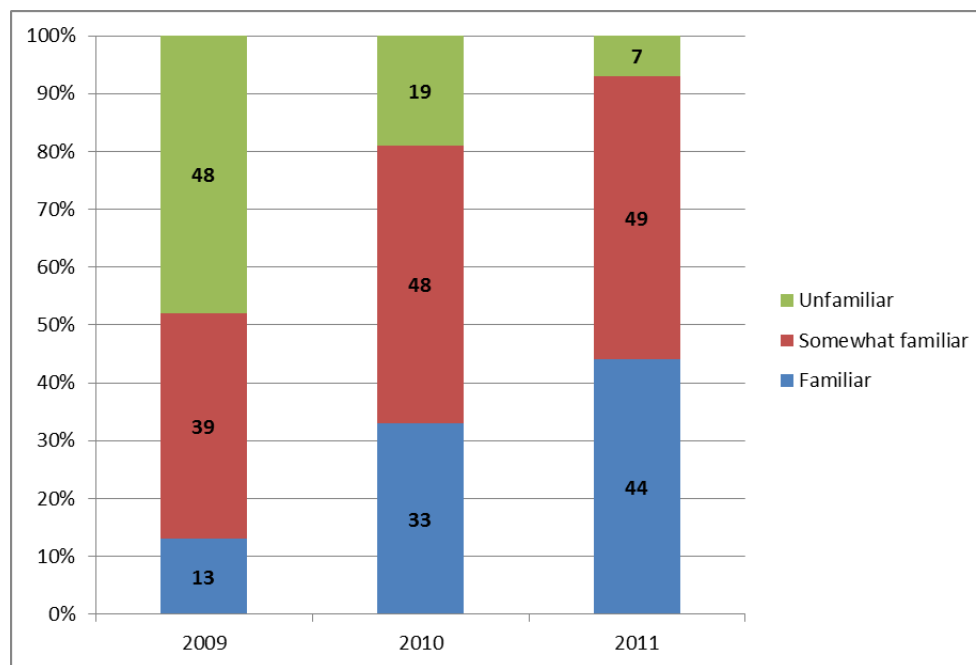
mechanisms in place.² Further efforts are required to ensure that the remaining offices comply with the Secretary-General's Bulletin and other existing guidelines.

B. Staff capacity and skills

Staff knowledge and capacity: significant increase in awareness, but skills and capacity levels lag behind

27. Staff continue to gain familiarity with the Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls and Women. In 2009, when the UNICEF self-assessment survey on staff perceptions of their knowledge, competencies and skills in mainstreaming gender was first carried out, only 13 per cent of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the then-current gender policy and 39 per cent reported that they were somewhat familiar with it. In 2010, after the issuance and dissemination of the updated gender policy, 33 per cent of respondents said they were familiar with the policy, and 48 per cent that they were somewhat familiar. In 2011, these figures rose to 44 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively, with only 7 per cent of staff noting they are unfamiliar with the policy. These figures have risen even more significantly for senior-level staff, with 60 per cent reporting being familiar with the policy, up from 27 per cent in 2009. Only 1 per cent of these staff members indicated that they were unfamiliar with the policy.

Figure 4
Familiarity of staff with UNICEF Gender Policy



² UNICEF reported in the 2011 Executive Board report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2011/10) that close to 90 per cent of country offices in the South Asia region had mechanisms in place. This year, the reported percentage is 71 per cent. This is due to the fact that the Afghanistan Country Office, which reported that mechanisms were in place in 2010, indicated in 2011 that they were partially in place.

28. In addition, most staff members indicated that they understood the implications of the policy for their work. In 2010, 62 per cent of staff reported understanding the implications of the gender policy for their work; this increased to 82 per cent in 2011, meeting the benchmark of 80 per cent set in the SPAP.

29. While staff seem to be well aware of the gender policy, close to half of the respondents of the survey indicated that they do not feel they have the necessary skills to mainstream gender in their work. This proportion has remained virtually unchanged since 2009, suggesting that new strategies and efforts would be required to improve skills and capacity. Structural shifts such as the placement of the Gender and Rights Unit in the Programme Division may be an important step toward bringing hands-on knowledge of the practical application of gender mainstreaming closer to a broader range of staff.

30. Additional systematic initiatives to enhance staff knowledge and capacity to promote gender equality results are already underway. UNICEF makes the IASC gender e-learning course available on its intranet site and includes copies of the course in emergency deployment packages. In March 2011, an introductory e-learning course, Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You, jointly developed by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, was launched. Available to all staff, it is a prerequisite to enrolling in UNICEF programme process training workshops; to date, approximately 300 staff members have taken the course. This represents about 5 per cent of national and international professional staff, well below the 50-per-cent target. The organization is assessing bottlenecks to greater participation in the e-learning course to determine the best strategies to address them: strengthening enforcement of requirements to take the course, offering incentives or linking the course with other programming and training initiatives. UNICEF will also consult other agencies in this process and take their experiences into account.

Community of practice on gender: active participation among staff still low

31. The joint UNDP-UNICEF Community of Practice (CoP) on Gender Equality was established in 2010 as an online platform to facilitate the exchange and acquisition of knowledge on gender equality and gender mainstreaming among UNICEF staff. In the self-assessment survey, about 20 per cent of respondents indicated that they had used the CoP as a source of information to support their work in gender equality in the past year. However, the proportion of the 363 members that actively contribute to the CoP is quite small — only 2 per cent, far below the 25 per cent target set in the SPAP. Strategies that involve increased motivation, incentives and rewards for members to contribute to the CoP will have to be considered as part of the new action plan.

32. The UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes continues to maintain and update a Community of Practice on Gender and Humanitarian Action. Membership continues to rise steadily, albeit slowly, and reached 214 members in 2011, compared with 190 in 2010, with staff participating from 58 country offices and 6 regional offices. Approximately 100 gender tools and examples from the field have been shared through this CoP.

C. Integration of gender in programmes

Gendered sectoral analysis: increasingly common across many areas of work, but far from becoming standard practice

33. UNICEF programmes are increasingly undertaking gender analysis across different sectors. In 2005 only one-fifth of all country programmes conducted a gender analysis in relation to family and community care practices while in 2011 close to half of country programmes did so. Similarly, in the water and sanitation sector, gender analysis has been undertaken in a relatively small proportion of country programmes (23 per cent); this represents considerable progress since 2005, however, when only 6 per cent of country programmes undertook a gender analysis. Still, greater efforts need to be made to ensure gender analysis is conducted more systematically in all sectors. Increasing staff skills and capacity are critical for making this possible; this may require identifying and outsourcing external gender expertise at the regional level to support country office teams in their efforts to strengthen sectoral capacity.

34. Great strides have been made in the education sector to address gender disparities. The gap in net primary enrolment in developing countries has narrowed to 3 percentage points between girls and boys. Close to 70 per cent of national education-sector plans are reported to include specific measures to reduce gender disparities. However, the percentage of countries having undertaken a gender audit of education-sector plans in the last five years has remained quite low, at approximately 20 per cent, with relatively little change since 2009. Child-protection issues have been analysed from a gender perspective in close to 40 per cent of country programmes but the availability of sex-disaggregated data on child-protection indicators for all age groups of children remains extremely low, with only 13 per cent of countries reporting having relevant disaggregated data.

Reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: new tools and guidance developed but support by country offices remains low

35. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, continues to facilitate the reporting of United Nations country teams (UNCTs) to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women during its pre-sessional working groups meetings. Guidelines for UNCTs were prepared jointly by the four agencies, with inputs from other agencies, to serve as a basis for UNCT reports. In 2011, 10 UNCTs provided reports to the pre-sessional working group of the Committee.

36. Supporting the reporting process to the Committee and following up on its recommendations provide key entry points to working with governments and civil society to highlight issues affecting girls and women and to promote and protect their rights. While UNICEF has taken part in preparing UNCT reports, and in some cases led this process, the percentage of offices having supported the most recent national reporting process to the Committee remains low, at 35 per cent, unchanged since 2009. The guidelines for the UNCT reports are being simplified to facilitate the preparation of reports, and measures are being taken to follow-up with country offices to encourage their involvement in this process.

37. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNFPA, has produced a facilitator's guide for programme staff of the two organizations, which illustrates how to apply the Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to programming.³ It shows how to promote the rights of women and children through modules focusing on selected thematic areas: the human rights of adolescent girls; child marriage; HIV and AIDS; and maternal mortality. It also provides guidance on working with the committees of the conventions to support national laws, policies and priorities relating to women's rights and children's rights.

38. To promote awareness about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women among the younger generation, UNICEF produced a booklet,⁴ which outlines the articles of the Convention and key concepts related to human rights in adolescent-friendly language. Targeting girls and boys between the ages of 13 years and 18 years, the booklet encourages them to learn about the Convention and its implications for promoting the rights of girls and women. The publication has been translated into French and Spanish and is being disseminated to young people through regional and country offices.

III. Enabling factors and remaining challenges

39. In implementing the SPAP, UNICEF has achieved a number of key results in promoting gender equality. This section looks at some of the main factors in achieving these results, factors UNICEF can continue to build upon, as well as remaining challenges in the organization's work in this area, which need to be addressed in developing a new action plan.

Collaboration with partners

40. A key factor in achieving results in gender equality for UNICEF has been forming strategic partnerships with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. UNICEF participates in a range of United Nations country-level gender theme groups (GTGs) — taking a leadership role in some countries, such as Mongolia, Sierra Leone and Turkey, where UNICEF chairs the GTGs — and has been involved in efforts to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in UNDAFs.

41. UNICEF has taken part in joint programmes and system-wide initiatives with other agencies in a number of areas, most notably with respect to addressing violence against women and girls/ gender-based violence and promoting safe cities. This has contributed to the adoption of laws, policies and strategies to protect victims of violence and to an increase in services for women and girls seeking assistance. For example, in Sri Lanka, where it is a partner in the United Nations Joint Programme on Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence, UNICEF implemented a training-of-trainers programme for police officers on using the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act to support victims. The country office also

³ The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Making the Connection between Women's and Children's Rights.

⁴ CEDAW in Brief for Adolescents.

contributed to a media campaign on prevention of violence against women to mark the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence; this resulted in an increase in the reporting of incidents of violence to police and in the number of women seeking support.

42. The Safe and Friendly Cities Initiative, launched in partnership with UN-Women and UN-Habitat, is in the early stages of implementation. The cities for the first phase of the five-year programme are Greater Beirut, Dushanbe, Metro Manila, Marrakesh, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, San Jose and Tegucigalpa. The community-led results-oriented programme will enable local authorities and advocates for women, youth and children to take actions to increase safety of residents, and to prevent and reduce violence, including sexual violence and harassment against women and girls. Potential interventions include development of youth- and gender-responsive budgets and safety audits, female-led police units, improved and increased lighting in at-risk areas, youth- and women-led mapping of safety situations and thorough baseline studies of safety issues in target cities.

43. The challenge going forward is to expand partnerships beyond traditional 'comfort zones' on gender issues, both in terms of sectoral activities as well as in terms of types of partners. This will mean, for example, seeking sectoral partners in areas beyond issues such as HIV and AIDS, violence and child protection. It will also mean reaching out to a wider range of civil society organizations and especially the private sector to form new partnerships.

Institutional strength in advocacy

44. The reputation of UNICEF in effectively highlighting the situation of children and women and advocating for their rights also serves as an asset in achieving gender-equality results. For example, through the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and advocacy efforts with governments and other partners to promote girls' education, the enrolment and school completion of girls have been supported in a number of countries around the world. This has made an impact in priority-setting and decision-making with respect to girls' education. Pursuing a diverse set of activities, UNGEI continues to be active in 33 countries around the world. In Sudan UNICEF has introduced UNGEI to the Federal Ministry of Education, which now leads efforts to ensure that gender equality is promoted, particularly in rural areas and within nomadic communities and camps for internally displaced persons. UNICEF advocacy and programme support contributed to increases, by 30 per cent, of the school completion rate among girls and in the transition from primary to secondary education of girls from marginalized groups. In Rwanda, UNGEI (locally referred to as the Girls' Education Policy and Strategic Plan) was engaged in the drafting of a school health policy, ensuring that all chapters and components were analysed from a gender perspective, providing inputs during the drafting process and participating in the validation exercise. Several components of the draft School Health Policy now address key issues for girls, in particular the component dealing with menstruation management, which has been identified as a new priority area to address barriers to girls' school attendance and learning.

45. UNICEF has taken part in the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and worked in partnership with UNFPA to advocate for the abandonment of female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), among other

efforts, to address violence against women and girls and harmful practices. In Kenya, joint advocacy by UNICEF with UNFPA and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development has led to the enactment of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Bill in September 2011. In addition to protecting girls from FGM/C, the Act will help to prevent the harmful health risks and consequences associated with the practice.

46. Utilizing UNICEF expertise with regard to advocacy to address gender issues in sectors other than education and child protection (where UNICEF is particularly strong with regard to promoting gender equality) is an area for further attention. In addition, good practice and successes in this area will be shared more widely throughout the organization so that offices can learn from the experiences of other countries and regions.

Analysis and use of data and information

47. UNICEF has focused on support to countries in the collection and analysis of data on key indicators related to child rights and the well-being of children, ensuring that these data are disaggregated by sex to identify and address gender disparities and inequality. The organization's focus on equity has also provided an added impetus for the analysis of intersecting forms of discrimination in order to better address gender inequality across different sectors. However, efforts must be made to ensure this kind of analysis is conducted in a more systematic manner.

48. While considerable strides have been made with respect to the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and information,⁵ challenges remain. In some cases, the lack of data disaggregated by sex and other factors or the unreliability of such data continue to pose challenges. In addition, collecting data on what are considered sensitive issues, such as use of contraception and childbirth, may be difficult in certain contexts. After data analysis has been conducted, it is not always utilized and translated into programmatic action. Measures will be taken not only to collect and analyse data, but also to ensure that their analysis is disseminated widely and in formats that are user-friendly. Furthermore, efforts will be made to ensure that more qualitative research is conducted to complement quantitative data and analysis informing programme planning and development.

Commitment and accountability

49. Key factors for success are the commitment and support of senior management within UNICEF and of government partners working toward gender equality. In the organization, this commitment is evident in the participation of senior staff in gender-focal-point teams in some offices as well as the inclusion of gender issues within CMT meeting agendas and the statements of heads of office, as noted earlier. A number of offices have adopted gender strategies and plans to guide their work in promoting gender equality and to ensure that gender is more systematically mainstreamed in UNICEF-assisted programmes and operations. In the Middle East and North Africa region, the introduction of a regional gender equality strategy and the inclusion of gender equality on the meeting agendas of the Regional Management Team and those of Deputy Representatives and Operations Officers, as

⁵ See, for example, *Boys and Girls in the Life Cycle: Sex-disaggregated data on a selection of well-being indicators, from early childhood to young adulthood*, Division of Policy and Practice, UNICEF, 2011.

well as regional training workshops and other team meetings, have led to greater commitment at the management level for gender mainstreaming. There has been an increased demand by country offices for support from the MENA Regional Office on gender issues, as well as improved gender analysis and increased inclusion of a gender perspective in key country programme documents.

50. However, commitment, accountability and allocation of resources for activities and mechanisms supporting gender equality remain elusive in several aspects of the organization's work, such as specific sector programmes, country and regional plans, and measurement and human resource systems. Efforts are being undertaken to strengthen mechanisms to hold staff accountable for promoting gender-equality results through the performance appraisal process by providing tools and specific examples to guide supervisors in assessing performance. However, assessment against this criterion is not necessarily carried out in a systematic manner for all staff. Greater visibility and reward for high-performing offices, programmes and individuals are another way for increasing organization-wide appreciation for and commitment to gender equality. This strategy will be facilitated with the integration of the Gender and Rights Unit into the Programme Division.

51. Similarly, even as resources are scarce overall, it is not clear that internal resource allocation to gender equality is commensurate with the organization's prioritization of it as a guiding principal of its work. The UNICEF focus on equity emphasizes gender as a key component, and provides an important basis to enhance overall commitment with regard to gender equality organization-wide, offering an entry point to integrating gender in resource and accountability mechanisms. This opportunity will be maximized to foster an organizational culture in support of gender equality.

Capacity to promote gender equality

52. Support has been provided at the country level to building capacity of government and other partners as well as internally to developing skills with respect to gender mainstreaming, through training workshops and the development of tools and guidance in many countries and regions. The availability of dedicated gender expertise, particularly in the regional offices — in MENA and in Latin America and the Caribbean, where there are regional gender advisers/officers, or in West and Central Africa, where an external institution was contracted — supports country-level work to promote gender equality.

53. In the context of humanitarian action, gender advisors were deployed to five offices (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Occupied Palestinian Territory and Yemen) to build capacity of cluster coordinators to mainstream gender within the clusters led by UNICEF. A facilitator's guide has been developed based on this initiative, to be disseminated more widely throughout the organization.

54. Despite these efforts, the lack of adequate capacity remains a key issue in many offices. Action will be taken to raise awareness among staff with regard to the availability of the e-learning course on gender equality and United Nations coherence — through the Gender Equality Task Force, webinars with gender focal points in regional offices and global broadcast messages to all staff — to encourage more staff members to take advantage of the course. Beyond this introductory course, more advanced, targeted training materials will be developed in the different

focus areas, to help staff members to better mainstream gender in programmes. Another avenue to explore is to strengthen organically established regional communities of practice on gender, as for example, in the West and Central Africa Regional Office.

55. Action learning, where training is part of ongoing programmatic implementation rather than a separate one-time event, is also an approach under consideration. The possibility of executing this approach is greatly enhanced by the new structure, with the Gender and Rights Unit integrated within the Programme Division.

IV. The way forward

56. Given the limited resources and capacity, UNICEF has made considerable strides in its work to promote gender equality. However, as outlined in this report, gaps remain and new challenges are emerging. The focus over the past two years has been on systems-building and on development and dissemination of technical guidance and tools. Over the next two years, UNICEF will focus on accelerating utilization and application of the developed mechanisms. Going forward, the following themes are the critical components that need to be considered in developing a new action plan:

(a) Systematic application and consistent execution of gender mainstreaming across sectoral, regional and divisional activities, as part of the overall UNICEF focus on equity in development;

(b) Attaining not only breadth, but also depth in achieving gender-equality results, with more attention on the quality of what is achieved institutionally and programmatically;

(c) Stretching beyond traditional ‘comfort zones’ for gender integration, especially in terms of programmatic areas and partnerships;

(d) Strategically reconciling the scope of gender mainstreaming goals with available and achievable resources and capacity, in some cases, considering catalytic, as opposed to comprehensive, interventions and initiatives;

(e) A strengthened focus beyond inputs to outputs and outcomes, along with more effective use of data and analysis for investing in cost-effective strategies to achieve gender equality and the equity agenda.

57. Furthermore, current benchmarks will be reviewed, with a view to revamp and strengthen them, to ensure the data gathered in relation to the benchmarks are meaningful and reliable. This would include adding qualitative dimensions to complement quantitative data. Steps will also be taken to better understand the reasons behind regional disparities with respect to particular benchmarks and targets, and to identify feasible means of addressing these gaps and facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices among country and regional offices.

58. As is the case of the current SPAP, the new plan will be anchored in the renewed organizational focus on equity, which provides the basis for deeper analysis of intersecting forms of discrimination to identify the most marginalized girls and boys and communities. Within the framework of the new Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES), the roll-out of Level-3 Monitoring (L3M) further provides

a major opportunity to assess the work of UNICEF and its partners, to ensure greater equity in development, including gender-responsive policies, programmes and budgets. Gender indicators will need to be more clearly articulated for each strategic result area within the four domains of the L3M framework: enabling environment, supply, demand and quality. This will allow for close to real-time information on programme implementation that adequately captures progress as well as barriers with regard to the achievement of the gender-equality results within the equity agenda. The use of quantitative and qualitative research methods to identify behavioural, social, cultural, political and other bottlenecks to achieving gender equality will be intensified.

59. Future actions and the new plan will also be guided, and accelerated, by joint initiatives in which UNICEF is participating, particularly the United Nations System-wide Action Plan. Benchmarks and targets in the new action plan will be closely aligned with the SWAP standards, capitalizing on the opportunity these will present to ensure a strong plan and greater engagement by all parts of the organization for monitoring and reporting progress in promoting gender-equality results through programmes and operations. In addition, as part of the peer-review process that will take place in the implementation of the SWAP, UNICEF will have the opportunity to learn from other organizations and their experiences and to share its own expertise and knowledge in areas such as the development of gender equality markers. The SWAP will enhance UNICEF collaboration with UN-Women, particularly with regard to technical expertise at the country level and to building capacity within the organization.

60. UNICEF will be looking to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the post-2015 development agenda to further reinforce the organization's work and its focus on gender-equality results, as part of the intensified efforts of the United Nations system as a whole. In the context of the QCPR, UN-Women has commissioned a comprehensive study for evidence on issues related to gender equality and empowerment of women, including a review of progress at the country level in gender mainstreaming of United Nations system operational activities. UNICEF will engage in this process and utilize the findings and recommendations to inform its work in this regard. The new development framework, as it is defined and developed, will provide important opportunities to focus on persistent disparities and inequalities, of which gender is a critical element, and on reaching the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, taking into account multiple levels of disparities.

61. In this process, UNICEF is strengthening its linkages with other agencies, bilateral and multilateral organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development and the World Bank, and NGOs, such as Save the Children, in order to learn from their experience in promoting gender equality. These present excellent opportunities for UNICEF to draw upon external knowledge in its efforts to continue to strengthen gender equality in its work.