



# Administrative Committee on Coordination

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## Report of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality on its third session (New York, 25 to 27 February 1998)

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality held its third session in New York from 25 to 27 February 1998. The agenda for the session, as adopted by the Committee, is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II. The session was chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, on behalf of the United Nations Secretariat.

## **II. Matters for consideration by the Administrative Committee on Coordination**

### **A. ACC mission statement, and mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system**

2. The Committee, mindful of its responsibility to formulate, for consideration and adoption by ACC, an advocacy or mission statement for the United Nations system on the advancement and empowerment of women and on gender mainstreaming, submits the attached statement (contained in annex III) to ACC for its adoption. The Committee emphasizes that this text has the strong support of all members of the Committee. The Committee urges the members of the ACC to submit the statement, once adopted, to the governing bodies of their respective agencies.

3. The Committee welcomes and expresses its strong support for the report of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan (12-24 November 1997). It expresses its appreciation to all those who participated in the mission, under the leadership of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The Committee considers that both the process and the results of that mission constitute a good practice in terms of inter-agency attention to gender issues and mainstreaming. It recommends that the ACC integrate fully the recommendations made by the mission into the strategic framework to be adopted by the ACC on Afghanistan. It also expresses its hope that the lessons learned from the mission will generally serve as a model for integrating gender issues into strategic frameworks in the area of development and of humanitarian work of the United Nations system in future.

4. The Committee welcomes the response from agency heads to the Secretary-General's letter on gender mainstreaming, and notes that the respective entities are making progress in implementing agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee urges all members of ACC to take further action consistent with the agreed conclusions, in particular:

(a) Adoption of gender mainstreaming policies and the formulation of specific mainstreaming strategies and action plans, developed in a participatory process with staff;

(b) The establishment of clear structures to implement the policy and strategy, which would include the accountability of all staff. Accountability indicators should include attaining the General Assembly target of 50 per cent women at the Professional level, especially at decision-making levels, by the year 2000; a specific percentage of core programme budgets allocated to women's advancement and gender equality issues; institutional mechanisms for capacity-building; and gender training for staff.

5. The Committee endorses WomenWatch, the United Nations Internet gateway on women's issues, as an inter-agency project. It recommends that ACC give its support to this project so that it may become a truly system-wide effort.

6. In the light of the Committee's work on indicators and budget codes, it is recommended that ACC invite each United Nations agency to examine and – if necessary – consider revising its classification system, budget codes and financial monitoring system to systematically and explicitly account for and track budget allocations and expenditures for gender mainstreaming and women-in-development programmes. That may also require an examination of responsibilities for coding, programme design criteria, programming guidelines and manuals. The underlying assumptions of budget codes need to be spelled out for all users of those codes. Staff responsible for financial management systems should work closely with programme staff to that end.

### **B. Provisional agenda, dates and venue of the fourth session of the Committee**

7. It was agreed that the Committee would hold its fourth session for four days at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 23 to 26 February 1999. The provisional agenda for the fourth session is contained in annex IV.

### III. Work of the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality

#### A. Action taken and decisions adopted by the Committee

8. The Committee decided to convene a combined workshop with representatives of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee Expert Group on Women in Development and other relevant bodies, including national machineries and the Commonwealth secretariat. The objectives of the meeting will be to review and clarify understandings of a rights-based approach to the advancement and empowerment of women and gender equality, taking account of both policy and operational implications of such an approach. The meeting will proceed from the indivisibility of human rights, linking civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development. The Committee requested the Division for the Advancement of Women to take the lead in organizing the meeting and mobilizing required resources, in collaboration with Committee members. The meeting will take due account of outcomes of intergovernmental processes, especially the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1998, and the Economic and Social Council's coordination segments of 1997 and 1998. The meeting should be convened in the second half of 1998, preferably before Human Rights Day, and its findings put forward as a contribution to the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

9. The Committee decided to conduct a review of the women-in-development/gender focal point function in the United Nations system, and to assess the recommendations emanating from the review with a view to taking action on them at its next session. The review will take account of agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the Secretary-General's letter on the same matter and responses thereto. In order to ensure that there is no duplication, the review will include a survey of related studies currently or recently undertaken. It will focus on the following issues:

(a) An inventory of gender focal points and identification of a typology of gender focal point functions (programmatic, substantive, human resource, policy etc.);

(b) An organizational profile of gender focal points, including their structural location, linkages with internal and external structures and entities;

(c) An assessment of the existence of policy statements to guide the work of the entity in the area of women and gender issues, including management dimensions, and the work of the focal point as a catalyst;

(d) Review of the scope of responsibilities of gender focal points, their job descriptions, skill profile, qualifications and appointment process;

(e) Identification of resources available to gender focal points, including for programming.

In preparing the review, consultations with senior management should be conducted at various duty stations. The Committee designated the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as task manager for the project.

10. The Committee noted that one of its responsibilities under its terms of reference is the identification of best practices. The Economic and Social Council, in agreed conclusions 1997/2, encouraged the Committee to develop a standardized format for documenting and assessing gender-mainstreaming experiences in all areas of work. The Committee recognized the need expressed by different actors for wider access to such best practices in implementing global conference agreements related to gender equality, and as a way of supporting country-level programming. Consequently, it adopted the attached guidelines for the compilation of "good practices" (see annex V). It agreed on a time-line for their compilation, and designated the United Nations Development Fund for women (UNIFEM), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the task manager for this project. The Committee urged all members to ensure that their respective entities contribute to this exercise so that a variety of good practices in various sectors could be compiled at an early stage.

11. The Committee decided to continue its work on indicators and budget codes. To that end, it will invest resources collectively to undertake, with the help of experts in financial accounting and management systems and with familiarity with the United Nation system and donor agencies, to examine current practice and new developments with regard to thematic and cross-thematic classification and budgeting, identifying methodological issues, gaps and constraints, and tracking issues within development institutions. Practical recommendations would be expected to guide United Nations system institutions to better classify, budget and track thematic and cross-thematic allocations of expenditures to gender mainstreaming. This work should take into account and build on the recommendations of the Turin Inter-agency workshop on field-level follow-up to global conferences on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and other initiatives to coordinate

country programming exercises. There should be an initial examination of some country experiences to “genderize” budgeting, which would inform the current initiative, and possibly as a second stage, there could be joint inter-agency pilot case studies, specifically to develop national gender budgeting models. The Committee requested its ad hoc working group on this topic, chaired by the Division for the Advancement of Women, to continue its work, define the terms of reference for the study and identify the experts required.

12. The Committee recommended that United Nations system entities individually and collectively through the Committee closely monitor progress, and if necessary provide inputs into ACC statistical work, the application of the UNDAF list of indicators for common country assessments, initiatives endorsed by the Statistical Commission and other such initiatives to ensure that gender equality issues are fully addressed.

13. The Committee welcomed the initiative of several United Nations entities, in cooperation with the Commonwealth of Learning, to compile a database/inventory of all gender training materials and instruments in use in the United Nations system. The Committee pledged its full support and cooperation with this initiative, including the provision of materials and information used. The intention of linking this inventory to WomenWatch, the United Nations Internet gateway on women’s issues, was welcomed. The Committee designated the United Nations Children’s Fund as the task manager for this project.

14. The Committee welcomed the greater use of data on women and men in mainstream statistical publications. It emphasized the continuing crucial role of specialized publications such as *The World’s Women*, for policy makers and other actors. The Committee requested its Chairperson to explore possibilities for the production of further editions of *The World’s Women*, in particular the 2000 review of the Beijing Platform for Action, and to keep the Committee informed of progress made.

15. The Committee requested its Chairperson to submit to the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) a proposal for the creation of a gender group in UNDG in order to ensure the systematic integration of a gender perspective into coordinated country programming exercises, especially UNDAF, and full attention to follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women at the field level.

16. The Committee noted that the perspective of resident coordinators was essential for stimulating dialogue and strengthening the knowledge base at field level with regard to implementation of gender-specific conference

recommendations. It decided that a small number of resident coordinators would be invited, together with agency field staff, to attend its next session and contribute their perspective, and to engage in a dialogue on implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming. In order to ensure sufficient time for that dialogue, one day of the Committee’s four-day session in 1999 will be set aside for it.

17. The Committee noted with appreciation the willingness of several ACC subsidiary bodies to strengthen cooperation with the Committee, as reflected in suggestions made by them. The Committee requested its Secretary to follow up those suggestions by providing the Committee’s comments and relevant information to those bodies.

18. The Committee agreed to seek issuance of an ACC statement as input into the high-level plenary review of the Platform for Action in the year 2000. Such a statement would in particular put forward for consideration by the intergovernmental machinery suggestions for future actions and initiatives from a system-wide perspective.

19. The Committee noted the usefulness of the guidelines and related indicators for implementing the principle-centred approach contained in part two of the report of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan, and requested the Chairperson to bring them to the attention of United Nations entities with a view to making them available to their field staff.

## **B. Summary of discussion**

20. The meeting was opened by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, who welcomed participants and made an opening statement. She welcomed in particular new members of the Committee, and expressed the Committee’s appreciation to former members who have taken up new assignments in the system for their commitment and contribution to the Committee’s work and to gender equality.

21. The Special Adviser expressed appreciation to the ad hoc working groups and other informal gatherings for the discussion papers prepared to facilitate consideration of several of the Committee’s items. She emphasized the Committee’s responsibility to ensure that attention to women and gender issues be reflected fully in the new United Nations management structure, including in the work of the executive committees and in the integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, especially at the country level through UNDAF. She also invited the Committee to identify emerging challenges with which individual entities or the Committees

as a whole would be faced with regard to gender issues and mainstreaming. She noted in particular the need to develop closer links between normative/analytical/policy aspects and the operational aspects of issues, which brought with it challenges in establishing better communication between the field level and Headquarters. She also invited the Committee to reflect on the high-level review, in the year 2000, of the Beijing Platform for Action, which would assess progress achieved but also agree on further actions and initiatives. The system would be called upon to contribute on both accounts.

### Emerging challenges

22. This item had been included in the Committee's agenda to allow for a discussion of emerging challenges, as seen from the perspective of individual entities and organizations, in the follow-up to and implementation of the Platform for Action. The discussion also focused on issues that might arise during preparations for the high-level review of the Beijing Platform for Action in the year 2000 and that would require the attention of the intergovernmental process.

23. Members discussed trends that affect the status and situation of women. It was noted that although many issues were not new, they needed to be reassessed and addressed in the light of changing political, economic and social realities. Members noted, for example, the changing composition of stakeholders, both positive (the private sector, organizations of civil society) and negative (criminal networks), in the global economy and the changing role of the State. This required a broadening of the dialogue but also a new emphasis on ethical questions, such as in decision-making and in development more broadly.

24. It was noted that there is an increasing effort to introduce a rights-based approach to programming and to operational activities, as opposed to a primarily welfare or needs-based approach. The challenges include paying attention to civil and political rights, and to economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. Although progress for women in the realization of civil and political rights is being made, more broad-based attention to women's economic and social rights is emerging. That seems to coincide with a growing risk of setbacks and regressive trends in the enjoyment of economic and social rights. Opportunities are needed for more and better links between normative/legal aspects, policy aspects and operational aspects, including a greater awareness of the human rights implications of economic development. The Inter-agency Committee considered it important to shed light on the gender implications of a rights-based approach for planning, programming and operations.

25. Members noted that the effect of globalization on the situation of women is becoming clearer as studies are being undertaken to demonstrate the impact of global trends and developments on women. They also noted continuing scepticism and doubts, however, about the credibility given to gender-specific data, information and analysis for inclusion in mainstream economic and social publications of the United Nations.

26. Although regional differences in impact and repercussions were noted, the effect of regional phenomena on global trends was also pointed out. The Asian financial crisis, for example, is causing a rise in female unemployment, unpaid labour, informal sector work and petty trading as women are being pushed out of the formal labour market. The social consequences of economic trends are visible in such growing phenomena as the "commodification of women" (trafficking, sexual exploitation), and despite years of efforts and campaigns, violence against women is on the increase. United Nations publications, such as the *1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, provide an opportunity to analyse some of those trends and develop policy recommendations.

27. Members noted that such trends as religious and cultural fundamentalism in some regions pose challenges to United Nations system activities for the advancement of women, women's human rights and participation in governance, and require awareness on the part of staff. On the other hand, members noted the strong follow-up in some regions and subregions to the Platform for Action, especially the preparation of national action plans, but they expressed concern that resources for women and gender are diminishing. Coordination by the United Nations system thus takes on a new importance.

28. Members identified various sectoral areas that so far have received scant attention with regard to their gender dimensions. For example, the scarcity and/or decrease in natural resources poses new challenges for effective gender policies. Water was given as an example. The feminization of agriculture, where women are no longer only subsistence farmers, but are moving into large-scale and commercial farming, poses new challenges for policy makers, extension workers and other actors. The United Nations system's role in addressing those new realities needs to be explored.

29. A growing interest at the national level in "genderizing" national budgets was noted. This coincided with the Committee's own work on that issue with regard to United Nations budgets. Those developments need to be supported effectively. HIV/AIDS and its health, social and economic implications for women was mentioned, in particular the

challenges posed by the pandemic for larger national and international policy-making.

30. It was also pointed out that issues that have long been on the agenda, such as women's role in and gender aspects of peace-building, conflict resolution and rehabilitation, require continuing attention and perhaps new approaches so that progress can be made. The consistent integration of lessons learned from specific cases into larger frameworks needs particular attention.

31. A second set of issues raised covered "internal" aspects, that is, questions of an institutional and managerial nature that need to be addressed by the entities of the system. It was noted that gender mainstreaming as a cross-sectoral thematic programming issue continues to pose major challenges. A continuing compartmentalization rather than mainstreaming of the gender perspective was noted, especially in practical terms.

32. Although UNDAF was identified as an opportunity for translating many of the lessons learned and the steps involved in gender mainstreaming into practical reality in development cooperation, members recognized the challenge of actually doing so. Agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council could be used to orient UNDAF in a manner that would allow for the institutionalization of gender issues. The existence of a gender subgroup in UNDG remains essential to provide the necessary catalytic impetus for consistent implementation.

33. Members stressed that accountability is essential to achieve sustained and sustainable progress in gender mainstreaming. Senior management accountability, as well as organizational accountability to governing bodies, are both needed, for which the availability and use of indicators is seen as an important tool. Their development should be pursued as a collaborative effort of the Committee, in particular in such areas as classifications and budget codes for financial monitoring.

34. The continuing need for capacity-building for gender mainstreaming, especially at the country level, was stressed. Although training is an important element, the role of information, communication and learning on gender issues needs to receive more attention. The "reskilling" of staff as a prerequisite for change was discussed, and the relevant sections of agreed conclusions 1997/2 were mentioned.

35. Trends towards decentralization, together with downsizing and outsourcing, require that the United Nations system pay more attention to gender competence and awareness of consultants and other partners. That is especially important to ensure that the programmatic and operational

gains achieved through gender training of United Nations staff are not eliminated by lack of gender awareness of short-term staff or consultants.

36. The Committee welcomed the news that some organizations that because of their highly technical nature had not previously paid attention to gender issues are now examining how and in what way they can contribute to gender mainstreaming.

#### **Mainstreaming a gender perspective: mission statement**

37. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Committee is mandated to prepare, for adoption by the ACC, an advocacy or mission statement for the United Nations system on the advancement and empowerment of women and on gender mainstreaming. Following a preliminary discussion at its second session, a draft for discussion at the third session was prepared by Geneva-based members of the Committee.

38. The Committee expressed its appreciation to all members who participated in the preparation of the draft. It emphasized that the purpose of the statement is to commit the United Nations system as a whole to a proactive agenda for women's advancement and empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the most effective use of the statement after its adoption by ACC, and its formal communication to all senior managers in the United Nations by the Secretary-General should be envisaged. Governing bodies of all entities should also be apprised of the statement to give it the full backing of Governments. United Nations information centres and information services should also be involved in making the statement widely known.

#### **Mainstreaming a gender perspective: implementation of, and follow-up to, agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council on gender mainstreaming**

39. The Committee strongly welcomed the letter of the Secretary-General of 13 October 1997, transmitting for action to all senior officials in the United Nations system agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council on gender mainstreaming, to which 26 entities (out of 56) had responded to date, giving an indication of the actions planned or undertaken to implement the agreed conclusions. Members noted that there was an ongoing need to take specific steps to ensure full implementation of the agreed conclusions. Reporting to intergovernmental bodies especially to the Council, was considered an important element of ensuring accountability.

40. The Committee reiterated the usefulness of the workshop on gender mainstreaming which had been convened in September 1997 at Geneva, bringing together members of the Committee and the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Women in Development for an exchange of experiences in gender mainstreaming. Note was taken of the proposal that similar meetings on gender mainstreaming be convened at the regional level.

41. In a follow-up to the recommendation emanating from the workshop, the Committee discussed the parameters for conducting a review of the role and terms of reference of gender focal points in all United Nations agencies and organizations with a view to elaborating a standard minimum framework for the designation of gender focal points. Note was taken that funding for such a review needed to be sought from extrabudgetary resources. Members agreed that a thorough assessment of ongoing comparable studies would precede such a review to ensure that it would complement and not duplicate work already under way elsewhere. Examples of ongoing activities included a Swedish assessment of gender mainstreaming in education, a project of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Division for the Advancement of Women on the integration of a gender perspective in human rights technical cooperation projects, and a Norwegian initiative to assess organizational approaches to gender mainstreaming in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and UNDP. The review could also contribute to the clarification of the distinction and linkages between women-specific/targeted activities and gender mainstreaming.

**Mainstreaming a gender perspective: quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming**

42. The Statistical Division briefed the Committee on the development of statistics and indicators at the national and international levels. The Statistics Division collaborated with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP)/Gender in Development Subgroup in a programme to assist countries in the compilation of gender statistics and their dissemination in a non-technical format. Under the project, the Division prepared the *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports in Women and Men* as an operational guide for national statistical offices and gender programmes. Drafts from the *Handbook* were tested in gender statistics training, and were used in the preparation of two *World's Women*-type publications, *La Mujer Mexicana: un balance estadístico al*

*final del siglo XX* and *Arab Women 1995: Trends and Statistics*. Those documents stimulated further interest in the development of gender statistics, and projects have been initiated to develop national reports and gender statistics programmes in Central America and the Arab countries. The Statistics Division has also been working to disseminate gender statistics in more timely and user-oriented formats, with the support of UNFPA. Country tables from *The World's Women 1995*, updated yearly, are now available on the United Nations Statistics Division Web site ([www.un.org/Depts/unsd/gender/intro.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/unsd/gender/intro.htm)), and an expanded and updated version of the women's indicators and statistics database is being prepared for release in early 1999. In addition, work is under way to develop an international classification of activities for time-use statistics, and – with UNDP – to improve statistics on paid and unpaid work.

43. The Committee noted that *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* remains an essential source for policy makers, academics and organizations of civil society in gender equality. Although it welcomed the growing emphasis of including data on women and men in mainstreaming statistical publications of the United Nations, the Committee expressed its deep concern that resource constraints seem to be the major reason that no *World's Women* will be produced for 2000. The Committee believed that that decision should be revisited, and that resources should be sought for that purpose from the system.

**Mainstreaming a gender perspective: guidelines for financial monitoring**

44. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work done by an ad hoc working group on budget codes for gender mainstreaming, and welcomed the note prepared for consideration by the Committee (IACWGE/III/8). It recognized the preliminary work done in putting together an assessment of steps undertaken in this area in various organizations. It was noted in particular that thematic budget codes are not yet being applied very successfully in most organizations. At the same time, a number of organizations are in the process of revamping their classification and financial monitoring systems. Thus, there is a window of opportunity for ensuring that gender is included in the development of descriptors. The importance of establishing a dialogue between budget and financial staff and gender programme staff thus needs to be pursued as a matter of urgency. The links between the work on budget codes and classification systems and on the development of indicators was recognized. The Committee reiterated its commitment to work on qualitative indicators since they are used in integrated conference follow-up and will provide useful

insights into the impact of gender mainstreaming. The Committee designated a task manager (Division for the Advancement of Women) for the continuation of the work, and gratefully acknowledged the offer of one of its members (UNDP) to contribute funds for that purpose.

#### **Mainstreaming a gender perspective: compilation of best practices**

45. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work done by an ad hoc working group on best practices (IACWGE/III/9). The initiative of developing such best practices is in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference, and was encouraged by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming. Development of best practices will also respond to the demands made at a meeting organized on ACC follow-up to United Nations conferences (the Turin workshop).

46. The Committee agreed on the term "good practice" rather than "best practice". It reiterated that such practices should cover both follow-up to and implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming. It was noted that the early availability of good practices is essential to support ongoing efforts in the system and to be a source of ideas for action at other levels.

47. It was emphasized that the compilation of such good practices will need to be pursued in a phased and ongoing way. Although initially both the target groups and the number of collected practices will be limited, they will be expanded over time.

48. The Committee refined the format, criteria and target groups for good practices prepared by the working group, and agreed on a timetable and task manager (UNIFEM) for the continuation of the work.

#### **Interaction with ACC machinery**

49. The Committee's focal point for liaison with the ACC task forces on conference follow-up, UNIFEM presented a report (IACWGE/III/10) to the Committee summarizing the results of a workshop held in December 1997. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how the products and processes of the ACC task forces could support a coherent, integrated message to the resident coordinator system on the operationalization of a coordinated follow-up process at country level. From the Committee's perspective, understanding of and attention to gender as a cross-cutting issue by resident coordinators at the country level was seen as a crucial matter. The knowledge base as well as the

institutionalization of a gender approach need to be supported and encouraged.

50. The results of the ACC task forces were linked to UNDG, the executive committee on development cooperation, with a primary emphasis on the resident coordinator system. Members noted their concern to ensure that UNDAF will be gender-sensitive and that follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women will be included in priorities and in common country databases. Note was taken of the UNDG plan to develop a matrix highlighting the cross-sectoral themes of all major conferences for use by the resident coordinators. Although no further information was available on the continuing existence of JCGP, including its Gender in Development Subgroup, and given the limited membership in UNDG, concern was expressed about the ability to carry out effectively a successful system-wide approach to gender. The Committee emphasized that the creation of a gender group in UNDG should be pursued, and entrusted its Chairperson to make a proposal to UNDG in that regard.

51. At its second session, the Committee had requested its Secretary to contact other ACC committees to seek ways to cooperate in areas of mutual concern and to explore ways in which the gender perspective could permeate the work of the ACC as a whole. The Secretary's report (IACWGE/III/11) reviewed the replies received from the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control, the ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections, the Information Systems Coordinating Committee, the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, and IACSD. The Committee thanked the Secretaries of the committees for their replies and their suggestions for strengthening cooperation.

52. The Committee took note of steps being taken by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions to follow up on the 1995 ACC policy statement to improve the status of women in the secretariats of the common system, including on work/family issues. It also noted with appreciation that the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1997/2, and the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/96, had requested that statistics on the number and percentage of women in all organizational units and at all levels throughout the United Nations system, not only the Secretariat, be provided to intergovernmental bodies.

#### **System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women 1996-2001, and Economic and Social Council operational activities segment 1998**



53. The Committee discussed the purpose, methodology of preparation, and typology of content of the mid-term review report (E/CN.6/1998/3). The Committee recognized that strict page limitations had prevented the Division for the Advancement of Women from any extensive reflection of the input received from the system. Efforts had been made to make the review report more analytical and to focus on assessment of progress rather than report on specific activities. Note was taken that due to the lack of uniformity of information on resource allocations connected with the implementation of the plan, it had not been included in the report. The Committee noted the timetable proposed by the Division for the Advancement of Women for the preparation of the new draft plan for 2002-2005, due in 2000, and agreed to discuss further the preparations of the plan at its next session. The comprehensive final review of the current plan, which will be conducted in 2000, will also be further discussed at the fourth session of the Committee.

54. The Committee noted the Council's decision on the topic of the high-level part of the operational activities segment of 1998, which will focus on "Advancement of women: implementation of the Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting in particular capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development". The opportunities for ensuring attention to gender issues in the triennial policy review were emphasized. Following initial discussions among several funds and programmes on the content of the report, members of the Committee will receive the outline for the report, which is being prepared. The deadline for the finalization of the report (20 April 1998) was noted.

#### **WomenWatch**

55. The Committee discussed opportunities for expanding WomenWatch into an inter-agency project, based on a briefing note prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women (IACWGE/III/16). The project comprises currently the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. The advantages of developing the site into an inter-agency project were reviewed. The project, which is funded exclusively from extrabudgetary resources, requires for its continuation a demonstrated interest from the system to secure additional donor contribution for its maintenance and expansion. Membership in the project, with a financial contribution of between US\$ 5,000 and US\$ 10,000 offers a seat on the WebSite Committee, which sets the policy for the site. The Committee commended the current participants for the design and maintenance of an excellent

site, and several members noted that links to their own sites had already been established. Many members expressed their strong interest in exploring active participation through a financial contribution. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced their contributions, while other bodies including UNFPA, FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are exploring possibilities of doing likewise. Committee members will maintain the information exchange with the Division for the Advancement of Women, including on such issues as linking data bases to the Web site, training opportunities and language versions of the site.

#### **Women and health**

56. The Committee took note of preparations under way for a joint Division for the Advancement of Women/WHO expert group meeting on women and health, to be convened in late September 1998 to prepare consideration of the critical area of concern by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1999 (IACWGE/III/13). The focus of the meeting will be to develop a framework for gender-sensitive health policies. Note was also taken of the theme of the *World Population Report 1998*, which will focus on health and mortality.

#### **Briefing by the Special Adviser on the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan**

57. The Special Adviser briefed the Committee on the background, purpose and results of the mission, which had taken place from 12 to 24 November 1997. She referred to the detailed operational guidelines and related indicators proposed in the report of the mission, which was made available to the members of the Committee.

#### **Upcoming reporting requirements of the United Nations system**

58. The Committee took note of reports for intergovernmental bodies that the Division for the Advancement of Women will be preparing over the next 12 to 18 months that require contributions by the United Nations system (IACWGE/III/14). It was pointed out that replies received to the Secretary-General's letter on gender mainstreaming will be reported to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998, and members whose entities had not yet been able to reply were encouraged to pursue such replies for reflection in the Secretary-General's report.

59. The Committee was briefed on a decision by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, according to which representatives of specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, should be invited to provide country-specific information to the Committee's pre-session working group on States parties whose reports are before the group. The Committee also decided that representatives of specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations should be invited to address the Committee as a whole in a closed meeting on States whose initial reports were before the Committee. In addition, written country-specific information may continue to be submitted to the Committee, in accordance with past practice. United Nations entities wishing to present information to the Committee in writing or orally at its nineteenth session (15 June to 10 July 1998), were invited to inform the Division no later than 15 May 1998. It was noted that guidelines concerning the format of such information may be developed but are not yet available.

60. The Committee was briefed on the status of preparations of the *1999 World Survey on the role of Women in Development*, and agreement was reached on lead agencies for the preparation of the chapters of the *Survey* (IACWGE/III/15).

61. The Committee was briefed on an interregional consultation on women's right to land and property under situations of conflict and reconstruction, which took place from 16 to 19 February 1998 at Kigali, jointly organized by UNIFEM, Habitat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNDP. Drafts of the plan of action and of the declaration of commitments adopted at the consultation were distributed to members.

62. The Committee was briefed on preparations for the celebration of International Women's Day 1998. In particular, UNESCO will issue the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in passport format. A panel discussion at United Nations Headquarters, organized by the Department of Public Information jointly with the Division for the Advancement of Women, will focus on women's human rights.

#### **ACC input to the high-level plenary review in the year 2000**

63. The Committee noted that in the past it has submitted joint inter-agency statements to the Commission on the Status of Women, including during the drafting process of the Beijing Platform for Action. These statements were useful to the intergovernmental process because they highlighted issues

and concerns arising from the perspective of the system as a whole. The Committee noted that in 1997, ACC submitted a statement for consideration at the special session of the General Assembly on the review and implementation of Agenda 21. It was noted that such a statement could have a forward-looking character, putting forward suggestions and ideas for action by the intergovernmental machinery. The Division for the Advancement of Women was designated task manager to prepare a discussion note for consideration by the Committee at its fourth session.

#### **Methodologies for gender impact analysis**

64. The World Bank agreed to serve as task manager for preparing a discussion note on this topic for consideration by the Committee at its fourth session.

## Annex I

### Agenda

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.
2. Emerging challenges.
3. Mainstreaming of a gender perspective:
  - (a) Mission statement;
  - (b) Implementation of and follow-up to agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council on gender mainstreaming;
  - (c) Quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Platform for Action and for mainstreaming;
  - (d) Guidelines for budget codes and gender mainstreaming;
  - (e) Compilation of best practices.
4. Interaction with ACC machinery:
  - (a) Task forces on conference follow-up: next steps;
  - (b) Cooperation with other ACC machinery.
5. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, with a special focus on operational activities.
6. Women and health.
7. Two-year work programme, issues for the 1999 session:
  - (a) Preparation of a draft statement for adoption by ACC in 1999 as input into the high-level review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, to be held in 2000;
  - (b) Gender impact analysis.
8. Other matters:
  - (a) Inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan: briefing by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women;
  - (b) Briefing by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat on upcoming reporting requirements of the United Nations system;
  - (c) *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 1999*;
  - (d) Proposal on the expansion of WomenWatch, the United Nations Internet gateway on women's issues;
  - (e) Any other business.
9. Adoption of the report, including dates and agenda for the fourth session.

## Annex II

### List of participants

**Chairperson:** Angela E. V. **King** (United Nations)

**Secretary:** Kristen **Timothy** (United Nations)

#### United Nations, its entities and programmes

Department of Political Affairs	Joan T. Seymour
Department of Peacekeeping Operations	Mary Eliza Kimball
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Amina Adam Juanita Bobbitt Dorota Gierycz Tsu-Wei Chang Natalia Zakharova Christine A. Brautigam Maria Hartl
Population Division	Keiko Osaki
Statistics Division	Joann Vanek
Department of Public Information	Marian Awwad Elizabeth Ruzicka-Dempsey
Focal point on the Status of Women in the Secretariat, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women	Zohreh Tabatabai
Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights	Elsa Stamatopoulou Maarit Kohonen
Economic Commission for Africa	Hannah Tiaga
Economic Commission for Europe	Patrice Robineau
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Thelma Kay
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Fatima Kassem
Regional Commissions New York office	Margaret McCaffery
United Nations Children's Fund	Sree Gururaja
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Gloria V. Koch
United Nations Development Programme	Rosina Wiltshire Benjamin Gurman Sarah Murison Rosemary Kalapurakal
United Nations Development Fund for Women	Noeleen Heyzer Joan Sandler

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United Nations Population Fund	Wariara Mgubua Ana Angarita
World Food Programme	Mona Hamman Mohamed El Kouhene
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	William Lee
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	Catalina Hinchey-Trujillo
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Rita Reddy
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	Yakin Erturk Borjana Bulajic
International Trade Centre UNCTAD/World Trade Organization	Sabine Meitzel
<b>Specialized agencies and related organizations</b>	
International Labour Organization	Jane Youyun Zhang
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Sissel Ekaas
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Breda Pavlic
World Health Organization	Asha Singh Williams Cecilia Rose-Oduyemi
World Bank	Monica S. Fong
International Maritime Organization	Pamela Tansey
World Intellectual Property Organization	Helen Lom
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Vera P. Weill-Hallé
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Ajumi Fujino
Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Madhu Bala Nath
Non-Governmental Organizations Liaison Service	Barbara Adams

## **Annex III**

### **Mission statement submitted to ACC for adoption**

#### **Gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system: a commitment to action**

1. The United Nations Charter affirms "... faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women ...".
2. We are firmly convinced that the overriding United Nations goals of peace, sustainable development and human rights cannot be achieved without the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination. The United Nations system is uniquely placed to bring about change, and provides a platform for the effective realization of gender equality.
3. Gender equality is a major strategic objective of the international community. Global United Nations conferences, in particular the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, have set out a comprehensive global agenda for achieving this goal.
4. We commit ourselves to giving strong support to national and regional efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and other global agreements.
5. The United Nations system has to date made considerable progress in advancing the status of women and their human rights. We are determined to accelerate those efforts, and pledge to mainstream a gender perspective in all our institutions, policies and programmes by implementing the specific recommendations on gender mainstreaming elaborated in agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council.
6. We shall be accountable to ensure that institutional culture is both gender-sensitive and gender-responsive, and that our staff policies, programme budgets and resource allocations reflect our commitment to gender equality goals.

## Annex IV

### **Provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality**

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.
2. Emerging challenges.
3. Mainstreaming a gender perspective and follow-up to inter-sessional activities:
  - (a) Compilation of good practices;
  - (b) Budget codes and financial monitoring systems;
  - (c) Women in development/gender focal point review;
  - (d) Quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Platform for Action and for mainstreaming;
  - (e) Methodologies for gender impact analysis;
  - (f) WomenWatch;
  - (g) Compilation of data base of gender training materials;
  - (h) Follow-up to mission statement;
  - (i) Follow-up to workshop on rights-based approach.
4. Preparation of a draft statement for adoption by ACC as input into the high-level review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, and of further actions and initiatives.
5. Follow-up to global conferences, and interaction with ACC machinery:
  - (a) Integrated conference follow-up, in particular at the country level;
  - (b) Cooperation with ACC machinery.
6. Dialogue with resident coordinators and agency field staff.
7. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women: review of the plan for 1996-2001 and preparations for the 2002-2005 plan.
8. Two-year work programme: issues for 2000 session, ACC statement to high-level review of the Platform for Action.
9. Other matters.
10. Adoption of the report, including dates and agenda for the fifth session.

## Annex V

### **Guidelines for good practices in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming**

The good practice initiative has the following objectives for the United Nations system:

- (a) Demonstrate that gender mainstreaming can be effectively undertaken;
- (b) Demonstrate specific, recommended ways of doing so;
- (c) Share information on an ongoing basis both within the system and with external audiences on ways that each agency recognizes as “good practice”.

Good practices are aimed at three distinct sets of audiences:

- (a) The United Nations resident representative/resident coordinator system;
- (b) United Nations management and staff;
- (c) External audiences: Governments, bilaterals, civil society (the general public).

Good practices can fall into the following broad categories:

- (a) The 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action;
- (b) Gender mainstreaming and United Nations system institutional processes, including training and capacity building; institutional and policy commitments; and resource allocation;
- (c) Communications, outreach, and networking.

The following criteria are required for selecting good practices. However, not all criteria need to be present in each selected good practice. The good practice should:

- (a) Lead to an actual change that contributes to gender equality or breaks new ground in non-traditional areas for women. There should be a link between the “good practice” and some visible or measurable change in gender relations, gender balance or women’s options and opportunities;
- (b) Have an impact on the policy environment, to create a more conducive or enabling environment for gender equality. This could include impact on legislation, the regulatory environment or resource allocation. It should include an assessment of the degree of institutionalization of the identified good practice;
- (c) Have the involvement of a United Nations entity. Since this is a United Nations system-wide initiative that emerges from recommendations about strengthening United Nations support to gender mainstreaming and Beijing follow-up, those practices with United Nations involvement will be the most likely to be replicated;
- (d) Demonstrate an innovative and replicable approach. In the context of the present set of good practices, this implies the capacity to demonstrate what is new or unique about the initiative – either its product or process – and to offer opportunities for the initiative to be replicated in other countries and contexts;
- (e) Be sustainable. In this context, the commitment of mainstream or institutional sponsors or participants in the initiative – whether Government, academia, media, the United Nations or non-governmental organizations – needs to be a component of the best practice.



Special interest exists in good practices that:

- (a) Emerge from a participatory process, involving a range of actors (civil society, private sector, Government etc.);
- (b) Have significant scale or reach;
- (c) Involve inter-agency collaboration;
- (d) Address discrimination and inequalities from the life cycle perspective;
- (e) Demonstrate Government commitment to further action and resources.

Good practices will be assembled in a two-page format that should:

- (a) Be simple and user friendly;
- (b) Describe the method used;
- (c) Indicate what good practice criteria have been met, and how;
- (d) Identify obstacles faced and how they have been overcome;
- (e) Include some note of what would be different if a gender mainstreaming perspective had not been adopted;
- (f) Provide some analytical component for replicability;
- (g) Provide cross-referencing of availability and other basic information.

As for the process and timetable for collecting/compiling good practices, such collection will proceed in a phased approach. The ultimate goal is to establish an integrated information management system able to identify and disseminate good practices on an ongoing basis. Information about this initiative will be included into the overall information management systems of each entity.

An immediate effort will be undertaken by the task manager to obtain a collection of existing good practices from United Nations entities. All entities will share other information already available on good practice in gender mainstreaming, including conceptual development of guidelines/criteria. The task manager, through the Chairperson of the Committee, will communicate with all entities seeking their full cooperation and contributions to this initiative. Entities will collect good practices and submit them to the task manager by late 1998. They will be compiled and classified, and made available as a draft to the Committee at its fourth session. The task manager may avail itself of the support of an ad hoc working group in this project.

**Annex VI****List of task managers for inter-sessional activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Task manager</b>
Workshop on rights-based approach	Division for the Advancement of Women
Review of women in development/Gender focal point function	UNFPA
Compilation of good practices	UNIFEM/UNDP
Budget codes	Division for the Advancement of Women
Compilation of database on gender training materials	UNICEF
Cooperation with ACC bodies	IACWGE Secretary
ACC statement for 2000 high-level review of Platform for Action	Division for the Advancement of Women
Methodologies for gender impact analysis	World Bank
Focal point in United Nations Development Group	UNIFEM

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