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Working Party on Gender Equality

**MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY GOALS ON
EDUCATION, HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

A SYNTHESIS OF THREE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

(Note by the Secretariat)

This document is submitted to the Working Party on Gender Equality for CONSIDERATION and APPROVAL at its 18th meeting on 8-9 February 1999.

It is a synthesis of three reference documents:

DCD/DAC/WID(99)1: Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Education;

DCD/DAC/WID(99)2: Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Health;

DCD/DAC/WID(99)3: Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and the Environment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGCD	Administration Générale de la Coopération pour le Développement, Belgium
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
Beijing+5	Planned conference (2000) to review progress in implementing the PfA
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
EFA	The World Declaration on Education for All
FLS	Forward Looking Strategies (from the Third UN World Conference on Women, Nairobi, 1985)
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HLM	High Level Meeting (OECD-DAC)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994)
ICPD+5	Planned conference (1999) to review progress in implementing ICPD commitments
LFA	Logical Framework Approach/Analysis
Logframe	Logical Framework Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
NZODA	New Zealand Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PfA	Platform for Action (from FWCW - Beijing, 1995)
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations' Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAid	United States Agency for International Development

**MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY GOALS ON
EDUCATION, HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT:
A SYNTHESIS OF THREE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

I. Introduction

1. Background

1. At the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) governments from around the world reaffirmed their commitment to equal rights and women's empowerment. The *Platform for Action* (PfA) sets out twelve critical areas of concern and an agenda to support gender equality. Several months earlier at the 1995 High Level Meeting (HLM), DAC Members endorsed gender equality as a vital goal for development and development co-operation efforts.¹

2. In *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*², DAC Members reflected on the lessons of development co-operation over the last fifty years. They pledged their commitment to partnerships to promote development and reaffirmed their support for internationally agreed economic, social and environmental goals.

3. Throughout 1997, the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality developed new guidelines that recognised international commitments and that would support Members' efforts to advance these goals. The *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation* were formally adopted in 1998. With this formal restatement of equality between women and men as a specific development goal, the Working Party wanted to explore how development co-operation agencies have worked with gender equality issues in the areas of education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the environment. A primary assumption is that efforts to promote gender equality are also vital steps in the achievement of the *21st Century Strategy* goals.

4. The Working Party was specifically interested in how a gender equality perspective is being mainstreamed within the overall partnership framework. Although the focus of the reports is development co-operation agencies/ministries – their policies, strategies, projects, expertise and working methodologies – there is a clear understanding that responsibility for overall development strategies and gender equality rests with partners (both governments and the people). Yet DAC Members also have responsibilities in this relationship. As the *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* point out “DAC Members will only be able to support partner efforts if their own policies and procedures reflect a genuine concern for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.”

¹ *Gender Equality: Moving Towards Sustainable, People-Centred Development*, May 1995, High Level Meeting.

² Adopted at the Thirty-fourth High Level Meeting of the DAC, 6-7 May 1996.

2. Methodology

5. This document synthesises and draws out highlights from three reference documents:

- ◆ Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Education [DCD/DAC/WID(99)1];
- ◆ Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Health [DCD/DAC/WID(99)2]; and
- ◆ Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and the Environment [DCD/DAC/WID (99)3].

6. These documents are based on inventories or reviews (carried out in 1997) of how DAC Members have worked to mainstream a gender perspective in these thematic or programming areas. The methodology was an experimental version of ‘rapid institutional appraisal’, relying on documentation and interviews primarily from headquarters staff. Participation in the exercise was voluntary and each study had a different range of participating agencies.

7. Each study team prepared a series of agency reports not intended for general circulation. Then, with input from team members, the team leader prepared a synthesis, overview report. Each synthesis report explores achievements, lessons, good practice, and constraints as well as missed opportunities and areas for future work. Although the papers cover a wide-range of issues, the process also had its limitations. In particular, the rapid appraisals did not allow for field validation and researchers were dependent on project reports, agency documentation and interviews with headquarters staff.

8. The inventories were commissioned by Sida and researched by three teams of international consultants.³ More details on the methodology can be found in the reference documents. This paper highlights major findings and identifies the policy-related recommendations – both generally and from each report.

3. Looking Forward

9. As governments and non-governmental organisations prepare for “Beijing+5” (scheduled for mid-2000), development co-operation agencies will be called upon to account for their actions. Have they lived up to the commitments their governments made in the adoption of the *Platform for Action* (PfA)? How have they supported partners’ efforts to implement the PfA commitments and worked to ensure a full consideration of gender equality issues in programmes and projects?

10. As well, the findings of these studies can support the efforts of DAC Members to examine how they have worked to implement the 1995 High Level Meeting statement “Gender Equality: Moving Towards Sustainable, People-centred Development” (1995), the *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation* (1998) and the *Shaping the 21st Century Strategy* (1996).

³ The Education team comprised Janne Lexow (team leader), Juliet Hunt, Karin Hyde, Nelly Stromquist and Nicola Swainson, with assistance from Vibecke Kubberud and Annelene Ror. The Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health team was composed of Rounaq Jahan (team leader), Nilufar Ahmad, Juliet Hunt, Barbara Klugman, Johanna Schalkwyk, and Margrethe Silberschmidt. The Environment study was carried out by Beth Woroniuk (team leader), Juliet Hunt and Tabeth Matiza Chiuta.

II. Overall Findings and Conclusions

11. This section summarises findings from the studies on how development co-operation agencies have worked to mainstream gender equality perspectives in three sectors or programming areas: education, sexual and reproductive rights and health, and the environment. Each study signals that there are important differences among development co-operation agencies: size, programming priorities, the degree of decision-making decentralisation, the extent to which partnership models have been implemented. Despite these differences, common findings across the three reports emerge.

Bilateral development co-operation agencies and the PfA

Although the PFA clearly specifies that governments are responsible for taking steps to achieve gender equality, specific actions are also set out for bilateral development co-operation agencies. To list just a few examples, governments have agreed that these agencies should:

- reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level (para. 81);
- give full attention to the promotion of mutually respectful and equitable gender relations and, in particular, to meeting the education and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality (para. 108);
- encourage social, economic, political and scientific institutions to address environmental degradation and the resulting impact on women (para.254).

1. Policy development in all three areas is strengthened through greater attention to gender equality issues

12. Although all agencies have policies and strategies on gender equality or women's empowerment, there is not always a clear policy commitment to gender equality throughout all other policy areas. While gender equality policies establish gender equality as a cross-cutting theme that is relevant in all policy areas, this is rarely taken up. Discussion of how and why gender equality is relevant to the achievement of other specific policy goals is generally lacking. For example, the links between environmental sustainability and equality between women and men are rarely spelled out in environment policies.

2. Investments are required to (a) improve the understanding of the linkages between general policy goals and gender equality and (b) improve agency expertise on these issues.

13. All three reports document confusion around the inter-linkages between the major policy objectives and gender equality objectives, as well as different views of what is involved in a mainstreaming strategy.

14. The Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health report points out that there is confusion around mainstreaming strategies and the implications of a focus on gender equality (especially how this differs from a focus on women). In many health programmes and projects, women are a large proportion of the target group. Thus, staff often assume that gender equality issues are addressed. Yet, the impact of the unequal relations between women and men on sexual and reproductive health and on the exercise of related rights is not considered.

15. The Education report highlights the confusion around the meaning of gender mainstreaming strategies. Some agency staff have interpreted women-specific strategies as incompatible with mainstreaming. Yet the Beijing commitment to mainstreaming clearly supports women-specific initiatives that emphasise women's empowerment and explicitly target gender inequalities.

16. The Environment report notes that not only do staff sometimes not see the complementarity between environmental and gender equality goals, but that these two issues often compete for resources and attention. A clearer understanding of when and how these goals can be mutually supporting is greatly needed.

3. *An understanding of obstacles hindering mainstreaming strategies provides the basis for operationalisation*

17. The good practices identified in the reports are still isolated examples. Even with clear policy mandates, there appears to be no consistent attention to gender equality issues in programme and project design and implementation. There are many reasons for this gap. Explanations discussed in the reports include:

- Given the lack of clarity at the policy level, there have been few clear measurable goals to work towards and to use to assess progress – both at the agency and programme levels. In the few cases where a specific goal has been defined, it tends to be a superficial indicator of changing gender relations. For example, indicators in the education sector tend to focus on issues of access (enrolment ratios, etc.) to the neglect of quality issues.
- Gender equality issues are complex and have a range of dimensions from the personal to the international. Change will only happen through long-term, multi-faceted strategies.
- Awareness of gender equality issues is not part of the routine planning processes of most development co-operation agencies. Specific tools are often marginal to the primary standard operating procedures.
- Staff and partners often lack the competence to work in these areas. With the calls for holistic frameworks and alternative approaches to development planning, staff are being asked to work in new ways in increasingly complex situations. For example, they are asked to combine participatory planning processes, a results focus, and attention to overall development priorities such as gender equality and poverty elimination, all at a time when internal resources are often shrinking.
- There is opposition to change and to moves toward greater gender equality – both within agencies and among partners.
- Innovation and risk-taking are often not rewarded within agencies.

4. *A focus on gender equality has important implications within a partnership perspective*

18. A continuing theme through the three reports is that although development co-operation agencies have diverse work styles and perspectives, they are increasingly working within a partnership model. As outlined in the *21st Century Strategy*, each developing country and its people are responsible for their own development.

Development co-operation organisations are to play a supportive role. The reports highlight the importance of working within and adapting to the national context. With this emphasis, the reports signal the following priorities:

Mainstreaming Commitment in the PfA

“... Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively,” (para. 202)

- *Capacity of agency staff to engage in policy dialogue on gender equality issues:* Given the growing importance of policy dialogue, the staff of development co-operation agencies are increasingly involved in policy and thematic discussions rather than project design. In order to ensure that gender equality issues are an integral part of these discussions, staff require specific skills and information. The reports note that policy dialogue could make better use of the international commitments to gender equality in documents such as *Agenda 21*, *Education for All* and the ICPD programme of action. These documents are examples of shared objectives that, to date, have been under-utilised.
- *National capacity to work with gender equality issues within other policy areas:* Just as agency staff require support and assistance to work effectively with mainstreaming strategies in specific programme initiatives, so do partners. The reports point out that government bodies and NGOs could benefit from capacity building. Support to increase competence to work with gender equality issues appears to be most effective when it is incorporated into general initiatives to increase overall capacity. In this fashion, attention to gender equality issues can be developed as part of ongoing routines and practices, rather than a marginalised and isolated ‘add-on’.
- *Broadening of policy dialogue to include gender equality advocates, non-governmental organisations and women’s organisations:* All too often policy dialogue is restricted to conversations between agencies and governments. This process could be enriched through the inclusion of non-governmental actors, specifically organisations and individuals working on gender equality issues. In order to maximise the effectiveness of this participation, these organisations may require additional support and resources.
- *Assistance to locally-owned strategies:* In many cases, partner governments are working toward the implementation of international commitments to gender equality. In some cases, staff of development co-operation agencies were unaware of these plans. The reports also highlight the need to mobilise additional resources to support these strategies and assist in reaching the *21st Century Strategy* goals.

5. *Forward-looking initiatives can be learned from and built on. From isolated good practices they can become the norm*

19. All three reports document concrete examples of how development co-operation agencies have mainstreamed a gender equality perspective – in strategy documents, in specific programmes and projects (including sector reform and regional programming), in policy dialogue, in developing tools, in research and in evaluations. These cases provide direction and inspiration for future efforts.

6. *Processes designed to monitor compliance with international commitments on gender equality provide strategic opportunities to advance the 21st Century goals.*

20. The UN Conferences of the 1990s provide a common international agenda for action on a range of development issues. They also provide a clear commitment to supporting equality between women and men throughout all development assistance initiatives. Development co-operation agencies could do more to use these commitments both in policy dialogue and as a basis for programme planning.

7. *Institutional changes to implement gender equality policies are demonstrating results*

21. Overall agency efforts to implement mainstreaming strategies to support work toward gender equality can have an impact in specific sectors. General efforts to ‘get the agency fundamentals right’ vis-à-vis gender equality are reflected in improved attention to these issues in programming. Institutional issues raised by the reports include:

- Leadership and accountability:
 - The clarity of policy direction vis-à-vis gender equality varies across sector areas (with clear support for gender issues in education being perhaps the best example).
 - Yet, even in that sector, demands for concrete progress and results appear to be superficial.
- Organisational procedures:
 - Gender indicators are not routinely incorporated into Logical Framework Analyses (LFAs) and other planning tools. Thus, it is difficult for staff to seek opportunities to reorient programmes to better address equality issues.
 - Agencies that use participatory methods report that this technique has helped to raise the level of awareness of gender equality issues. Care must be taken to ensure that these methods are sensitive to gender differences and inequalities.
 - Yet one report points out that despite commitments to consultative processes, the rules and procedures of governments and agencies can work against authentic consultation and meaningful involvement of beneficiaries.
 - The reference documents identified specific tools that can be useful in working with gender equality issues in specific sectors. Yet they note that the mere availability of tools is insufficient. There is often little evidence on how and when tools are used. Tools also need to be adapted to the way each agency works and conform to the principle of partnership. The reference documents also mention that staff often request more tools and specific guidance.
- Expertise issues:
 - The level of expertise to mainstream a gender equality perspective varies considerably. All three reference documents reported a lack of understanding of how gender equality issues were relevant in specific programming sectors. The reports also point to the skills required to develop and maintain contact and relations with a broad range of partners (including local gender equality advocates).
 - Specialist expertise (including local gender equality expertise and analysts that combine sector-specific expertise with the ability to work with a gender equality perspective) provides essential analytical and strategic support.
 - Training appears to have been useful in raising awareness, but less effective in helping staff improve their day-to-day work. New training frameworks and methodologies are needed to help staff learn how and why gender equality issues are relevant in their specific areas and how to work with partners to advance gender equality goals.

III. Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Education

Commitments to Gender Equality in the Education Sector	
DAC Commitments	International Commitments
<p>Shaping the 21st Century Goals</p> <p>“2. Social development: There should be substantial progress in primary education, gender equality...”</p> <p>a) There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015</p> <p>b) Progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.</p> <p>DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation</p> <p>“Members can support gender equality and women’s empowerment in the education sector through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisting governments to formulate and implement strategies to increase the participation of girls at primary and higher levels, and enabling governments to maintain investments in these areas in the context of economic reform and structural adjustment; - Supporting the development of curriculum and educational materials that promote positive attitudes about women, the human rights of women, and equal partnerships between women and men.” 	<p>Education for All (Jomtien, 1990)</p> <p>“The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated,” (article 3, para.3)</p> <p>Platform for Action - Critical Area of Concern</p> <p>B. Education and Training of Women - Strategic Objectives:</p> <p>B.1 Ensure equal access to education</p> <p>B.2 Eradicate illiteracy among women</p> <p>B.3 Improve women’s access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education</p> <p>B.4 Develop non-discriminatory education and training</p> <p>B.5 Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms</p>

1. What issues does a gender equality mainstreaming strategy raise in the education sector?

22. There are numerous international commitments to the goals of ensuring basic education for all and ensuring both the access to and the quality of education for girls and women. Gender equality and differences between women and men are important in numerous ways in the education sector:

- Access and participation of boys, girls, women and men in education programmes (and attention to the broader social and economic factors that influence access).
- Quality of education (including what is taught, the availability of materials, curriculum development, teaching training, the range of programmes offered, investments in the different levels of education).
- Elimination of gender stereotypes and the promotion of more equitable images (education programmes have the potential to make a positive contribution to gender equality).

2. *What policy recommendations emerge from the study?*

- *Clarify the goals and elements of a mainstreaming strategy:* Work is needed to improve understanding of how gender equality is an important element in the achievement of broader goals in the education sector. It is also important to ensure attention to issues of educational quality and increase understanding of how women-specific programming fits within a mainstreaming strategy.
- *Build on international agreements:* Support for the mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in development co-operation initiatives in the education sector is firmly grounded in international commitments, including the World Declaration *on Education for All* and the Beijing *Platform for Action*. Despite this international consensus, the *Education for All* follow-up in Amman in 1996 stated that closing the gender gap was one of the areas with the least progress.
- *Move towards a holistic approach:* There is a need to shift the education paradigm from looking at only one or two factors (such as participation rates), to examining the gender equality implications of the education system as a whole. Project interventions should be based on related clusters of issues, and not on single factors. A wide range of inter-related factors such as teaching practices, school environment, curriculum and text-books and why and how they are influential needs to be addressed simultaneously.
- *Move beyond questions of access:* Successful education projects and programmes go beyond access issues and gender gaps in participation. They address quality, content and women's empowerment at all levels. Currently, attention to school access and an emphasis on content and improvement of teaching practices are often perceived as mutually exclusive. While the specific strategies may be different, they can be complementary.
- *Take advantage of the opportunities offered by education sector programmes to build in attention to gender equality issues at this broad level:* Education programmes often entail multi-donor involvement in the restructuring of national education sector policies, expenditures and institutions. Donors may be invited by the national government to support various combinations of programme assistance, technical co-operation and project activities. Given the scope and influence of these initiatives, it is important to raise gender equality issues at the earliest stages.
- *Use participatory approaches:* Agencies that have used participatory methods in project implementation and evaluation claim that this technique has helped to raise the level of awareness of gender equality issues. Although this approach can be time-consuming, it is not necessarily an expensive process compared with other education inputs and it appears to support long-term sustainability.
- *Reach out to an expanded partnership base:* There is a need for involving local women professionals and organisations that promote gender equality. Resources should be made available for local gender equality advocates to engage in programme and project planning and implementation practices. Partnership, according to the policy of most agencies, includes more actors than the donor agencies and governments. Stakeholder participation may include students, teachers, communities, local governments and non-governmental organisations.
- *Mobilise sufficient resources to meet agreed goals:* The report questions whether or not it is possible to meet international targets with the current level of resources. It argues that in order to reduce the gender gap in primary and secondary education and to ensure basic numeracy and literacy for all people, bilateral donors need to mobilise considerable additional funding to the basic education sector.

3. What project strategies have agencies used to support the achievement of the Education for All and Platform for Action goals?

23. The report discusses 14 different project-level strategies supported by agencies. Specific project examples are also outlined. Examples of these strategies include:

- *Making schools more accessible* through, for example, reducing the distance girls have to travel, building community schools and the construction of separate facilities and closed latrines.
- *Improving teacher quality* through in-service training and the incorporation of gender awareness into teacher training curriculum.
- *Lowering the cost of educating girls* for parents including scholarship programmes, provision of textbooks and uniforms, and offering pre-school or day-care facilities.
- *Increasing parental and community understanding* of the importance of girls' education through participatory approaches.

4. What programme strategies have agencies used?

24. The report discusses two programme level initiatives: sector-wide programmes in education/educational reform and gender balance in scholarship programmes.

a) *Sector programming* requires a new relationship between the government and the donors that implies more emphasis on policy dialogue and donor co-ordination than had been the case previously. Given their comprehensive nature, sector-programmes offer increased opportunities to mainstream gender equality objectives. Given the holistic approach, these programmes can influence national education capacity, curriculum revision, textbooks, teacher education, and processes for community involvement. Despite the fact that sector-programmes are still relatively new and there are few experiences of systematic gender equality mainstreaming strategies, factors that will support success appear to include:

- Ensuring that national policy is formulated with gender equality concerns clearly articulated.
- The context of the programme needs to be understood, based on a thorough social and gender analysis.
- The policy dialogue process should be supported by gender equality expertise. Both agency officers and personnel in the partner countries often require support – technical assistance, research results, data.
- Partnerships need to be expanded to include women's organisations and gender equality advocates representing civil society.
- Both agency and national policies need to have clear strategies on how gender inequalities could be addressed.
- Adequate national capacity, procedures and systems need to be in place to promote gender sensitive planning and implementation.

b) Based on the experience of two agencies, the report outlines strategies that have achieved a significant increase in the proportion of female awardees in *scholarship programmes*. The goal of gender balance was a focus for dialogue with partner countries. Strategies that proved successful included:

- setting clear targets for achieving gender equality, and negotiating with partners on how to achieve these targets in a reasonable time frame within the context of a commitment to partnership;
- providing scholarships for different training options, such as short-term and in-country training opportunities;
- reviewing and being flexible about the level of study required, the subject area of study, the level of language proficiency required, the time made available within awards to develop language proficiency, and the upper age limit for candidates – all of these factors can influence whether men and women can take advantage of scholarship opportunities.

5. *Highlights of the full report, available as DCD/DAC WID(99)1, include:*

- the discussion on incorporation of gender equality issues in sector-programmes;
- details on specific project strategies that have been useful in addressing the participation of girls and women in education; and
- an annex that provides concrete examples of specific initiatives considered to be good examples of mainstreaming a gender perspective in education programming.

IV. Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and Health

Commitments to Gender Equality and Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health	
DAC Commitments	International Commitments
<p>Shaping the 21st Century Goals</p> <p>“2. Social development: There should be substantial progress in ... basic health care and family planning...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rate of maternal mortality should be reduced by three-fourths by 2015. - Access should be available through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages, including safe and reliable family planning methods, as soon as possible and not later than 2015. <p>DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation</p> <p>“Members can assist partners to incorporate gender equality in the health sector through initiatives that support, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - health planning and services that recognise the needs of women and girls for health care throughout the life-cycle, and not only in relation to maternity and child care; - policies and programmes grounded in a recognition of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and men, and a recognition of the links between equality and the exercise of these rights; - strategies that target men as well as women for activities related to child health, fertility regulation and safe sexual practices, and that recognise men’s rights and responsibilities in these areas.” 	<p>International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) Summary of the Programme of Action</p> <p>“... advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, the elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women’s ability to control their own fertility are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes. In addition, States should take all appropriate measures to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, universal access to health-care services, including those related to reproductive health care, which includes family planning and sexual health. The principles reaffirm the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.”</p> <p>Platform for Action – Critical Area of Concern C: Women and Health - Strategic Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C.1 Increase women’s access throughout the life-cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services C.2 Strengthen preventative programmes that promote women’s health C.3 Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues. C.4 Promote research and disseminate information on women’s health C.5 Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women’s health.

1. *What issues does a gender equality mainstreaming strategy raise in initiatives aimed at sexual and reproductive rights and health?*

25. Drawing on the analysis and conclusions of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Platform for Action, the report uses an analytical framework to clarify gender equality issues in this area. The basic premise is that gender inequality (in other words, socially constructed inequality between women and men), is a major determinant of health status. Therefore, equality issues need to be addressed in order to improve the overall health of the population. The framework puts forward three propositions:

- Gender inequality in society, manifested through disparities in education, income, workloads and autonomy, influences the health of women and men.
- Gender inequality leads to women’s unequal access to health services and their unequal treatment by the health system.

- To promote gender equality in sexual and reproductive rights and health, actions need to be taken not only in the health sector to improve women's access to health care and reorient the health system; but also in other sectors e.g. education, employment, legal rights and political participation.

Framework for understanding gender equality in sexual and reproductive rights and health

Gender inequality in society influences the following:	through:	Therefore, what should be addressed by:
<p>Gender inequality in society influences the Health of women and men through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences by gender in autonomy (higher vulnerability of women to violence, STDs, unwanted pregnancy, mortality from unsafe abortions). - Higher risk of poverty among women linked to discriminatory legislation on economic rights, discriminatory practices in the economy, education (vulnerability to poor nutrition, maternal mortality). - Cultural practices (e.g., biases against women and girls in food allocation, female genital mutilation). - Division of labour (different occupation health hazards for women and men) - Workload/length of working day of women (stress, mental health, fatigue) 	<p>Therefore, gender equality can be addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of women's rights to autonomy in relation to control over sexuality, fertility, rights to decision-making in marriage and sexual practices (human rights approach). - Linkages to related policies and sectors (e.g., agriculture/food security, nutrition, water and sanitation, media, education and to gender equality policies). - Overall priority assigned to poverty reduction and improved quality of life (particularly among women). - Changes in behaviour patterns of men (on fertility decisions, reproductive/sexuality practices, violence); sexuality and life skills for men to promote increased responsibility for sexual practices, domestic work and child rearing and a decrease in violence against women.
<p>Gender inequality in society influences the Access to health services through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of willingness of families (including women) to invest in health care for girls and women; lack of independent income for women. - Women's heavier workloads (less time) and women's opportunity costs in using health care services. - Social/cultural attitudes. 	<p>Therefore, gender equality can be addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lowering the cost for individuals at primary health service level. - Alternative strategies to avoid making women carry ever-increasing roles as care-givers. - Need to promote financial independence of women. - Promotion amongst women and men of positive attitudes to women's health; encouragement to women's self-confidence to challenge barriers; support to women's organisations, NGOs, and community-based organisations. - Services structured to promote access (longer opening hours/schedules, distance in relation to availability and cost of transport, integrated services, sex of staff).
<p>Gender inequality in society influences the Response structure of the health system through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority biases toward single-issue vertical services (family planning, STDs, safe motherhood) targeted to specific groups of women. - Biases in resource allocation favouring e.g., tertiary hospitals rather than primary health care. - Biases in staff attitudes about appropriate roles of women and men. - Service provision that does not take account of the gender-based needs of women and men. - Unwillingness to recognise the sexuality of young . - Lack of women participation in decision-making. - Negative working condition for health workers. 	<p>Therefore, gender equality can be addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate investment in the health system at primary health care level (management, supervision, training drug supply, facilities, infrastructure and transport for emergency case). - Reorientation of services/staff toward client focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) understanding the impact of gender on people (life-cycle approach beyond sexual and reproductive health for women and men, dignity, respect); ii) skills to provide integrated services (e.g., family planning, safe abortions, STDs, infertility, violence, maternal care, tuberculosis (TB) immunisation, diarrhoea, etc.); iii) appropriate working conditions for staff, including non-discrimination by sex. - Organisation of services (privacy, queuing and booking systems; the need for multidisciplinary health workers). - Services that address people through the life-cycle and recognise diversity among both women and men (i.e., broader range of services). - Capacity-building of women in the health sector for management (e.g. training, personnel policies etc.). - Targeting of both women and men for sexual and reproductive health services (to look after their own health, and health of partners, have confidence in use of health system); also link with the education system (knowledge and confidence). - Mechanisms for user inputs (both women and men), e.g. stakeholder consultations, partnership with civil society etc.

2. *What policy level recommendations emerge from the study?*

- *Develop a common understanding of key concepts:* There is no clear consensus on the meaning of terms such as gender equality, gender relations, men's involvement, human-rights based approach and mainstreaming. In many health-related programmes, women are a large proportion of the clientele and it is often assumed that through this fact, gender issues are being addressed. It is not clear to many staff of development agencies and their partners what additional dimensions emerge from a gender equality perspective. Gender issues are addressed more often in women-focussed programmes and projects with a focus on service provision. How to mainstream and not compartmentalise gender equality issues in major programmes still remains a challenge.
- *Ground policies and programmes in ICPD and PfA commitments:* Both the ICPD and PfA commitments provide a strong base on which to build good practices. The report outlines seven principles that, if implemented, would strengthen both the impact of health programmes on gender equality and the overall effectiveness of programming in this sector.
 - *Analyse and understand the impact of inequality between women and men on health.* Initiatives which start with an appropriate understanding of gender inequality (the different ways in which the socio-economic and cultural aspects of being male or female affect the health risks of individuals and their access to health services) are generally better able to promote and mainstream gender equality objectives.
 - *Take action to address gender inequality in access to health care and responses of the health system.* Good practice initiatives have recognised that women's access to health care is influenced by more than the absence or limitation of services. Other socio-cultural and economic factors can prevent access (e.g. women's heavier workload, absence of independent income). These initiatives demonstrate an understanding that the health system requires not just new facilities and staff, but reorganisation and reorientation.
 - *Shift from demographic to quality of life objectives and from targets to individual rights and health.* The paradigm change encouraged by ICPD is from demographic to quality of life objectives and from targets to a human rights approach. To date, however, agencies have primarily been able to demonstrate this more through policy and strategy documents rather than changes in operational programmes.
 - *Pay attention to men's as well as women's health needs over the life cycle and both men's and women's roles and responsibilities in relation to fertility and children and in securing women's rights and health.* It is important to broaden the focus on women beyond childbearing years and to explore why and how men can and should be involved. The report points out that despite the interest in men's roles, there are few examples of initiatives that do this successfully.
 - *Build self-esteem, confidence and capacity of both women users and health workers.* Work in this nature is a crucial element in both creating demand for and providing quality health services.
 - *Consult with all stakeholders including women and build partnerships with women's organisations.* Improved consultation leads to a better understanding of issues and thus a better identification of needs.
 - *Promote gender equality in strengthening national capacity.* A wide range of partners could benefit from capacity-building to work with gender equality issues.

- *Build on lessons learned to improve programme/project implementation.* The agencies participating in the study have made progress in developing policy and strategy documents, tools and methodologies, and even some innovative operational projects but, on the whole, there is a gap between policy and practice. To bridge this gap, the report recommends ten actions, including:
 - Use policy dialogue with partners to build consensus around the centrality of gender issues. Expanding partnership with civil society groups including women’s organisations can assist with this.
 - Work to empower women to participate in and monitor policies, programmes and projects. This can be facilitated by support to women’s advocacy groups and networks.
 - Support the development and implementation of programmes and projects in response to local needs and in consultation and partnership with local organisations including women’s organisations.
 - Promote cutting-edge work such as redefinition of concepts and tools and innovative projects. One area in need of further work is partnership with men to promote ICPD and PfA objectives.

3. *What additional actions can agencies take?*

- *Review the state of ICPD and PfA commitments.* Bilateral development co-operation agencies can support the preparations for ICPD +5 and Beijing+5 through actions such as:
 - Supporting initiatives, particularly by the national women’s advocacy groups to assess the implementation of ICPD, nationally and internationally.
 - Organising full-scale external reviews of bilateral development co-operation agencies’ own progress in implementing the ICPD commitments.
 - Using the review process to raise awareness and build competence about the gender equality issues at the local, national and international levels.
 - Promoting the dissemination of information about good practices and lessons learnt.
- *Follow-up on the DAC 21st Century Strategy.* Gender equality is critical to the achievement of the goals set out in the 21st Century document. This document points to good examples, but it also clearly demonstrates that DAC Members and their partners have a long way to go in mainstreaming a gender equality perspective. Follow-up work is needed to:
 - Create a mechanism for regular sharing of information about good practices and lessons learnt in promoting gender equality in health.
 - Develop a framework around gender equality and health for use in the DAC peer review process.

4. *Highlights of the full report, available as DCD/DAC/WID(99)2, include:*

- A framework for analysis.
- The good practices principles illustrated by examples.
- A discussion of efforts to implement ICPD commitments and analysis of donor follow-up to the conference.

V. Reaching the Goals in the S-21: Gender Equality and the Environment

Commitments to Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability	
DAC Commitments	International Commitments
<p>Shaping the 21st Century Goals</p> <p>“Environmental sustainability and regeneration: There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends ... are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.”</p> <p>DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation</p> <p>DAC Members can assist partners to incorporate these perspectives in initiatives related to environmental management and regeneration through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the development of participatory planning procedures that enable both women and men to voice their views and concerns, and increase opportunities for participation in decision-making at the national and community levels; - the formulation of policies and programmes that recognise women as well as men as managers, producers and consumers of environmental resources; - the development and use of environmental assessment methodologies that recognise the different roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints of women and men in managing natural resources in both households and communities.” 	<p>Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1993)</p> <p>Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration: “Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.”</p> <p>Platform for Action – Critical Area of Concern K: Women and the Environment – Strategic Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> K.1 Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels. K.2 Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development K.3 Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

1. *What issues does a gender equality mainstreaming strategy raise in initiatives aimed to promote environmental sustainability?*

26. The issues raised in this study were somewhat different from the other two. In addition to being a specific programming area, the environment is also a cross-cutting theme in development initiatives. In other words, in a parallel fashion to gender equality, although there are specific programmes to support environmental objectives, environmental impact is an issue to be considered in all policies and programmes.

27. International conferences have tended to focus on women’s roles and participation in resource management and on the differential impact of environmental degradation on women and men. This report draws on these issues and adds to the discussion. It urges the analysis of how gender inequalities and differences influence:

- the extent and nature of environmental degradation;
- the impact of environmental degradation (women and men can experience environmental crises in different ways);
- the responses of individual women and men to environmental protection/degradation; and
- the collective responses of organisations and institutions to environmental problems (for example, the actions of organisations, communities and governments).

28. Although this framework is only at an early stage of development, it can assist in the understanding of how gender equality and environmental sustainability are inter-linked and in the identification of possibilities for 'win-win' scenarios.

2. *What policy level recommendations emerge from the study?*

29. The study recommends five areas for future attention:

- *Get the agency fundamentals right:* The study reiterates the importance of general agency efforts to support a mainstreaming strategy and confirms their validity in work on the environment. Key among these elements are leadership, allocation of responsibility to all staff (rather than specific 'gender experts') and the dedication of resources. The report also validates findings from earlier studies of key factors that support the integration of a gender equality perspective in specific initiatives. These include the use of sex-disaggregated data, incorporation of gender equality expertise into project teams, the use of local expertise, and the identification of the constraints and obstacles to women's and men's participation and the development of concrete strategies to overcome these barriers.
- *Document the key linkages/rationales for the consideration of gender equality and environmental sustainability:* There is an ongoing need to explain the linkages between gender equality objectives and environmental sustainability. Concrete experiences that have created win-win situations should be documented. It is clear that different linkages/arguments will work with different audiences. The report indicates that concrete examples drawn from peoples' fields of specialisation are important (for example forestry examples to use with foresters and coastal zone examples to use with marine biologists). The report outlines four potential starting points to discuss linkages:
 - The perspective of women and women's empowerment (including emphasis on social justice analysis and women's contributions to environmental sustainability...);
 - Project effectiveness and efficiency (using gender analysis and attention to gender issues as a way of achieving environmental project objectives);
 - Promoting broad sustainable development objectives (building a holistic, sustainable, people-centred vision of development); and
 - Participation and stakeholder involvement.

Each of these starting points has its advantages and potential pitfalls.

- *Move the analysis and focus up from the community level:* Although an understanding of the community level is vital, it is important to expand the areas under consideration to include broader spheres of activity such as gender issues in institutions involved in decision-making around environmental issues and resource use, national structures and institutions and international bodies. This area is particularly important given the focus on national action plans in the *21st Century Strategy* and the absence of research and analysis of how gender inequalities are relevant at this level. Participation, participatory process and institutional analysis are important issues in this area.
- *Ensure that capacity development initiatives on the environment integrate the capacity to work with gender equality issues:* Capacity development frameworks for environment activities should incorporate the capacity to work with gender equality issues. The report builds on a framework to assess institutional capacity to work with gender equality issues and identifies how specific elements are relevant in environmental policy and planning. It emphasises that efforts to strengthen the ability of partner institutions to work with a gender analysis in environmental policy development and

programming will be most effective when they are part of overall efforts to build capacity. Specific initiatives to support the understanding of gender equality issues tend to be marginalised and do not fully emphasise how gender equality issues are relevant to the entire breadth of environmental issues.

- *Design and implement gender/environment mainstreaming strategies with an agenda-setting focus.* It is important to go beyond a focus on women's participation in current initiatives. Emphasis should be given to the creation of opportunities for women to participate equally with men in both the definition of environmental priorities and in developing solutions. A potential danger in the emphasis on women's participation is that efforts will focus on getting more women into decision-making positions rather than on raising broader questions of power, authority, how decisions are made and how organisations function. Environmental sustainability and gender equality will both be supported through this broader type of change.

A focus on participation can also mean that women are only treated as a source of cheap labour for project implementation. They are involved in processes they did not design and working towards goals they did not set. A focus on agenda-setting highlights the fact that merging gender equality and environment issues is not merely a technical issue that can be resolved at a mechanistic level. There is a strong political dimension that involves activism, mobilisation, resistance and challenges.

3. *What were the agency-level findings?*

30. The report summarises agency-level findings in a number of areas:

- *Policy.* In general, the formal integration of gender equality issues in environment policies is weak. The links between the two issues are often not clear.
- *Institutional/organisational level.* There tends to be a thematic and structural separation of gender equality and environmental issues, (e.g. staffing, methodology development). There are reporting requirements and agency tracking systems for both themes, but they rarely overlap.
- *Policy dialogue.* Despite agency statements that they incorporate gender equality issues into policy dialogue on the environment, it was often difficult to identify concrete examples. In specific examples where this did happen, mobilisation of concrete examples and evidence of how and why these two issues were inter-related was important.
- *Tools and methodologies.* There is a wide range of tools to support the consideration of environmental impacts, the integration of a gender perspective in environmental programming and generic tools to support gender mainstreaming across sectors. Yet little is known on whether and how these instruments are used. Staff said that it was a challenge to get tools into the hands of programme staff and have them use them on a regular basis.
- *Monitoring and evaluation.* Monitoring and evaluation are important at two levels: within specific projects and at the agency level as a whole. There was strong anecdotal evidence throughout the agency studies to indicate that gender considerations are not routinely part of project and programme evaluations. Despite this unevenness, the study did find dramatic evidence that a careful consideration of gender equality issues in the evaluation of environment projects can be a powerful push toward change and a vital entry point to promote the integration of a gender perspective at a future stage. At the agency level, it was difficult to measure progress as there were few measurable targets established to assess agency progress on these issues.

- *Building donor capacity.* A key challenge in training programmes is to avoid the compartmentalisation of environment and gender equality issues. They are often treated as separate issues with little exploration of how they fit together.

4. *Highlights of the full report, available as DCD/DAC/WID(99)3, include:*

- The discussion on bringing two cross-cutting themes together (environment and gender equality);
- The discussion on capacity building to improve both environmental sustainability and gender equality in an integrated fashion;
- The initial documenting of links between environment and gender equality; and
- An annex with a detailed list of annotated resources and tools used by development co-operation organisations.

VI. Recommended Actions for DAC Members

31. The analysis and conclusions of the inventories also point to an agenda for collective action for DAC development agencies/ministries – through the DAC, its subsidiary bodies or other international fora. In addition to the agency-specific actions, there are themes and issues that can be effectively explored and addressed by the larger community.

1. *Monitoring international commitments*

32. The 1990s have seen agreement on a series of commitments to gender equality across the range of development sectors and themes: the *Platform for Action* (Beijing), *Agenda 21* (Rio), *EFA* (Jomtien/Amman), and *ICPD* (Cairo). It is important for DAC Members to look for creative ways of monitoring implementation, measuring advances, and documenting lessons.

2. *Monitoring DAC commitments*

33. DAC Members have also made specific commitments through the DAC Statement "Gender Equality: Moving Towards Sustainable People-Centred Development" (1995), *Shaping the 21st Century Strategy: The Contribution of Development Co-operation* (1996) and the *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation* (1998). The impact of these documents could be greatly enhanced through a monitoring process that involved reporting from the highest levels in agency.

3. *Advancing the mainstreaming of gender equality goals and analysis in other policy areas*

34. Although this theme was explored in the previous section as an agency-level responsibility, there is significant room for donor co-ordination and collaboration. All three studies clearly identify the need for an improved understanding of the relationship between gender equality and other development objectives. Linkages and opportunities for synergy should be explored and documented.

4. *Supporting leading-edge documentation, research and analysis*

35. All three reports highlight the need for continued documentation of good practice, sharing of lessons among development co-operation agencies and cutting-edge research. In addition to research into and the documentation of the linkages between gender equality and other policy objectives, specific themes for a research agenda include:

- *Sector-programmes*: Given the holistic nature of this type of programmes, they have a potential to influence the overall direction of both governmental policy and development co-operation in a specific area. It will be important to identify strategies that support the successful inclusion of gender equality perspectives and objectives.
- *Rights-based approach to development*: There is growing attention in the international development community to a rights-based approach to development in general and to gender equality issues in particular. Research and analysis could focus on how and why this approach is useful in specific situations and how it can best be implemented.
- *Indicators*: With the movement of development co-operation agencies towards results-based approaches and increased pressure to identify and measure impact, there is a need to select and use appropriate indicators. The reports note the need to develop qualitative as well as quantitative measures of impact. Experience has shown this to be difficult and more work is needed in this area. For example, the goal identified in the *Shaping 21st Century* to demonstrate progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment is the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Further indicators to complete the picture on progress are vital.
- *Partnerships and programming with men*: The shift to a 'gender equality' approach was based on an understanding that it was important to focus on the relationships between women and men and gender inequalities, not just women. Although there has been an evolution in language, many agencies have not worked out how to bring men into the picture. For example, the Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health report points out that although work with men has been identified as a strategic issue, there is an absence of concrete strategies in support of specific initiatives.