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Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF

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Gender mainstreaming in the GEF

A technical paper for OPS4

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	World Conservation Union
OPS4	Overall Performance Study
PRMGE/QAG	Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Gender and Quality Assurance
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework for Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
WEDO	Women and Environment Development Organization

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE GEF

Technical paper prepared for OPS4

Introduction

Gender mainstreaming is an imperative in multilateral and bi-lateral development programmes. At the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995, all nations of the world declared their determination and committed themselves to implement the *Beijing Platform for Action* and ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all their policies and programmes. Linkages between this declaration and other UN instruments of human rights such as the *UN Charter*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* undergird the principles and norms embedded in the *Beijing Platform for Action*. The decade following the conference has been one of unpacking the concept of gender mainstreaming and experimenting with it as a modality for integrating a gender perspective in all policies and programmes. The aim of gender mainstreaming is gender equality which is a moral imperative of the 21st Century. The Millennium Development Goals have galvanized all nations of the world to achieve their commitment to achieve gender equality by 2015.

Even before the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995, in 1992 *Agenda 21 of the World Summit on Environment and Development* called for attention to the rights of women if the world is to tackle the interlocking problem of poverty, development and the environment. Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration states that “Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable Development.”¹ Chapter 24 of Section III of Agenda 21 entitled *Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development* focuses on the relationship between gender and the environment and calls for women’s full involvement in decision making and implementation of sustainable development activities as an urgent action.²

¹ Rio declaraton

² Agenda 21

BOX 1: Definitions

Gender refers to the differences in socially constructed roles and opportunities associated with being a man or a woman and the interactions and social relations between men and women.

The gender approach provides the theoretical and methodological instrument to analyze gender relations, to understand their dynamics in a specific context and to build proposals to promote equity.

The context therefore in which the GEF operates as a financial mechanism for environmental conventions of the United Nations is one which acknowledges the differential impact that environmental conditions and initiatives have on women and men. Equally acknowledged is the marginalization of women more so than men in the implementation of initiatives and in decision making on sustainable development. Gender mainstreaming actions are therefore intended to collect gender disaggregated data in order to identify gender specific gaps and impacts, develop strategies to address these gaps, allocating resources to implement the strategies, monitoring the implementation and holding actors accountable.³ Women play very important roles in the management of natural resources yet governments and experts are prone to leave them out of decision making processes. Gender mainstreaming is about gender justice and its goal is gender equality. Whether for reasons of efficiency, sustainability or justice, institutions have come to see the logic and necessity of gender mainstreaming and to put in place measures to achieve it. The GEF, in examining its position on gender mainstreaming, is therefore rightfully participating in an important discourse and working modality of this era.

³ Agreed Conclusion 1997/2

Objective and Methodology of Including Questions on Gender Mainstreaming in OPS4

This technical paper is part of the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF in the period April 2008 – September 2009 which will be divided into 5 clusters, on the role of the GEF, results, relevance, performance and resources. OPS4 will also report on whether local benefits are taken into account in projects in an appropriate way, and gender perspectives will need to be included. The GEF does not have a specific gender policy or strategy other than the Public Involvement Policy which includes provision on gender issues. Nevertheless, there are several questions and issues where a gender perspective would be especially relevant and should be included in OPS4. Furthermore, the GEF seems to be working towards adopting a gender strategy or guidance, and OPS4 could provide evaluative evidence to underscore such an exercise.

The general perspective on “local benefits” was subject of a study of the GEF Evaluation Office in 2006, which concluded that local benefits and global environmental benefits are linked and that global benefits will not be sustainable unless local benefits are achieved as well. This study has led the GEF Council to conclude that in all relevant GEF activities, appropriate social

BOX 2: UN-ECOSOC definition of gender mainstreaming

A strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated

and developmental expertise would need to be included in the preparation and implementation of projects. In the Annual Performance Report 2007 it was concluded that not yet all relevant projects include appropriate expertise. In the meantime, the GEF secretariat has asked for more attention for gender issues through the publication of a brochure in 2008.

This paper is expected to provide the GEF with information that will enable it to take decisions on the way forward with regard to gender mainstreaming. Its contribution to the evaluation of OPS4 is both retrospective and prospective. It reviewed convention documents, talked to key informants in the World Bank and the UNDP, examined policy documents and directives on gender mainstreaming of these two largest implementing agencies as well as studied evaluation reports of their gender mainstreaming performance. Perspectives of feminists and gender specialists who have written on the institutional performance of the agencies, especially the World Bank, were also reviewed to position this assessment in its broadest context. Within the GEF, discussions were held with senior policy makers in the secretariat and the evaluation office. Thematic evaluations of the GEF and terminal evaluations of the GEF projects were reviewed to see how gender is treated in these evaluations.

The assessment of gender mainstreaming for this paper was constrained by the inability to talk to field staff of the agencies who act with a certain amount of autonomy in terms of carrying out the policies of their respective authorities. Their creative initiatives are not often captured by database systems at headquarters. In UNDP in particular, gender indicators have not yet been introduced into the results framework of their Atlas data system and information from the field can not be easily captured.

Present Position of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF

Gender mainstreaming in the GEF is in its embryonic phase. As the financial mechanism for the UN Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Persistent Organic Pollutants, Convention to Combat Desertification; the GEF is guided by the out come declarations and the decisions of the conference of the parties. Present arrangements for the implementation of the GEF funds are through 10 designated agencies: the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Hitherto, the GEF has relied on these agencies to apply their

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gender mainstreaming policies and strategies to all GEF projects in their purview. However, “recognizing that each GEF agency has a different gender policy and/or strategy, with varying application to GEF projects”,⁴ the GEF has felt the need to rethink this approach to fulfilling its commitment and mandate for gender mainstreaming in its work. As a first step, the GEF produced a think-piece to provoke discuss in and outside the organization and generate ideas for new directions.

Related to consideration of a gender approach in the GEF is the even larger issue of the social dimensions of environmental work. Since its inception the GEF has struggled to reconcile national and global environmental interests.⁵ This debate is embedded in the discourse on the responsibility of the GEF in funding local benefits as compared to global benefits. Local benefits are described as “outcomes that, directly or indirectly, have positive impacts upon people and ecosystems within or adjacent to project areas and that provide gains, present and further in the livelihoods of communities and to the integrity of ecosystems.”⁶ GEF funding is focused on the attainment of global benefits rather than local ones, and the GEF funds only the agreed incremental costs necessary to achieve global environmental benefits. Local benefits are to be taken care of by national authorities, cofunders and organizations.⁷ This position has implications for the ethos of the organization and could constrain the readiness with which it is able to embrace issues that are often considered local in nature and affect the sustainability of performance of projects.

In this respect, the GEF evaluation report on *The Role of Local Benefits in GEF Programmes* uncovered a significant weak link in project effectiveness and sustainability. The lack of systematic social and gender analysis leading to an undifferentiated approach to project design and implementation not only led to weak project effectiveness but also to missed

⁴ GEF 2008, p 16

⁵⁵ World Bank, 1994

⁶ GEF 2006, p4

⁷ Ibid

opportunities for sustainability of outcomes. While the majority of environmental management problems are linked to human behavior, few of the GEF projects “(14%) included reference to a full social assessment and 12% to other forms of social analysis at the design stage”⁸. With specific regard to gender analysis, the report concluded that “In some instances, the lack of adequate gender analysis and awareness led to negative impacts on women”.⁹

Gender specialists in the Bank nor in UNDP do not get pressure from the GEF units to do a gender analysis of their projects. In key informant interviews, one gender specialist said she had done gender analysis for many projects but had never been asked to do one for a GEF project. Others spoke of resistance from the GEF units to pressure from gender units to do gender analysis of their projects. GEF projects are large and the emphasis is on raising the extra funds, efficiency of implementation with regard to time between project approval and project implementation, raising the additional funds and keeping on track with project implementation. Performance evaluations look at the questions of relevance of support to the GEF mandate an national sustainable development policies and priorities, the efficiency of GEF support and the results and sustainability of GEF support. Task managers looking at these as criteria against which their work will be judged will not readily see gender issues.

There is also the immediate reaction that certain projects, such as some large infrastructure projects, have no social relevance and therefore no gender issues. The project on Commercialization of Energy-efficient CFC-Free Refrigeration in China is a good example of how gender issues were considered in project management and capacity building of a project which on face value might not have gender implications. Large infrastructure projects have many opportunities for attention to gender in the introduction of women to new technologies, recruitment of staff, recruitment of consultants and evaluators (both national and international), end-users and stakeholders opinions.

The Mandate for Attention to Gender Issues in GEF Related Conventions

⁸ Ibid p.33

⁹ Ibid p.32

The GEF derives its mandates from the major UN conventions on environment and those of regional groupings on the management of international waters. All the conventions for which GEF is a financing mechanism, except for Climate Change, have a clear mandate on gender equality.

Paragraph 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which has been ratified by 190 states, recognizes the important role that women play in conservation and sustainable use for biological diversity conservation. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) mentions women's practices, knowledge, and gender roles in food production, as do various decisions of the Conference of the Parties. COP, 3, 5,6,7,8, and 9 have all made recommendations on gender equality. COP 6, The Hague, in particular stressed the importance of social factors (including demographic, gender and familial factors) that relate to sustainability of efforts to promote biological diversity.

The CBD Secretariat has prepared its own Plan of Action for using a gender approach in its work. A gender focal point was appointed in 2007. A Gender Plan of Action prepared in 2008 is based on the experiences of the secretariat working within the Convention and those of other organizations. Gender activist from prominent organizations working on issues of gender and the environment such as IUCN, WEDO, feminists and UN agencies (UNEP, UNIFEM, UNDP) all contributed their experiences to the preparation of the Plan. The Plan of Action is based on a theory of institutionalizing the gender approach developed at the University College, London by Caren Levy. The theory postulates a web of 13 interlocking institutional sites of power all of which must work together for sustained institutionalization of gender.

Activities that form part of the Plan include a re-assessment of tools for any linkages to gender, development of new tools to show actors how to integrate a gender perspective in their biodiversity conservation activities, network CBD national focal points with other national activists who have made progress on gender and the environment, create opportunities for Parties to report on progress in the implementation of their national efforts at mainstreaming gender in their national biodiversity planning process, promote awareness among women activists of biodiversity issues, and create capacity of indigenous women to participate in decision making

relevant to the convention through preparatory meetings prior to each conference of the parties. The Plan of Action also includes a force field analysis of conditions that would facilitate gender mainstreaming and those that would not.¹⁰

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification is especially strong on mainstreaming gender and recognizing the role of women in this area of environmental maintenance. The Preamble of the Convention stresses the important role and the consequences of land degradation and desertification on women particularly in rural areas and urges the full participation of men and women at all levels in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. Article 4 of the General Obligations requires countries to promote awareness and facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women, with the support of non-governmental organizations to efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.”

The Convention on Persistent Pollutants, in Articles 10 and 11 call for the development of programmes of public awareness for women and children and research to alleviate the effects of persistent organic pollutants on reproductive health.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is silent on gender issues. Except for in the guide on how to prepare National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA), no mention is made of women or gender issues in the main text of the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol. According to a UNDP assessment, very few NAPAs (Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania) recognize women as important agents in adaptation processes. In general the NAPAs portray women as victims and do not recognize that women have the knowledge to make a contribution to adaptation processes.¹¹

This lack of attention to gender mainstreaming in the UNFCCC has exposed it to intense pressure and advocacy initiatives from strong lobbies of the women and environment

¹⁰ UNEP/CBD/COP/9/INF/12/Rev.1

¹¹ UNDP 2009

movements. In COP-13, UNDP, UNEP, IUCN and WEDO launched the Global Gender and Climate Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance is to ensure that policies, initiative and decision-making processes include the gender approach at all levels. Among other things, the Alliance hopes to ensure that mitigation and adaptation financing mechanisms take equal account of the needs of poor men and women. The Alliance will collaborate with the Secretariat to prepare a plan to incorporate a gender perspective in the UNFCCC. It has already met with the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC and has begun collaboration with the Gender Focal Point of the UNFCCC. Additionally, the 13th and 14th COPs of the UNFCCC were attended by the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment and the gendercc women for climate justice. These advocacy efforts by international women's groups will produce results in the short and long term for a gender approach in the UNFCCC.¹²

All of the above should give the GEF boldness in its approach to choosing a way forward to ensure gender mainstreaming is addressed in its work. Both the CBD and the UNFCCC experiences show that effort to do gender mainstreaming is timely, new approaches and new impetus are emerging and there are many lessons to learn from present successes and failure.

Gender Policies and Strategies of Implementing Agencies

At present in the GEF, the approach to gender has been to rely on the implementing agencies to apply their gender policies to GEF projects. Two assumptions underlying this position are of interest: The first has to do with application of the agency policies to their own work and the second has to do with the level of integration of GEF in the work of agencies in order to benefit from good policies and practices that might exist. The two large agencies that implement the greater amount of GEF funds are The World Bank Group and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Bank executes xxxx of GEF funds and UNDP XXX. UNEP is a smaller agency and does more normative work. Other agencies such as the regional development banks have not been studied for this evaluation. In order to determine how well agencies are applying their own policies and strategies, evaluation reports of gender mainstreaming were therefore reviewed for the Bank and for UNDP. The Bank has undertaken

¹² The above material relied heavily on UNDP Resource Guide Gender and Climate Change

two major evaluations of its gender mainstreaming performance. The first, an evaluation report of *World Bank Gender Policy 1990 – 1999* was published in 2002. The second, of the succeeding ten years, will most likely be completed in 2009. UNDP, in 2006, also published an *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP*. These evaluations give a good account of the policies and strategies for gender mainstreaming that do exist in the agencies and how well the agencies are applying their own policies.

The gender websites and reports of the agencies show a fluid territory of engineering and re-engineering to adapt to changing epistemological positions on the inclusion of women in development processes and a respect for their rights to do so. Research and successive UN conferences on women have generated new knowledge on the status and condition of women in society and have made declarations of what needs to be done to correct the injustice and inequalities that women experience because of their gender and sex. These declarations have encouraged development practitioners to expand the horizons of their work from women specific projects and programmes commonly known as “women in development approach” to what is known as “gender and development approach” and further to an emerging approach based on human rights referred to as the “rights-based approach”. These approaches are not mutually exclusive since underlying all of them is the struggle for gender equality and justice. .

The women in development approach which targeted women specifically was found to further marginalize an already excluded group. Worse still, women’s issues and perspectives,

BOX 3: Evolving approaches to transforming the Mainstream

The Women in Development Approach (WID)

Development is not addressing women’s issues and is not obtainable in the absence of women. Solution: separate or integrated projects that address the needs and issues of women. Concerned with social justice and political equality; called for equal opportunities for education, health, employment, credit, recognition of economic contributions, encouraged dis-aggregated data collection, promoted CEDAW.

Women and Development (WAD)

Women integrated but in exploitative way; patriarchy and global inequalities inhibit women’s access to fair share of development; dominant approaches to development lack women’s perspectives; redistribution of burdens and benefits necessary; international structures must become more equitable

Gender and Development (GAD)

Need to rethink development through a gender lens; unequal power relations between men and women prevent women from accessing resources and impact how development programmes are planned and implemented

Empowerment

Women and men need to be looked at as active agents of change; way in which development is done can dis-empower or empower

Rights based approach

Equality between men and women is a matter of human rights and a necessary condition for social justice; a prerequisite for development and peace. Emphasizes the capacity of right holders to claim their rights and duty bearers to fulfill their obligations. Uses this framework for analyzing and addressing inequalities and discriminatory practices and unjust power relations

though central to social and economic well being, were not central to the development process and not included. The concept of gender, as a socially rather than biologically prescribed construct, was identified as the most appropriate for demonstrating why certain roles and positions in society are held by women and others by men. In this conceptual evolution, gender analysis then was developed as a tool for examining the differential impact of social and economic activity on men and women and for analyzing the power differentials in male/female relationships. These shifts in thinking have demanded that development agencies make adjustments to their policies and strategies for responding to an uneven playing field. What is important to keep in mind is that there are deep ideological underpinnings to this evolution and no one approach is totally exclusive of the others, hence the complexity of having all the right ingredients to make mainstreaming a success. The following sections of this paper look more carefully at the evolution of gender policies of the two largest implementing agencies of the GEF.

The World Bank

As the largest implementing agent of GEF funds, the GEF stands to draw useful lessons from the experiences of the Bank in gender mainstreaming. The Bank has a long history of considering women in its work. Beginning in 1977 after the First World Conference of Women in Mexico, the Bank appointed its first WID officer. In 1984 operational policy OMS 2.20 obliged Bank staff to consider women's issues in project appraisal and ensure that activities enhance women's participation in development. In 1994, a change in policy direction took a country level approach requiring that analytical work be done through Economic and Work in Sectors and that integration of gender be done in country assistance strategies. In 1994 a Gender and Development Board composed of senior level personnel across sections was appointed with responsibility for knowledge management, monitoring and reporting on the status of policy implementation.

The evaluation report of the first decade of Bank Policy, *Evaluating a Decade of World Bank Policy 1990-1999*, indicated that even though gender issues had been better integrated in the Bank's work, the policy had set no benchmarks for assessing its progress. The evaluation

highlighted the lack of speed in the systematic integration of gender in the work of the Bank and a variety of institutional challenges to implementing the policy. These had to do with the lack of staff accountability framework, no quantitative targets, indicators or effective monitoring system; lack of clarity in the presentation of the policy thereby exposing it to alternative interpretations and undermining its mandatory character; lack of staff training and support.¹³

In response the World Bank issued a Policy Research Report (2001) which concluded that gender inequality retards economic growth and poverty reduction. This report formed the basis for a new strategy in 2002 (*Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work*), a new operational policy (OP4.20) and in 2006, a new plan of action (*The Gender Action Plan- Gender Equality as Smart Economics*). The new strategy maintained the up-stream country level direction of the 1994 policy and introduced the multi-sectoral Country Gender Assessment (CGA) as a new tool for identifying policy and programming interventions needed for poverty reduction, human development and economic growth. It further recommended that gender be mainstreamed in sectors where it is a barrier to poverty reduction and growth including economic, financial and infrastructure sectors. The new Gender Action Plan is targeting the financial, labour market, infrastructure and economic sectors. The new operational policy OP4.20 gives the impression that gender will only be considered for projects that are identified in the CGA and not in all projects. Under the previous policy directive (OMS2.20) required gender consideration when women were an “important group of project participants or beneficiaries”. The evaluation report of the 1990-1999 Decade had suggested that it would be helpful for the Bank to ensure that gender considerations pertain to all its interventions.

The concern that this raises for GEF is the extent to which and how its projects will become part of the new system and benefit from new policies. Are GEF projects identified from CGAs? Without the necessary training and support, what guarantees are there for the GEF, that Bank staff will give its projects adequate gender considerations. What are the implications for the fact that natural resource management sector is not one of the priority areas for the Gender Plan of Action. For this technical report the Bank was requested to provide the PRMGE/QAG

¹³ World Bank, 2002

gender ratings for all the projects in OPS4 cycle. Results showed that none of the GEF projects from 2006-2009 had been given gender ratings. Interviews in the Bank showed that gender specialist at headquarters are few in the sector networks and are hardly if ever consulted on GEF projects. There might be good examples in the field to the contrary but these were not available for this paper. Most of the interviews with senior social and gender specialist in the Bank indicated that the new gender policies have yet to take effect in any meaningful way.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP can normally disburse amounts of up to US\$933 million of GEF funding annually. These funds attract co-financing of approximately US\$2,535 billion. For the year 7/07 – 7/08 GEF funds were spent on 218 projects in 75 countries. A special team at UNDP manages the GEF portfolio in the Bureau for Development Policy. Annual Performance reports are prepared of this important portfolio. Ideally GEF projects are subject to all the policies and guidelines of regular UNDP projects. A closer examination of the situation would show some differences between the ideal and reality.

UNDP's Gender Team is also located in the Bureau for Development Policy where the GEF Unit is situated. The Gender Team has a group of environmental specialists who are full time members of its staff. As a result, relationships are forged with the GEF Unit and with environmental activists working outside the UN system. So far the Gender Team, in partnership with some of these groups, has published guides and training manuals on Climate Change, Environment and Energy and Chemicals Management.

UNDP issued a Practice Note in 2002 which put gender equality squarely within the rights paradigm and made it imperative as a goal in and of itself, central to human development and to human rights. UNDP's approach to gender mainstreaming is based on its Human Development paradigm which is a people centered view of the world. It identifies the two paths to achieving gender equality as gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment and makes it the responsibility of all staff to use these methods in their work. In 1996, after the Beijing Conference, the Administrator of UNDP put in new guidelines, structures and funding, even for gender balance in the human resources of the organization, to promote gender equality. In 1998, TA/GEF/09

the advancement of women was made one of the five focal areas of UNDP. In the 2000-2003 Business Plan however, with a new Administrator, emphasis on gender took a down turn. It was made gender a cross cutting theme and the global gender programme budget was cut to one fifth its original size. In 2001, while still affirming UNDP's commitment to gender equality, he appointed the UNIFEM Director as gender champion. The Practice note put out in 2002 sought to dispel some of the doubts and confusion of staff created by these moves.

In 2006, the Executive Board of UNDP called for an evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the organization. The results of that evaluation showed that gender mainstreaming was not visible and explicit in the organization, there was no corporate strategic plan for putting the policy directives into effect and no tracking mechanisms. While there are multiple forms of guidance and noteworthy training had been done especially in the regions, staff found they had no incentive to use these resources. Much effort was put into gender balance in the organization even though UN targets had not been fully achieved. In 2002, gender driver questions were put in the Multi-Year Funding Framework and a gender mapping exercise was carried out. The practice areas of UNDP (poverty eradication, democratic governance, energy and environment, and HIV/AIDS) were found to have made some commendable efforts at gender mainstreaming, even though many of the initiatives had the tendency to be small and gender specific.

Since the evaluation, a new gender equality strategy *Empowered and Equal 2008 – 2011* has been launched. It incorporates full accountability mechanisms for its implementation at all levels. Performance appraisal of all staff will include reports on the results of their work to achieve gender equality. Recognition, as well as withdrawal of recognition, along with other incentives are part of the plan. All practice areas of UNDP are required by the Strategic Plan to accelerate MDGs through the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. A Gender Parity Action Plan has set targets and a tracking system for gender balance in the workforce. The strategy takes cognizance of the organizational culture and its impact on the issue of retention of a balanced workforce. Attitudes to gender equality will form part of the recruitment criteria. A more vigorous and high-quality capacity building programme is envisaged.

Each Unit in UNDP is required by the new Gender Strategy to prepare a workplan and a progress report on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy. The March 2009 progress report of the Energy and Environment (E&E) unit conveys much information of the work of that unit in the area of climate change, the several training workshops on energy and the environment that will be run at the regional and country levels for E&E staff and gender focal points. Several knowledge products have also been developed. It is noteworthy that GEF projects have been identified as “needing more systematic integration of gender” and are therefore a target of special work to be done between the E&E unit and the Gender unit of UNDP to ensure adherence to the Gender Strategy. This work will also follow up on the GEF Secretariat report, *Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF*. The May, 2008 E&E progress report pointed out that all Small Grants national focal points had received training in gender mainstreaming and that USD19 million had been raised to implement 600 Multifunctional Platforms to increase the income levels of women farmers.

This technical report raises the same issue for UNDP GEF projects as it does for those implemented by the World Bank: how will GEF projects benefit from these new policies. Will GEF staff be appraised on the same criteria as UNDP and will they have access to the same training as other UNDP staff. The above evidence indicates that change can be expected in the management of GEF projects. The environmental team in the Gender Unit and the gender focal point in the E&E unit could be seen to work closely together. The May 2008 report of the E&E also indicates that the demand to fulfill the corporate requirements of the new Strategy is more than one gender focal point in E&E can manage.

Interestingly the evaluation findings for both institutions bare much similarity. It is noteworthy that both organizations have taken extensive measures to respond to the findings and recommendations. The Bank’s choice of certain sectors at the exclusion of others misses the opportunity to take advantage of its reputation for doing analytical work of hitherto uncharted territories of sectors considered not relevant for gender equality. The UNDP does try to go the entire length of living up to its ethos of human development by making work-life culture in the organization more conducive for both men and women. All of these can be useful lessons for the GEF.

The Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is not without its challenges. Recent reviews and assessments of gender mainstreaming in international agencies (Gopal, 2002; Hannan, 2004; Moser and Moser, 2005; UNDG, 2007; UNDP, 2006) have revealed that challenges have both conceptual and operational underpinnings. The conceptual underpinning has to do with the ethos of the organization and the extent to which that ethos prioritizes gender equality and equality of voice to transform the mainstream if necessary. Feminists in Beijing posed the question of the quality of the streams into which women were being integrated. The aim of the World Bank Gender Action Plan to make markets work for women and to empower women to work in markets, assumes that neoclassical economic structures can bring about gender equality or gender justice.¹⁴

Practitioners have noticed other challenges to gender mainstreaming. Another important issue has to do with focal vision of experts. “Many in the environment field, for instance, see environmental degradation,

climate change as the most pressing issues of our time. Bringing a gender perspective into their programming can be seen as a relatively unimportant concern in the face of the planet’s

An environmentalist at a meeting on mainstreaming gender into environment once compared the activity to “rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.”

biodiversity loss and pressing and urgent environmental issues. Bringing a gender perspective into their programming can be seen as a relatively unimportant concern in the face of the planet’s imminent demise.

Moreover, many environmentalists come from science and technology backgrounds and their training does not emphasize questions of power and exclusion. Advocates for women’s equality may face an uphill battle in making such issues seem relevant to technical work in various environmental sectors.”¹⁵ Is the language of discourse and the aim of the mainstream to improve the lives of people, men and women or does it view people, women in particular, as instrumental in improving the efficiency of other agendas such as a more efficient market or better managed environment? The 2008 *Evaluation of the Role and Contribution of UNDP in Environment and Energy* comments on the uneasy fit between UNDP’s emphasis on poverty and local benefits and the GEF emphasis on environment and global benefits. Organizational paradigms are a difficult

¹⁴ Bergeron, 2002

¹⁵ UNDP. 2003 p32

area of change. Gender mainstreaming efforts can fail if the paradigm of the stream can not sustain gender justice and human rights. In one conversation in UNDP it was suggested that GEF might wish to see gender equality as a global environmental benefit, making it easy to focus on people as actors in environmental management.

In the operational sphere, changes in organizations that embark on gender mainstreaming are slow and marked by many false starts. Mehra and Gupta's insightful piece on gender mainstreaming puts the situation very succinctly as follows:

Recent reviews and evaluations show a huge gap between policy commitments made at Beijing and actual implementation (Hannan 2004 and Moser and Moser 2005). In fact, evaluators assert that policy commitments to gender mainstreaming “evaporated” or became “invisible” in planning and implementation (MacDonald 2003). Other assessments describe implementation as “patchy” and “embryonic.” The gap is most pronounced in mainstreaming gender into operations. A review of UN agencies found that many had not even taken the first step of using gender analysis to inform policies and programs (Hannan 2004). Moser and Moser (2005) studied 14 international development agencies representing a mix of bilateral and multilateral donors, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and also found that gender was not reflected in country and strategy documents. Since these documents form the basis for developing sector programs and interventions, this shortcoming at the start of the process is reflected throughout planning design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. Perhaps reflecting the imbalance between internal organizational focus and programming, a DAC review found that evaluations also focused exclusively on organizational mainstreaming processes and not on results (quoted in Watkins 2004), even though the goal of gender mainstreaming is precisely to have an impact and to show results—to demonstrate development effectiveness”¹⁶

Much has also changed in the past decade. Since the specific targets of the Millennium Development Goals on gender equality, agencies have found reason to renew their efforts at

Box 4:

In no area of international development is the gap between stated intentions and operational reality as wide as it is in the promotion of equality between women and men.

-UNDP Toolkit on Transforming the Mainstream

¹⁶ Mehra & Gupta, 2006 p.4

gender mainstreaming. Evaluations of the status and effectiveness of gender mainstream have been done, new policies and strategies are being put in place, hopefully based on lessons learnt from past experiences. As stated above, both UNDP and the World Bank have completed this exercise. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity has also done the same. Some of the lessons learnt about what works can be found in Box 5. One of the most serious challenges is changing the hearts and minds of staff which can require much more than training. The UNDP evaluation report alludes to this problem as such “One of the most disappointing aspects of UNDP’s gender mainstreaming has been its limited attempts to build understanding among the staff”¹⁷ Many of the key informant interviewees held felt that gender mainstreaming went well with committed leaders in place or staff who are passionate about the issue. “In the absence of directives, incentives, and specific mandates, the only people who will dedicate their scarce resources to gender mainstreaming are those who care about the issue on a personal level.”¹⁸ Even in the absence of a gender parity policy, the GEF has done well with achieving gender balance of staff. What still requires attention is parity at the levels of employment and training of staff .

Box 5: What can affect gender mainstreaming

Leadership

Organizational ethos

Expertise

Funding

Indicators for success

Operational manuals, guidelines

Accountability/monitoring

Relevance

Research/openness to innovation

Staff capacity, attitudes and values and gender balance

Incentives and rewards

¹⁷ UNDP,2006. pVI

¹⁸ UNDP, 2003 p. 9

If the GEF is to take the issue of gender mainstreaming seriously, the above would be a helpful check list. The first step would be the demonstration of political will and the hiring of a full time gender expert who is an environmentalist to guide the process through.

Gender Issues in GEF Project Terminal Evaluations

For this paper, 210 terminal evaluations across the agencies for OPS4 were reviewed to discover if gender is at all mentioned in the reports. This exercise served to determine if terminal evaluations were commenting on the activities that had been identified as gender gaps during project implementation. The reviews were done using the following methodology

- If there is no mention of gender issues or gender mainstreaming, and no special mention of women in stakeholder participation: classify as “N”
- If there is mention of gender issues or gender mainstreaming, and/or special mention of women in stakeholder participation: classify as “Y” and include a comment.

Results:

Per agency

AGENCY	Yes	No	TOTAL
WB	42	49	91
UNDP	36	49	85
UNEP	12	16	28
UNDP/UNEP	1	2	3
WB/IFC	0	2	2
WB/UNDP	0	1	1
TOTAL	91	119	210

Per Focal Area:

FOCAL AREA	Yes	No	TOTAL
BD	68	49	117
CC	10	42	52
IW	8	15	23
LD	1	3	4
MF	3	7	10
OD	1	2	3
POPs	0	1	1
TOTAL	91	119	210

Per Type of project:

TYPE OF PROJECT	Yes	No	TOTAL
FSP	57	58	115
MSP	34	60	94
EA	0	1	1
TOTAL	91	119	210

The results per focal area show that except for climate change, at least 50% or above of the projects do mention gender in the TEs. The results per agency show also a 50% or above of all agency projects do mention gender. The statistics for type of project give the same ratio. Without full knowledge of the nature of the project, it is difficult to say whether those that do not mention gender represent opportunities missed or whether those were projects where project managers did not think gender issues were relevant. In the absence of adequate directives or gender sensitive TORs used by the evaluators, a more precise interpretation of this data is not possible. However, an attempt was made to categorize the comments made by evaluators and see if any patterns emerged.

There were five categories of project related issues: gender analysis, participation, indicators, training and outcomes. Gender analysis and indicators were the least mentioned (8) times for each, followed by training (11), outcomes (23) and participation (39). What is clear is that gender is being reported on in the Terminal Evaluations though not in a systematic manner. Equally clear is that the terminal evaluation form is not capturing the actions taken on gender at the beginning of the project nor at the very end.

Six major evaluations were carried out by implementing agencies or donors. Of the six, three made comments about the treatment of gender in the evaluation report. All of the comments made called for greater opportunity in projects to present the interface of gender and the environment more clearly.

Some immediate short term actions can be taken to improve the way terminal evaluations capture issues of gender inequality in GEF projects.

Opportunities exist in the reports on capacity building to assess the ratio of men and women who are trained and who are recruited as project staff.

Information on results of gender analysis that was done and outcomes of actions taken should also be included in updated terminal evaluation forms

There are guidelines for terminal reviews. These could be revised to include gender

There are assessments of GEF agency climate policies and guidelines. The same should be done for gender

Conclusions and recommendations

This technical paper on gender in the GEF was called for as part of the OPS4 evaluation. It argued that GEF has a mandate to address gender equality in its work through gender mainstreaming. This argument is based on the prevailing push to achieve gender equality in the coming decade and the need for every agency, particularly those that serve member states of the United Nations in an international dimension to become actively involved to bring an end to one of the oldest and most entrenched forms of global injustices. Except for climate change, all of the conventions for which GEF serves as a funding mechanism have endorsed gender equality as important for the achievement of their goals. GEF has a responsibility to ensure that it supports parties to the conventions and the convention secretariats to meet their commitments to gender equality.

The paper examined the gender mainstreaming practices of the two largest implementing agencies of GEF funding, the World Bank and UNDP. The agencies were found to be very active in trying to put in place the necessary policies, systems and structures that will contribute towards the goal of gender equality. What is important to realize is that mainstreaming gender equality is not simply a technique, but has implications for the ideological paradigm of an organizations. For it to succeed, the ethos and fundamental principles upon which the organization is built must have an easy fit with the goal of gender equality. In this respect, UNDP is far nearer that goal than the World Bank given its fundamental values of human development. However, much depends on whether staff, including top leadership, personally uphold the principle of gender equality. Training for value change therefore becomes an

important ingredient of the equation. Gender training must be cognitive as well as affective. Despite many years of practice, neither of these organizations is at the point of proficiency in gender mainstreaming that GEF can totally rely upon even though with constant effort UNDP might arrive reach this goal. The learning curve is a large one and the GEF will need to get involved in the process to bring it to fruition.

In terms of operations, both UNDP and the World Bank will have to strengthen their efforts to give GEF projects the same attention with regard to gender that it gives its own projects. While UNDP's new policy on gender equality will make gender sensitivity a criterion for recruitment of staff, the same is not true for the Bank. Both organizations need to look at the recruitment of Task Managers for GEF projects to ensure that recruitment criteria reflect some attention to gender issues over and above the technical and managerial competencies normally required. Terminal evaluations are not at present very explicit about gender analysis and what was done to improve non attention to issues of gender.

Given the above, what is the way forward for the GEF. The point has been made in many manuals of the relevance of gender equality for sustainable development and more specifically for effects on biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, persistent pollutants, climate change and management of international waters. Evaluation reports are showing that where attention was paid to gender issues in projects, the outcomes were more effective. The GEF might have to improve its efficiency and sustainability by applying gender analysis to its projects and making gender equality a goal of its work.

The options that do present themselves for the way forward are as follows but not exclusively limited to these:

Option 1

Continue with the status quo of relying on the agencies but give clear directives on what the GEF expects from them with regard to the mainstreaming of gender in GEF funded projects. Recruit an environmentalist with gender expertise to monitor the agencies and support the focal areas in preparing gender sensitive strategies. The advantage of this would be that agencies already feel the weight of managing an already cumbersome portfolio. A simple but firm directive might get a better hearing. The disadvantage of this option would be that the GEF would be beholden to the

uneven application of policies and the weaning of enthusiasm for the flavor of the day syndrome that is often seen in organizations.

Option2

Follow the lead of the Convention on Biological Diversity and prepare a gender equality policy that includes human resource applications of gender parity and vigorously promote this issue for all professional and technical levels in the organization considering also equality in geographical representation. The advantage of this would be greater clarity on the part of the GEF of what its position is and the process of preparing the policy, if participatory would sensitize the staff to gender issues in their work.

Option 3

Take a rights based approach to GEF work. Contract a consultant to lay out how it would work and what would be the impact on the effectiveness of GEF projects. Have the consultant work out all of the scenarios of application including for staffing. Make a decision based on the results of this exercise. The approach would certainly have an impact on the sustainability of GEF's projects bringing about lasting change in the way the differential needs of men and women.

Leadership was identified by the evaluations of UNDP and the World Bank as one of the crucial factors in successful gender mainstreaming. The GEF has a unique moment in time to show what a difference this can make. The opportunity for the GEF does not rest only on the fact that there is a woman in leadership at this point in time, but that the organization is small, has the funding to do things right. The leadership opportunity is the leadership of ideas and of practice to show how gender equality can make a difference in the way development is done. All of these proposals are mutually inclusive with the last proposal subsuming the previous two,

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UNDP

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