

## **Information on Gender Equality within UN-HABITAT**

**1. Brief description of the mandate of UN-HABITAT on gender equality** The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The main documents outlining the mandate of the organization on gender equality are Habitat Agenda paragraph 46 on gender equality, its Gender Policy, Beijing Platform for Action, ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming gender in all UN entities and programmes, Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Millennium Development Declaration, the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Action for Sustainable Development; and UN-HABITAT Governing Council Resolution 19/16 “Women’s roles and rights in human settlements development and slum-upgrading” of 9 May 2003.

**2. Brief overview of the status of policy and strategy development in UN-HABITAT** The Gender Policy and Strategy were adopted in 1996, and revised in 2001. The objectives of the policy are twofold gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment.

**3. Main focus of UN-HABITAT on gender equality – thematic areas** Through its two Global Campaigns on Secure Tenure and Good Urban Governance and within the context of poverty reduction, women and the economy, peace and security, human rights and violence against women, politics and decision making, employment, and environmental sustainability, UN-HABITAT work focuses on women’s equal right to security of tenure, particularly equal access to and control over land and property, women’s rights to adequate housing, and slum upgrading; women’s increased participation in politics, decision making and the provision of basic services at municipal and local government level, safer cities for women and girls, gender, disaster management and post conflict reconstruction; employment creation, food security, rural and urban planning; training and capacity building for local authorities; water, sanitation and infrastructure; research, policy analysis; monitoring the HABITAT Agenda, and MDG targets 10 on water and sanitation and target 11 on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Emphasis is placed promoting the plight of the urban poor and the homeless.

**4. Field level operations** Mainstreaming gender in field operations is a challenging endeavour requiring careful consideration from all perspectives. Inclusive governance, land and property issues, inheritance, income generating activities and capacity building among others are all of crucial importance in field operations. UN-HABITAT developed some gender mainstreaming strategies and tool kits to guide field operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Somalia and Iraq. Another gender strategy on water and sanitation was developed to support gender mainstreaming within the Water for African Cities Programmes. These strategies provide overall direction for mainstreaming gender in all UN-HABITAT’s activities undertaken at field level. An attempt is made to promote gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment as part of the regional technical cooperation programmes, but much more remains to be done.

**5. Approaches for ensuring implementation of gender mainstreaming** It is a requirement that all project proposals submitted for funding should have a section on gender impact assessment explaining how the projects and programmes might affect women and men. The recruitment of Habitat Programme Managers at the country level might improve gender mainstreaming in human settlements programmes. The induction of Habitat Programme Managers included instructions on gender mainstreaming.

**6. Overview of main achievements with one good practice example for a box**

Since the set up of the Women in Habitat Programme in 1991 UN-HABITAT has supported the strengthening of women in shelter networks in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Arab States as well as the Federation of Women Mayors in Latin America (FEMUN), which are doing tremendous work in promoting women's rights to adequate housing, secure tenure, and urban governance. Up until 1999, UN-HABITAT supported the Secretariat of HABITAT International Coalition – Women in Shelter Network (HIC-WAS). Through advocacy a number of resolutions on women's rights in human settlements development were adopted. A credit guarantee scheme was introduced in Ghana, which has led to economic empowerment of women. Women's housing cooperatives in Senegal were established and workshops on women's rights to land and property in post conflict reconstruction were organized. In 1998 UN-HABITAT in collaboration with Urban Management Programme, UNIFEM and FEMUN in Latin America initiated a successful programme on gender responsive local governments and women friendly cities, which was replicated in Asia in 2003. Over 100 cities in 17 countries have participated. This programme has helped municipalities to do more for women in the delivery of basic services, increased gender mainstreaming and women's participation in municipal planning and development; and it has also facilitated the creation of a unique database. In 2001, UN-HABITAT and the Huairou Commission launched a pilot programme on local-to-local dialogue, which brings communities face to face with local authorities and municipalities to discuss and find solutions to local problems, and also to help communities to understand policies and programmes implemented by their local councils. This programme has contributed to women's and community empowerment. Tools on women's rights to land and property have been developed.

**7. Institutional arrangements for gender equality in the entity.** The Gender Mainstreaming Unit (GMU) supported by the Gender Taskforce consisting of gender focal points in the respective Branches, Units and Regional Offices, and the Habitat Programme Managers have the responsibility for spearheading the implementation of the gender policy and promoting gender mainstreaming in all UN-HABITAT programmes and activities. The Chief of Gender Mainstreaming Unit is a member of the UN-HABITAT Senior Management Board, the Project Review Committee, which approves projects to be funded by various donors. Her role is to ensure that all projects are gender responsive. A training programme on strengthening gender mainstreaming in UN-HABITAT activities including development of a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements has been designed.