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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON  
INTEGRATING GENDER ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

## **SUMMARY**

This paper focuses on the need to integrate attention to the different roles and situations of women and men throughout the range of development interventions. It details the impact of existing disparities for sustainable development, and explains how neglecting these disparities can jeopardise the effectiveness of development actions. It sets out principles, objectives and means for development co-operation to take account of these issues. Finally, it lays down general principles and puts forward practical arrangements for strengthening consultation and co-ordination between the Community and the Member States.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The present Communication provides suggestions for common policy guidelines on gender issues in development cooperation and proposals for strengthening collaboration and coordination between the Community and the Member States in this domain.

In its Conclusions of May 93, the Development Council considered that there was a need to review its previous conclusions on Women in Development (WID), with a view to preparing consolidated Community and Member States policy guidelines on this subject, possibly in the form of a Resolution. Following the Council's suggestions, the Commission undertook, as a preliminary step, an impact assessment to review the administrative measures, strategies and procedures adopted in this domain by the Community and the Member States.

The impact assessment, completed during 1994, underlined that "despite the efforts made, in many European countries and in the Commission, women's participation in development still remains a marginal rather than a central issue. Much lip service is given ...but it is not considered an integral part of the goals of development cooperation". The study also confirmed that the elaboration of a clear common policy framework was a crucial step to ensure consistency between principles and practice in this domain.

The Fourth UN World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995) provides a timely context for this Communication, which has incorporated the main results of the preparatory process of the Conference.

## II. GENDER DIFFERENCES AND DISPARITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

1. There are differences in the ways women and men contribute to the economic and social advancement of a given society. There are differences between women's and men's status, access to resources and to development opportunities, control of assets and decision-making powers. There are differences often also in the ways women's and men's contribution is perceived by developers.

2. In different household systems, men and women have different responsibilities in terms of work, and different obligations to provide food, other resources and cash income to meet family needs such as school fees, clothing and agricultural inputs.

3. The division of labour between women and men is based on socially constituted concepts of what is "women's work" and what is "men's work". It reflects the differences between women's and men's legal rights, access and control of assets and economic resources.

4. There is great diversity in the situation of women in developing countries, which varies greatly according to region, income level, social grouping, family situation, and between urban and rural areas. It is clear, however, that across all these diversities, women in all developing countries, particularly in poorer households, carry out an important range of productive economic activities.

5. Studies have demonstrated the importance of women's role in subsistence agriculture, where they produce almost all the food needed for family consumption. In most countries, they also play an important role in livestock care and the production of cash crops. They are generally extremely active in the informal sector, often taking the lead in starting up small, micro- and medium-sized enterprises in growth sectors such as services and small scale contracting. Where social constraints allow, they are also active in manufacturing industry.

6. However, women are often concentrated in low productivity sectors, in the least skilled and lowest status jobs, or in forms of outworking and subcontracting, which provide little legal protection. They frequently earn less than men for the same work.

7. In addition to their productive work, women carry out the bulk of what is defined as reproductive work, including not only biological reproduction, but also the care of the sick and the rearing of the children. They also provide most of the fuel and water collection, food processing, house cleaning and maintenance. Time-use surveys have shown that women in developing countries work significantly longer hours than men, in the performance of their multiple roles, and that their workload is often exhausting.

8. Field research has shown that women's work, paid or unpaid, is often not perceived as such either by their own community or by development experts, as it is regarded as being a natural extension of their domestic duties. Women's economic contribution is often 'invisible'.

9. Defining the economy mainly in terms of marketed goods and services - with some allowance made for subsistence agricultural production - gives a false picture of women's economic contribution to society. Much of women's productive, and all of their reproductive, work is unpaid, and therefore not valued in economic terms. Women's work, paid and unpaid, is critical to family well being.

10. However, women achieve this contribution in the face of formidable obstacles which are specific to women, which limit the outcome of their work and reduce their opportunities to benefit from new economic settings and incentives.

11. Socially defined roles, which are often very rigid, dictate women's and men's social and economic opportunities. In their own economic activities specific legal and social barriers often limit women's access to and control over productive resources, credit, extension services and technology.

12. Unequal power relationships between men and women are a common feature from the family to the public level. In spite of women's crucial contribution to development, their control over the economic, social and political processes which affect their lives remains limited compared to men's. Women have fewer opportunities to advocate their priorities, and to redirect resources in their favour.

13. Distorted power relationships lead to an unequal division of labour, rights and responsibility within the household and the community. In a vicious circle, it is then more difficult for women than for men to access opportunities which could enable them to participate in the decision-making process on an equal basis with men.

14. Inequalities between women's and men's rights are still a common feature. In some countries, adult women are still treated by the law as minors under the guardianship of their male relatives, whose consent they must obtain in order to enter formal employment, own or manage property, or appear in court.

15. Overall, girls only receive half as many years of schooling as boys. There are still many more illiterate women than men in every region of the world, particularly in rural areas. Women's access to education is mostly concentrated at the lowest level of the educational system, and socio-cultural constraints limit their access to vocational and technical education. The educational process tends to reinforce existing inequalities between women and men through inappropriate curricula based on gender stereotypes. As a result, women obtain lower educational qualifications, which exacerbates their labour market disadvantage.

16. Disparities exist also in the domain of health. Although stronger physically, female children are more vulnerable to early death than male children in some regions, due to differentials in feeding, care and health-care. Girls' lower status, and the lower returns from women's participation in the labour market, lead parents to invest less in girls' than in boys' education and health. This, in turn, causes losses from inefficient investment in and allocation of productive and human resources. In 43 out of 45 developing countries for which recent data is available, mortality rates for girls aged 1-4 are higher than those of boys.

### **III. IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

1. Neglect of differences between women's and men's roles, needs, interests and status in development planning leads to an incomplete picture of reality which has serious adverse effects on the whole results of development interventions, as measures and incentives designed to ensure the active participation of the population concerned cannot be properly targeted and the real impact of development intervention cannot be properly assessed.

2. Development interventions at project and non project level are often based on the implicit assumption that their results will be automatically beneficial to both women and men. This is unfortunately not always the case, as men and women have different baseline situations in terms of constraints and opportunities.

3. Often, development projects with a gender-blind approach require extra work from women, the output of which remains controlled by men, because of existing disparities between women's and men's access to and control of assets and resources. Also, services and incentives provided, such as credit and market facilities, training and extension, are often less easily accessible to women than to men. This is likely to widen the gap between women's and men's development opportunities. Beside, it results in a lack of motivation and skills for women, and seriously affects the overall results of project activities.

4. Similarly at non-project level (sectoral programme assistance, structural adjustment support, public expenditure review etc), the gender-blind approach fails to consider that gender differences and disparities at the micro-level have important implications also for the macro-level.

5. Macro-economic measures and interventions cannot be effectively planned, implemented and assessed without considering three main elements :

- the rigidities in the division of labour between women and men
- the interdependence between unpaid work (mostly female and invisible to current economic analysis) required for the reproduction and maintenance of human resources, and the paid work valued by economists
- the inequalities in access to and control of resources within the household

6. In a recessionary environment, for example, cuts in social expenditures, rises in prices of staple foods and decrease in household incomes lead to an increase of women's unpaid labour within the family and the community. Thus, what is regarded at macro-economic level as increased efficiency may be instead just a shifting of costs from a visible to an invisible, women's centred economy. At the same time additional incomes are required, and women are thus under pressure in both their paid and unpaid activities, which leads to increasing workload and deterioration of human capital.

7. Another important element to consider is that existing gender disparities seriously hamper the release of women's social and economic potential, while their contribution is crucial to the development of the whole society.

8. Development interventions in the past have rarely properly addressed this issue. Projects or measures specifically designed for women have often been marginal, small-sized and formulated without considering the need for an enabling environment to ensure sustainability, or without considering the related roles played by men. An exclusive focus on women which ignores men's major share in control of resources and decision-making is unlikely to give sustainable results in development projects, as much as the lack of recognition of women's and men's roles.

### III.a The priority areas for development cooperation

9. In fact, the multiple social and economic roles played by women in developing countries make them indispensable partners in all the four priority areas for development cooperation established in **article 130u of the Maastricht Treaty** : sustainable social and economic development, the fight against poverty, the integration of developing countries into the world economy, and democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

**10. Sustainable social and economic development** requires a qualitative and quantitative balance between human and natural resources. Women play a crucial role in the management of both.

a. Women are often primarily responsible for the consumption patterns of the household both in rural and urban areas, as well as for gathering fuel, water, and minor forest products. Despite this, women have been largely absent from formal decision-making on environmental strategies and interventions. Improving women's control over natural resources and benefiting from their experience, commitment and knowledge are important steps for avoiding mismanagement of the ecosystem.

b. Higher women's educational levels are closely associated with lower fertility and child mortality rates; increases in women's participation in the formal labour force are also associated with smaller family size. If the indirect effect of mothers' education on their children's health and education is taken into account, it clearly appears that women's education yields a high return on investment.

c. Improving women's health implies, as immediate consequence, decreasing risks associated with pregnancy and child birth. Spending on improved health care for adult women aged 15-44 offers the largest return from health care spending than for any other demographic group of adults (men or women). Furthermore, the marginal cost of providing a year of healthy life is smaller for this group than for any other.

**11. Poverty** is a multidimensional problem related to different factors of marginalisation which reinforce each other: lack of control over assets and resources, lack of access to services, lack of participation in decision-making. Therefore, the fight against poverty requires changes in economic, political and legal structures, to enable both men and women to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

a. Women are more affected than men by factors of marginalisation at all levels of society, and are often the poorest among the poor. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty. 60% of the world's rural poor are women, and the poorest households include a large number of female-headed households.

b. Women's economic contribution, through paid or unpaid work, is already crucial to family survival. Removing barriers to the release of women's social and economic potential is critical for poverty alleviation and produces significant returns for the whole of society. The encouragement of entrepreneurship and self employment for women is proving to be a self directed and targeted poverty reduction strategy.

**12. The integration of developing countries into the world economy:** macro-economic perspectives, which should guide development efforts towards the gradual integration of developing countries into the world economy, still too often lack the necessary link with the micro and meso levels.

a. Gender disparities contribute to shaping the response of the micro-level to macro-economic measures, as well as the features of the meso-level. The frequent underestimation of women's economic contribution, neglect of gender specific costs of macro-economic measures, and lack of attention to constraints on women's ability to benefit of some economic incentives, lead to the formulation of macro-economic packages which can be only partially effective or even have long-term negative results.

**13. The links between democracy, good governance, participatory development and human rights** are now widely recognised. The systematic under-representation of women at all levels of the concerned processes and institutions is a symptom of existing gender disparities.

a. Women's important contribution to development is not matched by their participation in terms of control over the economic, social and political processes which affect their lives. Measures taken by governments to change women's disadvantaged position have generally been inadequate as they were not attuned to women's specific needs and failed to address the existing power relations between women and men.

b. The full participation of women on an equal basis with men at all levels of political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination between women and men are indispensable conditions for democracy and respect of human rights. Physical violence against women, including domestic violence, is a violation of human rights which constitutes an obstacle to women's participation in employment and public life.

c. Changes in both men's and women's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are necessary conditions for achieving just and harmonious partnerships between women and men.

#### **IV. INTEGRATING GENDER ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

##### **1. General principles**

a. Gender is a social, economic and cultural dimension which cuts across all areas and sectors of development, and has crucial implications for the achievement of all development objectives. Therefore gender analysis must inform the conception, design and implementation of all development policies and interventions.



b. There is a direct link between women's participation in development and an equal footing with men and the attainment of overall development objectives. Therefore, defining and attaining development objectives is a matter of shared responsibility between women and men, and both should participate to and benefit from the development process on equal basis.

c. Unequal sharing of rights and responsibilities between women and men at all levels, mainly biased against women, hampers in different degrees the release of women's social and economic potential which is crucial to promote the advancement of the whole of society. Therefore major gender disparities are barriers to effective and sustainable development, and building a new partnership between women and men is a crucial societal issue.

d. Modifying existing inequalities between women and men is a complex, long-term, social and economic process. It requires changes in attitudes, structures and mechanisms at political, legal, community and family level. Development cooperation must encourage and support such changes through its relations with governments and civil society in partner countries.

e. The analysis of differences and disparities between women and men must be a key criterion for assessing the results of development policies and interventions.

## **2. Means and strategies**

### **2.1. Policy formulation and policy dialogue**

a. The formulation of all development policies, sectoral and non-sectoral, should ensure the adoption of an appropriate and consistent gender approach, acknowledging the building of an equal status between women and men as an integral and indispensable part of the development process, as well as the reduction of disparities between women and men as an indicator.

b. In policy formulation, gender relations should be acknowledged as a contributing factor in the operations of the economy and economic institutions. Efforts should be made to establish the necessary link between micro-, meso- and macro-level analysis.

c. To ensure the full participation of women on an equal basis with men in the development process, an appropriate institutional and legal environment should be created, establishing the principle of shared responsibilities between men and women at home, in the workplace, in the community and in the wider national and international context.

d. Gender relations are not fixed. They evolve in response to economic, social and political conditions, to opportunities and obstacles. This flexibility opens up a window for development interventions.

e. The general principles for gender-sensitive development cooperation should be a constant feature in all policy dialogue and negotiation with partner countries. In particular, external assistance should:

- stress the importance of the reduction of gender disparities as a "litmus test" to assess the results of development policies and strategies
- encourage and support the revision of existing policy and legal frameworks in a gender-sensitive way, and the removal of the barriers that presently limit women's public participation.

## 2.2. Formulate and implement gender-sensitive development interventions

a. All development interventions undertaken should be aware of existing differences and disparities between women and men and able to address them so to ensure that both women and men can equally share benefits and responsibilities.

b. External assistance should ensure that:

- gender analysis will orient all development interventions from the planning to the evaluation phase
- priority is given to interventions addressing major gender disparities

c. Gender analysis should be an integral part of the process for elaborating global country strategies for development cooperation. Both mainstreaming and positive actions should be considered as complementary strategy aimed at enabling the release of women's and men's development potential. Country strategies should thus ensure that:

- addressing existing gender disparities is among the criteria for identifying priority areas and sectors of intervention
- a gender perspective is adopted into all areas and sectors of intervention, and not only in those traditionally considered as relevant to women, to ensure the full and equal participation of women as well as men
- special interventions are provided, if necessary, to fill in major gaps between women and men

d. When non-project form of development aid are foreseen, it should be acknowledged that gender relations are an intervening variable. Efforts should be made to establish the necessary link between the micro-, meso- and macro-level analysis, ensuring that differences and disparities between women and men are considered and properly addressed in the formulation and evaluation of all interventions.

e. At project level, gender issues should be mainstreamed into all development interventions. In particular:

- gender analysis, gender expertise and gender-disaggregated information should be provided throughout the programme/project cycle, including making use of rapid appraisal techniques
- programme/project activities should explicitly include women, as well as men, among beneficiaries, and foster women's participation in activities aimed at upgrading production skills and earning potential, especially those linked to sectors of growth and priority in the national economy;
- women, as well as men, who will be participating in the programme/project must be consulted in the design stage;

- programme/project interventions should be assessed in terms of their direct or indirect impact upon both women's and men's activities, output and incomes in the targeted areas. Specifically, their potential for strengthening or undercutting the major areas of women's economic activities should be examined. If undercutting is a risk, support for alternative activities to maintain and expand women's output and incomes should be assessed.
- programme/project activities should be made accessible to women as well as men by making them compatible also with women's resources, constraints and opportunities. Where barriers to women's participation exist, measures to remove or reduce them should be pursued.
- gender-sensitive training should be provided to project staff; female staff should be utilized when necessary to facilitate women's participation
- a system for monitoring progress and evaluating impact on both women and men should be an integral part of project activities

f. Analysis of existing gender disparities may also demonstrate the need for special positive action measures as a necessary temporary strategy to bring women to a threshold level from which they can enter mainstream activities.

g. Large scale women specific initiatives are for example a particularly important option in those countries where addressing gender disparities is not an explicit feature of the policy being pursued by governments or is a controversial issue because of cultural and religious norms.

h. In all countries and situations, positive actions can be useful to abridge the time required for gender oriented actions to show beneficial effects. In general, willingness to initiate positive actions can be seen as the proof of governments' commitment to addressing gender related issues and can signal to public opinion, both domestic and international, a change of approach to long neglected disparities between men and women.

i. If women specific projects or measures are undertaken, they should meet the following conditions:

- being structurally linked to major sectors of activity
- being supported with adequate financial and technical resources
- being time bound in their execution, with a clear perspective of linking up with mainstreaming activities

### 2.3. Capacity building

a. Awareness and training on gender issues should be supported for those responsible for formulating and evaluating policy and legal frameworks in partner countries.

b. Where women-specific structures exist within government institutions, their catalytic role in fostering changes should be strengthened. Strategic location of these "machineries" within the administrative structure should be encouraged. Exchanges between national machineries of different countries should be facilitated, and interaction between government institutions and women's organizations should be encouraged.

c. To facilitate dialogue between governmental and non-governmental national and international bodies, consultations in partner countries should be carried out. These should involve government institutions dealing with gender issues, but also those concerned with policy planning, women's organizations and networks, development NGOs, universities, gender studies centres, training centres, independent researchers and practitioners.

d. Efforts should be made to backstop national bodies in charge of collection and systematization of statistics and data, in order to produce gender-disaggregated statistics and analyze already existing statistics with a gender perspective. Insufficient quantitative and qualitative data on differences and disparities between women and men often cause serious bias, both at policy and operational level.

e. The principle of shared responsibilities between men and women and their equal participation in the development process and benefits should be fostered at household and community, as well as at national and international level. External assistance should support this process also through strengthening civil society.

f. Support to civil associations should give priority to those promoting equal participation of women and men. Legal literacy should be promoted. The establishment of documentation and information centres should be encouraged also at non governmental level, taking into account that the sustainability of these projects is a long term consideration.

g. Women's organizations and international networks should then be encouraged to develop their own goals, strategies, targets and instruments, and to establish a dialogue with the various components of society. Gender analysis might show that autonomous types of institutions and resources are needed initially to enable women to reinforce their position vis-a-vis existing unequal power structures.

#### 2.4. Strengthening internal capacity

a. A crucial first step is to ensure gender expertise within development institutions on a long term basis. Gender specialists should be appointed at policy level, in the technical divisions and at the operational level, ensuring close coordination between them and with the other services of the institution. In developing countries, the use of local gender expertise, where available, should be supported.

b. A system for monitoring progress of gender policy and implementation should be established within the administration. The system should be integrated into the overall management information system of the organization, so that it is monitored at a senior management level.

c. Several studies have shown that what makes a real impact is the compulsory nature of operational procedures to ensure integration of gender issues and the fact that gender officials have a voice in project review. Institutional accountability mechanisms and measures should therefore be established. Accountability and "quality control" strategies must be extended to include consultants, who are responsible for much work in the field.

d. Professional staff both at headquarters and in the field should be enabled to assume increasing responsibility for implementing a gender aware policy and assessing its results.

e. Gender training should be provided on a regular basis, and the gender dimension should be integrated into other training courses and workshops.

f. Sufficient resources should be earmarked for promoting the catalytic role of the gender experts within the institution, covering areas such as elaboration of policies, methodologies and guidelines, gender training, research, thematic monitoring and evaluations. A certain flexibility should be foreseen in the use of these resources due to the continuous evolution of gender theory and practice.

g. Within the mainstream budget, resources should be made available for financing international networks of women and those pilot projects or positive actions which for any reason cannot be financed under bilateral agreements.

h. Analytical and operational tools for gender-sensitive development cooperation should be improved and increased. For some sectors which have been recognised as of direct relevance

to women's social and economic position (such as food security, agricultural and rural development) there is a considerable body of unambiguous strategies available. For other sectors there is still a crucial need to carry on research, provide inputs and analytical guidance both at the level of conceptualization and the level of operationalization.

i. Gender country profiles have proved to be a useful tool for country programming. They should contain not only systematized information on the condition of women in a specific country compared to that of men, including educational, economic, political and socio-cultural data, but also an evaluation of the institutional setting for women's issues, an assessment of the work of women's organizations and NGOs and a critical review of the programmes and projects carried out with the financial and technical support of different bilateral and multilateral donors.

## **V. TOWARDS CLOSER CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEMBER STATES**

1 In their declaration of 18 November 1992 on 'Aspects of Development Cooperation Policy in the run up to 2000', the Council and the Representatives from the Member States emphasized the need for the Community and its Member States to coordinate their development cooperation activities more closely, both when formulating policies and at the operational level. The Council also stressed that, in light of past coordination experience and of present needs, it would be more useful to pinpoint which sectors needed such coordination and what procedures should be used to make it more effective.

2 The Communication from the Commission to the Council and the Parliament of March 24, 1993, dealt with the identification of priority areas where policy coordination might be envisaged. It suggested that the role of women in development should be taken into account across the board when laying down objectives and means to achieve them in those areas singled out as development cooperation priorities.

### **3. General principles**

a. Coordination between the Community and the Member States in this field is not meant to bring in standardization but to increase the synergies and the effectiveness of aid in line with Council Resolutions. It will facilitate communication of a clear, consistent message on the importance of gender issues as an integral part of development co-operation, and will avoid duplication of efforts and dispersion of forces.

b. Community and Member States co-ordination in this field involves: establishing principles and a consistent framework for action in this field, ensuring that the operations of the Community and the Member States respect these principles and providing for consultation. The present communication should help to establish the policy framework which is to be adopted by the Council.

c. Initially, efforts will focus on the exchange of information and sharing of experiences and views. This will help to identify points of convergence, common objectives, priorities and guidelines for action.

d. An increase in the effectiveness of coordination between the Community and the Member States will only be possible if sufficient human and financial resources are made available to enable its proper planning and management and for monitoring and evaluating the new coordination strategy. The availability of human resources could be increased through the creation of additional posts for gender experts, by the provision of gender training for existing personnel, by the sharing of expertise between different European donors and through a rationalization of tasks at all levels.

#### **4. Policy consultation**

a. The Commission will organize meetings of gender experts from the Community and the Member States on a regular basis (at least once a year). These meetings will provide not only the opportunity to promote better mutual understanding and a common language, but also the opportunity:

- to exchange experiences and research results;
- to hold detailed consultations on the gender approach in a specific sector of intervention;
- to refine policy and study operational approaches vis a vis particular geographical areas.

b. As a basis for their policy and operational work, the Commission and the Member States will start to coordinate their initiatives in the fields of research, studies, data collection, and reviews. This could lead to the preparation and implementation of joint operations in line with the guidelines adopted by the Community and the Member States.

c. The Commission will monitor the progress made and will report to the Council.

#### **5. Operational coordination**

a. Pilot countries for gender operational coordination should be chosen among those which have already been selected as the loci for the coordination efforts in relevant areas of cooperation, and preferably among those countries where a minimum core of gender officers have been posted by the Commission or the Member States. If necessary, the Commission and the Member States should provide expertise to the Delegations and the Embassies, especially in the initial phase of the process.

b. In the pilot countries selected either the Community or a Member State may be chosen by common accord to lead coordination. The choice would be made on the basis of experience of coordination with the country in question, the scale of the support provided and its expertise on gender matters. The leader will be responsible for disseminating information, organizing ad-hoc meetings, and preparing an annual report to the Community and Member States.

c. Initially, operational coordination on gender issues will focus on ensuring that existing sectoral or cross-sectoral coordination in the country concerned is properly oriented along gender-sensitive guidelines. In a second phase, it would then move to the elaboration of a common global country strategy to integrate gender issues in all the main fields of operation.

d. More generally, the appropriate committees or groups will be used to keep a regular check on the application of the common policy guidelines adopted by the Council, and to monitor their application by the Member States and the Commission in practice.

#### **6. Coordination in international fora**

a. With regard to coordination in international fora, the principle of systematic consultation should be followed before and during sessions, meetings, conferences and seminars. Already existing coordination mechanisms should be taken into account. Coordination of gender experts is in fact already taking place through the DAC/WID experts' group at the OECD, which through the years has played an extremely valuable role in the development of WID/gender mandates, policy statements and action plans. A more structured coordination between the European Union Members will reinforce the activities of both groups.

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## ANNEX I

### FROM WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT TO GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

#### From WID to GAD

1. The Women in Development (WID) approach, developed in the 70's, concentrated on identifying the situation of women, providing information about women's life and mobilising women's groups at field level all over the world. In its initial phase, the WID analysis led to a proliferation of "women only projects" or "women's components" in sectoral, sub-sectoral or multi-purpose projects.

2. Equal-but-outside characterized these strategies. The projects initiated often neglected men's crucial position in the control of assets and in decision-making; beside, they were too often small size, marginal, welfare-oriented, and linked to ministries and executing agencies that lacked the financial and technical resources to enable self-sustaining development beyond the project context. The inadvertent result of such projects was largely to perpetuate women's isolation on the periphery of main development efforts.

3. Analysis tools have gradually been refined, leading to the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. GAD focuses on the interdependent relations between women and men (gender relations), rather than on women per se. The term "gender" refers to socially acquired and culturally specific attributes distinguishing men and women, while the term "sex" refers only to physical distinctions. As gender differences are historically determined and culturally specific, they vary across countries and regions and change over time.

4. Gender analysis in programme/project planning seeks to distinguish the resources, activities, potentials and constraints of women relative to men in a given socio-economic group. The aim is not only to address distortions and disparities between men and women but also to ensure maximum efficiency in pursuing development goals.

5. Following the further marginalisation of women deriving from the strict women-only project strategy, the need was recognised of a more global approach. Mainstreaming was thus developed as a new strategy, which aimed at integrating a gender perspective in all mainstream development policies, programmes and projects.

6. Mainstreaming does not exclude the need for positive action measures, programmes and projects oriented to the disadvantaged party, generally women, in areas where gender gaps are particularly strong, such as for example education and training, access to credit, or which by their nature especially concern women. These differ from the earlier "women-only" approach in being designed for maximum strategic effect, implemented on an appropriately large scale, and intended as important temporary measures to bridge major gender gaps and bring the disadvantaged party to a threshold level from which it can enter into mainstream activities.

#### Women's multiple roles and workload

1. For a long time, development assistance only addressed women's reproductive role; the emphasis was placed on social sector interventions. Later, women's substantial role as producers of goods and services was recognized and shaped investment programmes in the economic sectors. As women, characteristically, allocate their labour simultaneously to both productive and reproductive tasks, the unilateral approach to one or other set of roles diminished women's capacity to fulfil either set of tasks effectively.

2. A combined approach is now being developed, which recognizes the continuum in women's labour allocations and aims to increase women's productivity, health and nutritional status, so as to enable them to combine their productive and reproductive tasks more effectively. This approach has broad implications for national development planning in that it forges the necessary link between investments in both the economic and the social sectors.

3. Development interventions often assume that women's time is infinitely elastic, failing to note the range of their existing roles or the often exhausting demands these impose. Indeed, projects have often led to an increase in women's workload without bringing them compensating benefits. Projects and projects components for example rarely consider the need to lighten women's workload.

4. Social and technological support measures to reduce the amount of time spent in domestic activities, for example, should not be viewed merely as measures to reduce women's labour burden and address their time constraints, but as essential pre-conditions for the expansion of those sectors of production in which women play a major role.

### The household

1. The idealized model of the household in which decision-making, production, income and consumption are happily and equally pooled and shared does not exist as such. It cannot therefore be assumed that increasing household production and incomes will necessarily improve the living standards of all members.

2. Empirical studies have shown that within the household, the use of resources and labour and the distribution of income and output are constantly negotiated, and intra-household relations are often conflictive. The division of labour and the resource allocation process within the household is related to differentials in status and bargaining power. These mainly depend on control over assets and incomes, and are thus often biased against women.

3. Due to the existence of separate women's and men's budgets within the household, women's income, in kind or cash, is usually a much greater determinant of children's nutritional status than is men's income. In many households at the margin of subsistence, women contribute a major proportion of their labour and of their total income to satisfying household needs, particularly those of their children.

4. One out of every three households in developing countries is de facto, and less often de jure, headed by a woman. Not enough is known about the social and economic situation of these households, which now seems more diverse than was first thought. However, it appears that in many cases, the vulnerability of these households to poverty is exacerbated by a decline in community support under conditions of economic crisis, and by the failure and incapacity of governments to provide alternative support systems.

### Participation

1. Disparities between women and men in decision-making structures exist from grassroot to higher levels. Despite the widespread movement towards democratization in the past decade, women's participation in political and economic power structures has made little progress. Although women make up at least half of the electorate, only 10 per cent of the members of legislative bodies and a lower percentage of ministerial positions are now held by women globally. Women hold a minority of influential posts, be they in the civil service, private enterprises, trade unions, employer organizations, influential lobbies, local government or community councils.



2. With regard to development interventions, most project evaluations have concluded that a precondition for achieving sustainable development is that both women and men are enabled to express their needs and interests from the planning phase onwards. Existing gender disparities make it more difficult for women than for men to participate in this process.

3. Thus, development interventions are often designed without women's participation, even when they concern fields which are traditionally women's domain, such as water supply. Several projects have not offered women the opportunity to participate in the newly established management structures, ignoring even their informal role in the management of the traditional systems. When women are involved in development activities uniquely as a low cost labour-force, and not as productive resources and agents of change, the sustainability of the project is seriously challenged.

## ANNEX II

### EMERGING AREAS FOR SENSITISING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TO GENDER ISSUES

Within the changing political and economic environment, some areas for cooperation are gaining increasing importance in terms of political or financial commitment. It is important to ensure that a gender perspective is adopted in these domains. In other areas, recent research has produced important new gender perspectives which need to be applied to analytical and operational guidance.

#### Emergency operations and crisis prevention

1. While little involved in decision making, women and girls suffer the consequences of armed conflicts and militarism in special ways due to their status in society and their sex. Women and children constitute 80 per cent of the world's 25 million refugees and displaced persons, and as a result they have to contend with severe deprivation of goods and services, as well as with violence and insecurity.

2. Women and children have fewer options than men in terms of mobility, alternative sources of income, tradable assets at their disposal and skills. By necessity they tend, therefore, to become the major direct beneficiaries of food assistance. Support to women should form an integral part of the strategies aimed at consolidating interventions along the interface of relief, rehabilitation and development.

3. During emergency situations, customary socio-economic roles within societies are disrupted and there is a tendency for women to assume the roles and responsibilities that were previously men's. Emergency efforts should therefore, assist women in performing their new roles in the best possible way. Experience has shown, for example, that local women are an important resource for handling and distributing emergency food aid commodities, and that they initiate self help enterprises to meet the needs of the other crisis victims. Such initiatives should be supported to encourage a concept of self reliance, especially among refugees.

4. Refugee women should become active partners in assessing needs, planning activities and implementing them. In the aftermath of emergencies, rehabilitation and development interventions should not overlook the changes that have occurred in the gender relationships between men and women and the latter should be helped to maintain the new status they have acquired.

5. In disaster prone areas, which face recurrent food scarcity or famine situations, it is necessary to distinguish the economically vulnerable households and particularly vulnerable members within these households and identify their survival or coping strategies. In these cases, women's pivotal role in food production and their propensity to spend their earnings on food and other basic household needs become of primary importance. Assistance should therefore be given to increase women's production, raise their incomes and improve their skills.

#### Macro economic policy analysis and interventions

1. Gender divisions of labour, the differences in access to power and decision-making, and the differences in men's and women's access to and control of resources at household and community level mean that men and women face different constraints and have different needs when responding to economic signals.

2. Conventional macro-economic models do not take these factors into account, nor do they consider the interdependence between the unpaid work required for social reproduction and maintenance of human resources, and the paid work that economists count.

3. It is now understood that these defects in analysis may result in unforeseen and unwanted results for macro-economic policies, as well as limited effectiveness. Social phenomena, such as marriage and reproduction, are influenced by macro-economic measures in a manner that until now has taken government institutions by surprise.

4. In the last two decades, the aims of macro-economic policies have been associated with structural adjustment policies (SAPs). It has been increasingly recognized that the gender-blindness of SAPs may easily result in gender specific costs which weigh more heavily on women and girls than on men and boys, aggravating existing gender disparities. They may also create unforeseen results, for example in access and use of public services or in migration decisions.

5. Budgetary restraints tend to transfer costs from social sectors budgets to women, while monetary and foreign trade policies force them into the labour market or to spend more hours on export production. Additional pressure on women's workload is likely to hamper human resources development on the long term. At the same time, due to existing gender disparities, women are less likely than men to benefit from new economic opportunities.

6. Therefore, efforts should be made to adopt a gender perspective in macro-economic policies and programmes, exploring how gender factors can better inform the formulation and tuning of policy options. Efforts should also be made to improve the analysis of impact of macro-economic measures on women and men. If differential adverse impacts can be identified, measures to counteract these adverse impacts should be designed and implemented within adjustment programmes.

### Population

1. The recommendations of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 in Cairo should be taken into account in all population and family planning policies and programmes.

2. Family planning as such has been on the agenda of many development cooperation agencies for several years. The new strategy endorsed at Cairo emphasizes the numerous linkages between population and development and focuses on meeting the needs of individual women and men rather than purely on achieving demographic targets.

3. The Programme advocates making family planning universally available by 2015 or sooner as part of a broadened approach to reproductive health and rights. A gender approach is adopted in the Programme, which seeks to empower women by expanding their access to education and health services and enabling them to make informed choices about their fertility. At the same time, the Programme stresses that men should be encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and their social and family roles.

### Rights

1. The World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 established that the human rights of women throughout the life-cycle are "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal

human rights". A growing number of developing countries have now provided in their constitutions for fundamental rights and freedoms for both women and men, in line with the provisions of the Convention for the Elimination of all Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

2. However, constitutional guarantees of equality for women do not always result in immediate benefits in practice. Difficulties in adapting the whole legal framework in a consistent way, the influence of customary laws and of cultural practices, lack of legal literacy and of access to legal services continue to hamper the fulfilment of women's rights.

3. Women's health, safety and mobility is also endangered by high rates of male violence, including domestic violence. Little trend data is available, but violence against women is a serious problem worldwide and in 1994, the UN Assembly nominated a special rapporteur within the Commission of Human Rights on this issue.

