



DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE  
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

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**DAC GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT  
IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (WID)**

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**DAC GUIDELINES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (WID)**

**DRAFT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Purpose of the Guidelines*

1. These new *Guidelines* provide direction to DAC members in order to:
  - assist in the fulfilment of the commitments made in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995);
  - implement the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting statement on gender equality as a vital objective for development and development cooperation;
  - develop and implement policies and programmes fully consistent with both international and domestic commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment (WID).

*Why guidelines?*

*Gender equality is recognized as a vital issue for development and development cooperation*

2. Full development cannot be achieved unless women and the resources they represent are integrated into the development process. Investment in gender equality and women's empowerment is vital for improving economic, social and political conditions in developing countries within the framework of sustainable development. A focus on gender equality and women's empowerment (WID) is a means to enhance the total effectiveness of aid. The knowledge, insights and experience of both women and men are required if development is to be both effective and sustainable.

*New emphases in the Guidelines*

3. These *Guidelines* build on achievements and experience to date. They reflect changes in both the priorities and mechanisms of development cooperation. Major new emphases include:
  - a shift in emphasis from women as a target group to *gender equality as a development objective*;
  - an emphasis on *mainstreaming* gender equality issues into policy formulation, planning and evaluation, and decision-making procedures;
  - establishment of effective partnerships with local authorities, civil societies and external partners to secure *locally owned* strategies in this field;
  - an emphasis on the *supportive role of DAC members* in advocating the implementation of international agreements.

4. These *Guidelines* are designed to inform approaches for official development assistance as well as assistance to countries in transition.

*Development*

5. In keeping with the DAC statement *Shaping the 21st Century*:

*partnerships on  
gender equality*

*the Contribution of Development Co-operation (1996)*, these *Guidelines* are based on a partnership approach that emphasises leadership by partner governments and local actors. In this relationship, DAC members have two complementary responsibilities:

- to ensure the mainstreaming of equality considerations in their own processes and products (such as analyses, policies, position papers);
- to support the efforts of partners to promote equality (including support to partner capacity to mainstream equality considerations into policies, strategies and programmes).

*Implications for  
development  
cooperation agencies*

6. The DAC Gender Equality statement (1995) recognises that the adoption of gender equality as a strategic objective for sustainable, people-centred development implies a more comprehensive approach than previously followed by development co-operation. The *Guidelines* explore two primary areas: methods of development co-operation and internal equality strategies. In addition an annex provides guidance on gender equality and women's empowerment (WID) in relation to major themes on the development agenda: poverty, economic development, democratic processes, human rights, education, health, environment and conflict. The annex concretely demonstrates the implications of mainstreaming gender equality for each of these areas and provides some suggestions for possible programming options. It also illustrates how a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is essential to the achievement of other development objectives as well as important in its own right.

*Gender equality and  
development  
cooperation  
approaches*

7. Achieving results relating to gender equality and women's empowerment (WID) objectives is dependent on DAC members' capacity to incorporate gender equality concerns into all development cooperation. The *Guidelines* discuss a selected number of development approaches and illustrate how gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed. The *Guidelines* illustrate the relevance of gender equality across different programming options and reinforce the argument that gender equality is relevant not only in bilateral projects, but in **all** cooperation activities and channels including policy dialogue, institution at capacity development and emergency assistance.

*Gender equality  
strategies of DAC  
members*

8. One of the responsibilities of DAC members in development partnerships is to ensure that there is sufficient capacity on gender equality and women's empowerment. The *Guidelines* highlight four major areas for internal attention:

- **monitoring: goals, indicators and impacts** - goals, measurable targets and strategies are essential for DAC members, at both the overall institutional level and within all specific projects and

programmes;

- **leadership and accountability** - strong, consistent leadership is critical to effective policy implementation;
- **staff competence and specialist support** - recognition of the varied skills required to work with a mainstreaming strategy including generalist skills and specialist units;
- **institutional procedures and methodologies** - gender analysis is most effective when it is an integrated aspect of policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, rather than a separate activity.

*Monitoring Progress  
on the Guidelines*

9. DAC members should commit to monitor the implementation of these *Guidelines*, both individually and through DAC mechanisms (such as the DAC annual country memoranda and peer review process, country-based aid reviews, statistical reporting, and working groups).

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## **DAC GUIDELINES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (WID)**

### **I. Gender equality and effective, sustainable, people-centred development**

*Goal endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:*

*"gender equality is an overall strategic objective for promoting the role of women and therefore sustainable, people-centred development."*

These new *Guidelines* provide direction to DAC members in order to:

- assist in the fulfilment of the commitments made in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995);
- implement the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting statement on gender equality as a vital objective for development and development cooperation; and
- develop and implement policies and programmes fully consistent with both international and domestic commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

These guidelines would reflect the change from a 'women in development' approach to a broader gender approach.

*Commitment in the Platform for Action, from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995:*

*The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men (gender equality) are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples.*

*Gender equality as a development objective*

1. At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, both DAC members and their partner countries made commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* adopted at the Conference builds on the perspectives and strategies outlined at previous United Nations conferences on education (1990), environment (1992), human rights (1993), population (1994), and social development (1995). It is based on principles of human rights and social justice. It clearly recognises that gender equality and women's empowerment is essential for addressing the central development concerns of poverty and insecurity, and for achieving sustainable, people-centred development.

*Transforming  
development cooperation*

2. Globalization, the changing role of States, environmental degradation, a growing profile for civil society, declining official resources, and military confrontations all present challenges and opportunities for development cooperation. In this context, a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment provides a constructive entry point for transforming the development agenda. The incorporation of the knowledge, insights and experience of both women and men has been internationally recognized as essential for securing effective and sustainable development.

*Development benefits  
from gender equality and  
women's empowerment*

3. The DAC High Level Meeting held in 1995 endorsed gender equality as a vital goal for development and development cooperation efforts. Investment in gender equality and women's empowerment is not only important in and of itself. It is vital for securing sustainable economic growth and other development objectives. The commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the broad vision of development outlined by DAC members in *Shaping the 21st Century: the Role of Development Cooperation*.

*A gender approach*

4.

***Gender***

Biological differences between women and men do not change. But the social roles that they are required to play vary from one society to another and at different periods in history. The term *gender* refers to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. In most societies, men and women differ in the activities they undertake, in access and control of resources, and in participation in decision-making. In most societies, women as a group have less access than men to resources, opportunities and decision-making. These inequalities are a constraint to development because they limit the ability of women to develop and exercise their full capabilities, for their own benefit and for that of society as a whole. The nature of gender definitions (what it means to be male or female) and patterns of inequality vary among cultures and change over time. A recognition of this variability assists in the analysis of socio-economic contexts and relationships and the possibilities for change.

*More comprehensive  
approaches required*

5. The 1995 DAC High Level Meeting gender equality statement recognised that the promotion of gender equality implies a more comprehensive approach than previously followed by both partner governments and DAC members. The statement points out the necessity of identifying the structural causes of gender disparities and developing strategies to rectify imbalances.



### ***Gender equality***

Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment does not presume a particular model of gender equality for all societies and cultures, but reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it.

Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies.

*Gender equality is neither a sector nor a "women's concern"*

6. The perspective and commitments contained in the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995) and the goals endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting make clear that the pursuit of gender equality is not a "sector" for separate attention, but a broad cross-cutting concern that involves all sectors. Promotion of gender equality is not a "women's concern", but a broad societal issue that women and men need to address in partnership.

## **II. Gender equality strategies**

*New emphases in the Guidelines*

7. The adoption of gender equality as an explicit development goal will require changes in policy and practice in development cooperation. These *Guidelines* have been formulated to assist staff at all levels of organizations in DAC member countries, and particularly senior management, to undertake these changes. The *Guidelines* replace the DAC *Guiding Principles for Women in Development* adopted in 1983 and amended in 1989. They build on the achievements and experience to date and reflect changes in the priorities and mechanisms of development cooperation. Major new emphases in the *Guidelines* include:

- a shift in emphasis from women as a target group to *gender equality as a development objective*;
- an emphasis on *mainstreaming* to influence policy formulation, methodologies for planning and evaluation, institutional structures and decision-making procedures;
- an emphasis on the *supportive role of DAC members* in facilitating change through development partnerships, in particular through advocating for the implementation of international agreements.

The *Guidelines* are designed to inform approaches for official development

*Gender equality strategies support and strengthen DAC approaches*

cooperation as well as assistance to countries in transition.

8. Past experience has shown that effective gender equality strategies depend on and support adherence to the policy statements and principles adopted by DAC members, including:

- *People-centred development.* A focus on the human aspects of development is a prerequisite for considering gender equality.
- *A partnership model that emphasises local leadership and locally owned strategies.* The renewed emphasis by DAC members on leadership by local actors facilitates a focus on local efforts to define problems and solutions, local ownership of interventions for gender equality, and support for strengthening local capacities for effective action on issues of inequality between women and men.

*Mainstreaming as the key strategy in support of gender equality*

***Mainstreaming commitment in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995)***

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

9. Mainstreaming is the overall strategy adopted in Beijing to support the goal of gender equality. A mainstreaming strategy has two major aspects:

- the integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects;
- initiatives to enable women as well as men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision-making across all development issues.

A mainstreaming strategy does not preclude initiatives specifically directed toward women. Similarly, initiatives targeted directly to men are necessary and complementary as long as they promote gender equality.

*Empowerment of women*

10. A critical aspect of gender equality is the equal participation of women and men in decision-making about societal priorities and development directions. Women's empowerment generally refers to the recognition that women legitimately have the ability and should, individually and collectively participate effectively in decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives.

### **III. Gender equality and development partnerships**

***Goals endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:***

- ***"Focus on local communities' abilities to identify gender priorities and support actions in partnership with aid agencies."***
- ***"Help partners strengthen their institutional capacity to incorporate actions in favour of women and to develop new instruments for addressing gender equality."***

*A common commitment to gender equality*

11. The Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995), along with other international agreements, provides a common framework for partnership between DAC members and governments to work toward gender equality and women's empowerment. The *Platform for Action* clearly sets out the responsibility of national governments to promote gender equality and to formulate national strategies to implement the Beijing commitments. It also outlines the roles of other actors, including non-governmental and international organisations.

*Development partnerships on gender equality*

12. In keeping with the DAC statement on *Shaping the 21st Century*, these *Guidelines* are based on a partnership model that emphasises leadership by partner governments and local actors. In this partnership governments hold primary responsibility and DAC members should play a supportive role. The local momentum for change, as demonstrated by the commitments undertaken in the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995) and strong women's movements in partner countries, provide a good basis for dialogue and the identification of development cooperation initiatives.

*Two complementary responsibilities for DAC members*

13. In their relationship with partners, DAC members have two complementary responsibilities:

- to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in their own processes and products;
- to support the efforts of partners to promote gender equality.

DAC members will only be able to support partner efforts if their own policies and procedures reflect a genuine concern for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

*Partnerships with multilateral organisations*

14. United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and regional development organisations, including financial institutions, are important partners for DAC members. A significant proportion of official development assistance is channelled through these organisations. The responsibilities of DAC members in this relationship include:

- working together to ensure that multilateral organisations promote gender equality through the range of their activities;
- ensuring that institutional assessments and evaluations of multilateral organisations systematically consider gender equality;
- enhancing dialogue and coordination with multilateral organisations about specific projects and initiatives for gender equality.

*Coordination within and among DAC members*

15. Coordination is an important issue for DAC members at both the national and international levels. This includes:

- coordination among the staff of an individual DAC member country so that gender equality is an integral aspect of the development of all policy areas;
- coordination among units or staff representing the DAC member on various DAC groups and other international bodies to ensure consistency on gender equality in all messages, statements and presentations;

- coordination among DAC members preparing programmes in any one country.

Coordination on concepts, policy, and principles is facilitated by the DAC and its subsidiary bodies and will be assisted by the DAC Gender Action Framework.

*Specific competence required to support partner's initiatives*

16. In order to best support partners' initiatives, DAC members themselves require improved competence. This includes ensuring that their own policies and practices, and the knowledge and skills of staff, enable them to be effective partners in promoting gender equality. Understanding of the gender equality dimensions in all areas of development is crucial.

#### **IV. Gender equality and development cooperation approaches**

*Goals endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:*

- *"Reconsider the impact of non-project forms of cooperation, such as sectoral programme assistance, structural adjustment, public expenditure reviews, on women."*
- *"Include gender implications in analyses, policies, country and sector strategies."*
- *"Help partners strengthen their institutional capacity to incorporate actions in favour of women and to develop new instruments for addressing gender equality."*
- *"Increase policy dialogue with partners."*

*Gender equality goals relevant to all development cooperation approaches*

17. Recognizing that the primary responsibility for development priorities and programmes lies with partner governments, DAC members use increasingly diverse mechanisms to provide support. These forms include non-project assistance, policy dialogue, and the contracting-out of implementation. The ability of DAC members to implement commitments to gender equality is dependent on the extent to which all methods and processes of development cooperation reflect and advance gender equality and women's empowerment objectives. This includes those outlined below and any new approaches that may emerge.

*Support for partners*

18. The paragraphs below illustrate how DAC members can work through various development cooperation mechanisms to support partner efforts to mainstream gender equality considerations. Although the primary responsibility for development cooperation initiatives lies with partners, these approaches provide DAC members with important opportunities to advocate the promotion of gender equality and enhance partner capacities in this area.

*Policy dialogue*

19. Policy dialogue between DAC members and partner countries includes both formal discussions and less-structured, on-going contacts. Policy dialogue is increasingly used to advance major policy concerns. It is an important means by which DAC members can demonstrate their commitment to gender equality and foster constructive partnerships. In

pursuing policy dialogue, DAC members should:

- use policy dialogue to actively promote gender equality;
- prepare for policy dialogue by working with partners to analyse the impact of proposed initiatives on both women and men and to identify the opportunities for promoting gender equality;
- ensure that all agenda items in policy dialogue incorporate gender equality considerations;
- encourage national governments to include women's organisations and gender equality advocates in policy dialogue.

*Country analyses and strategies*

20. An effective mainstreaming strategy requires establishing gender equality as an objective that guides and informs basic decisions. It is important that both DAC members and partner governments consider gender equality at the early stages of the planning process, as decisions made then narrow the choices available at later stages. DAC members use country analyses and strategies to define the scope, goals, priorities and resource allocations of their bilateral cooperation. Decisions about the overall direction of development cooperation (often relating to sectoral priorities) influence possibilities to work toward gender equality and women's empowerment. To incorporate gender equality objectives at the country programme level, DAC members should work with partners to:

- prepare background economic, social and political analyses that outline and compare the situation of women and men and identify gender-based disparities;
- identify national policies and strategies on women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality, and analyse institutional capacities for incorporating gender equality concerns in public policy and planning;
- identify in-country gender equality advocates and consult with them on issues and priorities.

*Programme assistance*

21. General programme assistance or non-project assistance (as formally defined by the DAC) is closely linked to economic reform, including macro-economic restructuring, public expenditure reform, and liberalisation programmes. Programme assistance is important from a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective because of its broad impact on economic and social conditions and thus on the lives of women and men. DAC members have agreed that gender equality objectives should be reflected in programme assistance initiatives and the analysis of policy options for economic restructuring. DAC members have begun to develop methods for country economic analyses that support this commitment. DAC members should:

- promote dialogue and collaborative efforts among economists, social scientists and gender specialists, within their own organisations, in DAC deliberations and within partner institutions, thus supporting integrated approaches to social development and economic analyses that incorporate gender equality considerations;
- develop appraisal procedures for programme assistance proposals that include an examination of the impact of gender-based distortions on

the economy and on the efficiency of the economic reform programme (including distortions arising from discrimination against women in access to resources and services, women's unpaid work, and unequal exchanges within households);

- promote the inclusion of a broad range of participants in policy dialogue about the design of programme assistance initiatives, including both governmental and non-governmental advocates of gender equality and women's empowerment.

*Sectoral reform and restructuring*

22. DAC members support programmes aimed at sectoral reform and restructuring. These programmes often entail multi-donor involvement in the restructuring of national sector policies, expenditures and institutions, and may be pursued through various combinations of programme assistance, technical cooperation, and project activities. In undertaking such initiatives, DAC members should:

- promote acceptance by partner countries and by all participating donors of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in the reform of sectoral policies and institutions;
- ensure that the analyses carried out as the basis for reforms address gender equality as an integral issue;
- in weighing alternatives and in supporting the design of programmes, promote policy directions and institutional reforms that have a positive impact on gender equality and women's empowerment (this could mean, for example, removing obstacles to women's access to resources in the sector or improving institutional capacity to address the needs and priorities of women and men equitably).

*Bilateral projects*

23. Even with new development cooperation methods, bilateral projects remain an important delivery mechanism. There are now numerous checklists, guidelines and other resources that identify gender equality issues and strategies in different sectors. In addition to their continued efforts to use these insights effectively, DAC members should:

- strengthen linkages between the project and policy levels within their organisations to ensure coherence of gender equality policy objectives and supported activities and resulting impacts;
- support partners to improve project-level monitoring and impact assessment in order to understand how projects can contribute to gender equality objectives, how obstacles can be overcome, and how project design can be improved;
- analyse the comparative strengths and weaknesses of different interventions used in specific sectors to increase knowledge about strategies that have positive results and are cost effective.

*Institution strengthening and capacity building*

24. DAC members are increasingly concerned with the enhancement of national capacities in partner countries, in particular with strengthening institutional capacity for policy development, programme implementation and overall management. An important element of capacity, as emphasised throughout the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995), is the ability to identify and address gender-related needs and to formulate approaches that reduce

disparities between women and men. To contribute to this process, institution-strengthening initiatives supported by DAC members should:

- give priority to initiatives that focus on the capacities of partners to analyse policies, programmes and institutional cultures, and to develop change strategies that contribute to gender equality;
- assist partners to examine the gender balance within their organisations and to identify strategies to increase the representation of women at policy and decision-making levels;
- support the modification of national and sectoral systems for data collection to increase the availability of sex-disaggregated data;
- support research on gender equality by sectoral institutions, research organisations and advocacy groups to increase the national resources of partners in this area.

*Humanitarian and  
emergency assistance*

25. DAC members give high priority to humanitarian and emergency assistance. Although this assistance is delivered quickly and under hazardous conditions, there is growing recognition that these exigencies should not preclude attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, much of this assistance is delivered by NGOs and multilateral organizations with limited direct input by DAC members or partners. The capacity of these institutions to mainstream gender equality in policies, strategies and dialogue is a prerequisite for the full consideration of gender equality in this type of development cooperation. DAC members should:

- focus on the institutional capacity of organizations delivering emergency assistance to both ensure participation of women and men and to incorporate gender equality objectives into their programming;
- move beyond a focus on women as 'victims' in an emergency situation, to an approach which considers women's and men's differing vulnerabilities as well as their different capacities and coping strategies;
- support the development and use of creative methodologies to ensure the participation of women as well as men in relief and emergency programmes and to allow them to articulate their own needs and priorities.

*Projects of  
non-governmental  
organisations*

26. DAC members deliver considerable development assistance through non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This support is generally provided in response to project proposals developed by NGOs with no direct role for the DAC member in project design or implementation. Thus consistency between DAC members' own policies on gender equality and women's empowerment and NGO activities needs to be fostered through an on-going relationship that seeks to develop a common understanding of goals and methods. DAC members should:

- encourage a mutual learning process among DAC members, NGOs, and governments and facilitate a dialogue about best practices for the promotion of gender equality in projects and programmes;
- focus on the institutional capacity of NGOs to incorporate equality goals in their policies, procedures and relationships with partner

organizations and support capacity development in this area where needed.

*Public and private contractors*

27. Contractors (both public and private) play varying roles. They often prepare studies and evaluations for DAC members. They may also provide design and implementation support in projects that have already been negotiated between DAC members and partners. Gender equality goals will not be achieved unless the relative roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and contractors are accountable for performance. In order to ensure that this occurs, DAC members should:

- develop criteria to assess the capacity of contractors on gender equality;
- ensure that contracts and terms of reference clearly define responsibilities and state specific expectations about performance on gender equality.

## **V. Gender equality strategies of DAC members**

***Goal endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:***

***"Emphasise competence development, management responsibilities, accountability, and adequate monitoring and reporting of results."***

*Need for ongoing innovation*

28. Over the past twenty years, DAC members have made progress in building institutional policies, structures and processes that facilitate their work in support of gender equality. Future approaches will benefit from the lessons learned to date. Gender equality strategies must be formulated in the context of changes in both partner countries and the international environment. Effective action will require innovation in DAC member organisations with respect to:

- partnership strategies that build on partner responsibilities and support the capacity development of partners, yet also recognize the need for DAC member competence on gender equality issues;
- processes for policy formulation and planning that mainstream gender equality considerations;
- processes and competence for assessing the impact of development cooperation activities, including impacts on gender equality;
- mutual learning processes based on joint reflection and the sharing of experience among DAC members and with partner countries;
- flexibility and the ability to respond to changing circumstances and lessons learned in the process of implementation.

Such innovations entail changes in institutional cultures and structures, as well as the development of new instruments or methodologies.

*Monitoring: goals, indicators, and impact*

29. Improvements in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed to assess whether development cooperation initiatives are meeting gender equality and women's empowerment objectives. A prerequisite for evaluating progress and impact is the establishment of measurable goals (quantitative and qualitative) against which assessments can be made. DAC



members should:

A) *Within their own organizations :*

- i) formulate policies and strategies that clearly set out goals and the means by which overall progress of support to gender equality and women's empowerment can be assessed;
- ii) improve evaluation and monitoring capacity with a clear emphasis on the mainstreaming of gender equality into all processes;
- iii) regularly assess whether or not the overall, institutional objectives set have been achieved;
- iv) improve their own capacity for monitoring and evaluating progress in mainstreaming gender equality.

B) *At programme and project level:*

- i) support partner efforts to formulate clear, measurable goals and expected results relating to gender equality and women's empowerment (focusing on development impacts, not just the completion of activities);
- ii) support partner capacity to monitor and evaluate results achievement in projects, programmes and institutions and to understand the reasons for success or failure.

*Leadership and accountability*

30. Strong, consistent leadership is critical to effective policy implementation. Management and staff must be held accountable for policy implementation. When gender equality and women's empowerment is taken seriously at the management level significant progress can be made. Senior management responsible for development cooperation policy and programmes in DAC member countries should:

- ensure regular monitoring of the results of gender equality strategies and goals, granting a high profile to the issue and rewarding outstanding staff contributions;
- ensure consistent communication to both staff and others of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a strategic objective of development. in policy discussions, public documents and interviews and presentations;
- allocate sufficient resources to support policy implementation.

*Staff competence and specialist support*

31. Although staff development strategies have focused on introducing all staff to basic analytical frameworks, it is now recognized that varied skills are required to address gender equality and women's empowerment. All staff require generalist skills but particular sectoral or methodological concerns may require specialist staff at headquarters and field levels. Specialist units are still required to stimulate continuing attention to gender equality as policies, methodologies and issues evolve. DAC members should:

- identify the skills required by all staff in order to work toward gender equality in their specific areas of work, including the capacity to identify gender equality issues in their sector, to discuss policy goals

with partners, and to find expert assistance when needed;

- develop in-house expertise in gender equality and women's empowerment and recognise this as a legitimate professional skill in development planning;
- maintain a unit or structure that acts as a catalyst to facilitate policy implementation by the entire organization;
- maintain a unit or structure that acts as a catalyst to facilitate policy implementation by the entire organization.

*Institutional procedures  
and methodologies*

32. The mainstreaming strategy also has implications for the institutional procedures of DAC members. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be dealt with in normal routines and procedures in day-to-day work. A gender analysis is most effective when it is an integrated part of policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, rather than a separate, isolated activity. A gender perspective should be an integral aspect of all analyses undertaken. DAC members should:

- ensure that guides and procedural manuals incorporate gender equality considerations into the methods to be followed by staff, with priority given to the promotion of gender analysis at the initial stages of the planning process;
- ensure that the gender equality objective is reflected in the development of procedures for results-based management, including the specification of results sought, indicators for monitoring achievements, and evaluation criteria;
- ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment measures and indicators are part of the mainstream reporting structure and evaluation processes rather than a separate system;
- develop and maintain statistical systems and project monitoring systems that provide sex-disaggregated data;
- ensure that gender equality is addressed in all training and staff development initiatives.

## **VI. Monitoring progress on the *Guidelines* within the DAC**

***Goal endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:***

***"Emphasise competence development, management responsibility, accountability and adequate monitoring and reporting of results."***

*DAC mechanisms to  
learn from experience*

33. The effectiveness of development cooperation is continually enhanced by efforts to learn from experience, both by individual DAC members and jointly through the DAC. The DAC has several mechanisms to facilitate this process: annual country memoranda, the DAC peer review process, country-based aid reviews, statistical reporting, and working groups. The *Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation* are relevant to all these mechanisms and to the methods adopted to monitor implementation of the directions outlined in *Shaping the 21st Century*.

*Annual country memoranda*

34. Member countries prepare annual country memoranda for submission to the DAC. These memoranda are a means through which the DAC remains informed of developments in member countries and of ongoing and emerging themes of policy interest. They are also an important input into the peer review process. In preparing their annual country memoranda, DAC members should:

- ensure that the objective of gender equality is addressed systematically throughout the document;
- include a discussion of action taken to implement these *Guidelines* and an assessment of the resulting impacts.

DAC delegates should be prepared to present and discuss progress in the implementation of the *Guidelines*.

*Peer review process*

35. The DAC peer review process is a means of exchanging experience and enriching the discussion on effective strategies and practices. In order to address gender equality issues systematically in this process, the reviewing countries in cooperation with the DAC Secretariat should:

- integrate assessment of policy and action on gender equality throughout the review process;
- consult with gender specialists and advocates in the preparation of questions for the review;
- give priority to gender equality as an issue to be examined in field visits;
- discuss strategies and progress on gender equality with the senior management of the DAC member under review.

***Possible questions for peer reviews include:***

- ⇒ *How are these Guidelines reflected in the thematic and sectoral policies or strategies of the DAC member? (For example, do policy statements or strategies for matters such as democratic development, education or conflict resolution make the link between those issues and equality objectives?)*
- ⇒ *How are these Guidelines reflected in the processes and methodologies followed by the DAC member? (For example, what has been the DAC members' experience in addressing equality objectives in policy dialogue, the formulation of country strategies, sectoral reform initiatives, etc.?)*
- ⇒ *What mechanisms does the DAC member have to respond to partners' plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and priorities identified by women's organisation in partner countries?*
- ⇒ *What specific goals has the DAC member established in relation to equality objectives, and how is it monitoring implementation and impact?*
- ⇒ *Can the DAC member identify lessons learned and/or best practices that contribute to greater understanding of work to support gender equality? These lessons could relate to **process** (what techniques or methodologies facilitated positive results?) or **impact** (which specific interventions were more successful in contributing to specific development goals?).*

*Country-based reviews*

36. Country-based aid reviews offer opportunities for DAC members to assess the coherence and consistency of their actions in one partner country in support of locally-generated strategies for gender equality. In addressing this theme, the DAC should:

- consult with partner country organisations, including women's organisations and gender equality advocates from the government and civil society, about the issues to be addressed in the review;
- in cooperation with local stakeholders, including women's organisations and gender equality advocates, assess the extent to which DAC members facilitate the achievement of national objectives for gender equality and women's empowerment and the implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995);
- assess the extent of coordination on gender equality issues among DAC members active in the country and the appropriateness, consistency and complementarity of their efforts;
- assess whether DAC members in the country are applying these *Guidelines* in their policy dialogue and programmes.

*Policy marker for gender equality and women's empowerment (WID)*

37. The DAC policy marker for gender equality incorporating women in development (WID) is based on intentions at the design stage. The marker provides a means for individual DAC members to monitor their own progress in pursuing gender equality objectives. The marker provides a measure of the sectors and types of activities that merit further attention in pursuing the goal of gender equality. DAC members use the marker to report regularly to the DAC.

*Shared responsibilities*

38. The exchange of experience and lessons learned on gender equality and women's empowerment among DAC members has been led by the DAC Expert Group on Women in Development. With the adoption of the DAC Gender Action Framework, responsibility for coordination and monitoring will be more broadly shared. All representatives of DAC members participating in working groups, peer reviews, country-based reviews and the DAC itself are responsible for monitoring policy and action toward the objective of gender equality and women's empowerment. The permanent DAC delegates in Paris have a major role in ensuring that the *Guidelines* are reflected in all DAC deliberations.

*Role of the Expert Group*

39. The DAC Expert Group on Women in Development has an important catalytic and advisory function in assisting all representatives and delegates to take up these responsibilities. The major focus of the work of the Expert Group is to influence the whole body of DAC work. The relationship of Expert Group members with their colleagues in national capitals and in partner countries will be increasingly important. The members of the Expert Group will also continue to have a significant role in fostering the development of policy, strategy, methodology and competence in individual member countries through the work programme of the Expert Group as well as through formal and informal exchanges. Periodic monitoring of these *Guidelines* will also be led by the members of the Expert Group.

## Annex: Gender equality and the development cooperation agenda

### *Goals endorsed by the 1995 DAC High Level Meeting:*

*"Re-emphasise the socio-cultural aspects of development and the general need for a more people-focused approach which integrates social, economic and political analyses."*

*"Emphasise these principles in continuing and emerging areas of co-operation, in particular participatory development and good governance, human rights, and conflict resolution."*

*Gender equality objective must be part of the definition of other development objectives*

1. Sustainable, people-centred development is the overall goal of cooperation between DAC members and their partners. There are major challenges to be addressed: widespread poverty, ill-health, lack of education, societal disparities, armed conflict, and environmental fragility. The knowledge, insights and experience of both women and men are needed to solve these problems.

*Poverty and gender equality*

2. Poverty remains the central challenge for partner countries and development cooperation. Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to the shift from welfare orientations to more sustainable approaches. The lack of income, food, health care, education and opportunities that characterise poverty affect more women than men, and women's efforts to overcome poverty are further constrained by discrimination in access to social and economic resources. Increases in the capacity of poor women and men to shape the processes and decisions that affect their lives will require attention to the specific constraints faced by women in exercising their rights and claiming resources. In addition to improving their own understanding of the linkages between poverty and gender equality, DAC members can support partners' efforts to develop poverty reduction strategies through activities such as:

- the identification of macroeconomic strategies that tackle the root causes of the disproportionate number of impoverished women;
- the identification of policy and administrative changes that promote women's equal access to and control over economic resources and opportunities (including ownership of land, credit, training, access to market structures, employment);
- increased participation of women, gender experts and advocates in debate and decision-making about poverty reduction strategies.

*Economic development and gender equality*

3. Recognising that sound economic policy is a foundation for development, DAC members have focused on shaping macroeconomic environments conducive to growth. To date, neither DAC members nor their partners have given sufficient attention to the gender dimensions of macroeconomic policy, despite a growing body of research indicating that inequality can hinder economic growth. While equitable development requires growth, it also requires policies that generate secure livelihoods for both women and men, that distribute opportunities and benefits equitably, and that support participatory and cohesive societies. DAC members can work with partners to incorporate gender equality objectives in economic policies and initiatives through supporting, for example:

- the use of mechanisms such as public expenditure reviews to assess the impact of budget allocations on women and men and their respective interests, needs and priorities;
- the development of skills among economic planners to assess the impacts of economic policy by gender, including impacts on the prevalence of poverty, access to productive assets, employment opportunities and household conditions;
- initiatives to develop accounting mechanisms for unpaid work and indicators to monitor the impacts of policy by gender.

*Democratic processes  
and gender equality*

4. Democratic processes are essential to sustainable people-centred development as they enable both women and men to participate in decisions that shape the conditions of their lives and hold public institutions accountable. The democratic nature of decision-making processes is diminished by the systematic under-representation of women. Public and political institutions that include more women would be both more representative of the views and interests of the public and more responsive to women's interests and concerns. In order to work effectively with partners, DAC members can foster gender equality and women's empowerment in democratic processes in number of ways:

- supporting information campaigns to facilitate women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral processes;
- strengthening the effectiveness of women's advocacy organisations to enable women's concerns to become more visible, through training in leadership and advocacy skills;
- encouraging and assisting all partners to consult with women and women's organisations and to understand that men as well as women are responsible for responding to gender equality concerns.

*Human rights and  
gender equality*

5. The 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights highlighted the interdependence between human rights, democracy and development. It also clearly acknowledged that discrimination against women and violence against women are important human rights issues, as are the restrictions on the ability of women to exercise civil and political rights. DAC members can promote the human rights of women in initiatives with partner countries by, for example:

- assisting governments to analyse changes in national legislation and enforcement mechanisms to give effect to international standards on the human rights of women (including rights to an independent legal personality, to land and property, to protection against violence, and to political participation);
- supporting the efforts of governments and non-governmental organisations to understand the causes of violence against women, to work with victims and perpetrators of violence, and to achieve greater personal security for women in domestic and work environments;
- strengthening education on the human rights of women for key officials and decision-makers, including politicians, police, the judiciary, and civil servants.

*Education and gender equality*

6. Education is critical to the ability to participate fully in social, economic and political life and to the development of society as a whole. The educational disparities between women and men and girls and boys are important development problems. Lower rates of literacy, school attendance and educational attainment among women place limits on individual women and constrain societal productivity and progress. DAC members can support gender equality and women's empowerment in the education sector through, for example:

- assisting governments to formulate and implement strategies to increase the participation of girls at primary and higher levels, and enabling governments to maintain investments in these areas in the context of economic reform and structural adjustment;
- supporting the development of curriculum and educational materials that promote positive attitudes about women, the human rights of women, and equal partnerships between women and men.

*Health and gender equality*

7. Health, including sexual and reproductive health, is an essential component of human well-being. Because women are so visible in the health care system as both care-givers and clients, there is a widespread perception that gender equality and women's empowerment have been addressed. However, inequalities between women and men are evident in the health of individuals, in access to and use of health services, and in the structure of health care institutions and employment. DAC members can assist partners to incorporate gender equality in the health sector through initiatives that support, for example:

- health planning and services that recognize the needs of women and girls for health care throughout the life-cycle, and not only in relation to maternity and child care;
- policies and programmes grounded in a recognition of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and men, and a recognition of the links between equality and the exercise of these rights;
- strategies that target men as well as women for activities related to child health, fertility regulation and safe sexual practices, and that recognise men's rights and responsibilities in these areas.

*Environmental sustainability and gender equality*

8. Environmental sustainability depends on the management of the environment and natural resources by women and men at the local level as well as national policies and corporate behaviour. Effective management depends on careful identification of complementary and conflicting interests concerning resource use. Differences and inequalities between women and men are important to the identification of interests and incentives for sound environmental management. DAC members can assist partners to incorporate these perspectives in initiatives related to environmental management and regeneration through, for example, support for activities such as:

- the development of participatory planning procedures that enable both women and men to voice their views and concerns, and increase opportunities for participation in decision-making at the national and community level;

- the formulation of policies and programmes that recognise women as well as men as managers, producers and consumers of environmental resources;
- the development and use of environmental assessment methodologies that recognize the different roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints of women and men in managing natural resources in both households and communities.

*Conflict and gender equality*

9. DAC members have responded to the increased number of armed conflicts by focusing attention on conflict prevention, resolution, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Women and men generally experience conflicts differently: soldiers carrying arms are more likely to be men, sexual violation of women has been used as a tactic of war, refugee populations largely consist of women and children. The participation of both women and men is necessary to the processes of peace-building and development. Peace negotiations are generally among men, but women's contributions as formal and informal negotiators, lobbyists and campaigners is increasingly recognised. Initiatives by DAC members can reflect the objective of gender equality and women's empowerment in various ways, for example, through:

- supporting the participation of women and women's organisations in decision-making and conflict resolution through increasing their access to information and their skills in leadership and negotiation;
- reinforcing international standards and norms of human rights by supporting efforts to investigate acts of violence against women in situations of armed conflict and its aftermath, and providing training and other assistance to enable officials, prosecutors and judges to deal appropriately with such cases;
- giving priority to participatory processes to ensure that women's experiences and needs, as well as those of men, are an integral part of reconstruction processes.