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THE ROLE OF MEN AND BOYS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

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BACKGROUND

There is a growing interest among Governments and the international community in the role of men in promoting gender equality. Achieving gender equality is now clearly seen as a societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage men as well as women.

2. The attention given to the role of men and boys in gender equality has emerged from the significant gains made as a result of the international community's emphasis on the advancement of women. Building on these gains, the gender equality approach broadens the perspective on men and women's relationships to gendered structures of power and opens a space for addressing men's roles in gender equality.

3. Gender equality policy should both address ways men need to change, and encourage men to become agents of change.

4. Men's involvement in gender equality and work with men and boys is not new. There is a large body of research about men's gender identities and practices, masculinities, social relations and related matters. Academic journals have been founded for specialised research on men and masculinities, many research conferences have been held, and there is a rapidly growing body of international literature. Men's support for gender equality has taken a variety of forms including intellectual and public advocacy, organisational and political alliances, campaigns such as the White Ribbon Campaign and a variety of educational programmes for young men.

5. In addition, there has been a proliferation of projects and programmes related to working with men and boys implemented by institutions, ranging from large international development organisations to small community-based groups. Many of these projects focus on improving sexual and reproductive health, combating HIV/AIDS, reducing gender-based violence, and overcoming poverty and social exclusion. In many instances these diverse programmes and approaches to men's involvement are conceptually grounded in gender-equitable, pro-poor and/or rights based approaches to development.

6. These conceptual frameworks help make clear the linkages between the different thematic areas of work with men – such as the linkages with violence, structural inequalities (including those based upon race, class, physical ability and age), the spread of HIV/AIDS and poverty. Projects working with men and boys are seen not only as an end in themselves, but as a strategic way to achieve gender equality, reduce poverty, and ensure human rights.

7. While there are many examples of men's support of gender equality, it is also clear that significant resistance remains. Such resistance is based on the patriarchal dividend to men acquired from gender inequalities, including material benefits and power. Men as a group receive formal benefits such as higher incomes and informal benefits, including care and domestic service from women in the family. If social definitions of masculinity include being the breadwinner and being "strong", then men may oppose women's professional progress because it makes men seem less worthy of respect. In many parts of the world ideologies exist that justify men's supremacy on grounds of religion, biology, cultural tradition or organisational mission, for example in the military. These ideologies do not disappear with the advance of equality perspectives; anti-equality perspectives may adapt to changing social conditions and be revived or emerge in new forms.

8. To realise men's interests in change, a majority of men and boys must be persuaded that the benefits under the current gender order (the current system of gender relations in society) are less valuable than many now think – or that they come at too high a cost. Moving towards gender equality requires a basic shift from a gender consciousness built on dichotomy and privilege to a gender consciousness built on diversity and reciprocity. There are many positive trends in this direction, and many men who support them.

RATIONALE

9. Equality is a relationship between people. Gender equality is not an issue that only concerns women. It requires active commitments by men, and partnerships between women and men. While different political movements have placed gender equality on the agendas of international and national fora, it is only relatively recently that the issue of the active involvement of men and boys in achieving gender equality has been raised.

10. The rationale for involving men and boys in gender equality is manifold – and will continue to develop and expand as goals are realised and different gender and social arrangements emerge around the world. Men and boys must be brought into the framework of strategy, policy and micro politics of gender equality programmes.

11. Hegemonic ideologies of unequal power such as patriarchy suppress both women and men. Patriarchal ideologies eclipse the human capacities of men to care and love. Men pay significant costs within the current structure of gender relations. There are enormous health disadvantages to men including occupational health and safety costs (men predominate in dangerous industries such as mining), greater vulnerability to alcoholism, sexually-transmitted infections, imprisonment and homicidal violence.

12. In the formal economy, there is enormous pressure on men to spend longer hours in the workplace. In some occupational groups this results in a life practically consumed by "work". The negative side to a poor "work/family life balance" is that there is little time to

share with partners and children, and it is difficult to be a good father in any way except as economic provider.

13. Conventional divisions between men's and women's roles and expectations also narrow men's cultural experience. In education, for instance, boys and men predominate as students in "technical" courses and natural sciences, but are underrepresented in humanities, creative arts, social sciences and human services. Power oriented masculinities are often associated with ethnocentrism, rejection of other cultures and the maintenance of inflexible and rigid barriers to change.

14. Outlining the costs of gender inequality for men does not remove the fact that men are predominantly advantaged within patriarchal systems. It is clear therefore that involving men and boys is not a simple matter of requesting their participation in creating gender equality, especially if this means giving up the privileged positions they occupy within patriarchal structures. Seeking the active involvement of men and boys will entail a profound shift in the basis of societal structures. It should not, however, be assumed that such societal change will mean replacing one set of unequal power structures with another. Rather it involves redefining democracy and social justice in a way that creates a new social formation and opens the possibility of another gender-just way to be human.

15. There are clear benefits for men from involvement in creating a gender-equal society. In a world of gender equality, there will be less risk for men in experiencing and expressing the complete range of human emotions. Men will be able to enjoy more intimate, trusting and respectful relations with women and other men. Men will have more opportunity for sharing the care and contributing to the growth of young children – both as fathers and as professional caregivers. The possibility of a richer personal life and a fuller humanity is an important benefit of transformed and more equal gender relations. Moving toward gender equality does not mean loss of masculinity. It does mean that men as a group will in fact be able to share and be part of a broader, richer cultural experience. Another key potential benefit for men from gender equality is to live in a world where arbitrary inequalities of all kinds are rejected.

16. Research on violence, both personal and collective, has shown a persisting connection of violence to men as a group and specifically to dominance-oriented masculinities in hierarchical gender systems. Achieving gender equality will not totally end violence, which has many roots. But moving towards gender equality is an important step towards reducing violence. Men, who are victims of many forms of personal and institutional violence, primarily at the hands of other men, have a great deal to gain from a more peaceful non-violent world.

17. The involvement of men and boys in promoting gender equality is critical at this point in time, given the increasingly precarious conditions of life and livelihood experienced by increasing numbers of the world's population, the worsening sex ratios in some parts of the world, the global restructuring of world economies that affect household economies in differential ways, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The formations of dominant and violent military masculinities in conflict zones around the world create extreme forms of gender oppression. The active involvement of men and boys in promoting gender equality is a critical resource in peace building, peacekeeping, reconstruction and in eliminating displacement created by conflicts.

18. These huge global changes affect the most vulnerable sections of the world population, mainly women and children, but also large numbers of marginalised men.

Men's lives are as affected by globalisation, economic restructuring and HIV/AIDS as are women's lives. Men need to come out from the sanctuary of non-involvement or bystander positions and share in the tasks of caring for those who are sick, those who are unemployed, or those displaced by conflict. Boys and men cannot close themselves off from these conditions of social existence. The task of caring cannot be performed by women alone. There is adequate research that demonstrates clearly that men can change what they do when the material and social conditions of their lives change. It is important to keep sight of this capacity of men to change and to foster change in positive and fruitful ways. Human capacities are shared between men and women. It is important to acknowledge and expand men's capacities to achieve the goals of humanism and gender justice.

19. The time is ripe for involving men and boys. The international community has begun to articulate the importance of the roles of men and boys in creating gender equality and the benefits of greater equality for everyone. Economic restructuring and the shifts in global economic environments have also created circumstances that have forced men to rethink their roles and positions within existing economic structures and created a unique opportunity for new dialogues between men and women.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

20. The experts propose that the following set of principles should govern policies and programmes addressing the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

- Emphasise the active stake that men and boys have in gender equality, that is, the gains to men and boys.
- Develop integrated gender policies rather than separate and parallel policies for women and men ensuring that when a "gender perspective" is adopted in policies, attention is given to relations between women and men rather than to women and men separately.
- Recognise that working with men and boys toward the goal of gender equality faces short-term constraints and risks, but offers the potential for significant progress toward achieving gender equality in the long run.
- Work with men as allies to women in achieving gender equality through collaboration with, and accountability to, women's organisations and feminist movements.
- Ensure that funding for gender equality work with men and boys is not at the expense of existing or future funding for empowerment work with women and girls.
- Define specific roles for men and boys in developing and implementing policies and programmes for gender equality.
- Work with the men in positions of greatest power and influence (as local and national leaders, and policy makers) to ensure their commitment to and action on promoting gender equality goals.
- Recognise the well-being of men and boys as a legitimate aim of gender equality measures.
- Recognise the diversity of men's situation and assess the specific situations, interests, identities and privileges of different groups of men and boys and address their specific needs.
- Acknowledge that while men are responsible for gender norms that damage the lives of women and men they also suffer under these norms in different ways.

- Build on existing resistance to and questioning of gender norms that perpetuate gender inequality by some men and boys.
- Develop policies, programmes, practices and processes that both hold men accountable for their roles in structures of male power and at the same time assist men in learning about and healing from the harmful effects of gender norms in their own lives.
- Based on men’s multiple roles in relation to violence (including as perpetrators, survivors, witnesses and bystanders), mobilise men to end the interpersonal and institutional violence that sustains and results from gender inequality.
- Recognise sexuality as a fundamental dimension of human relations in which gender inequality is often expressed and enforced. Respond to the complexity and diversity of meanings, desires, practices and identities in men’s sexual lives. Address the connections between misogyny and homophobia in the construction of harmful norms of male and female sexuality.
- Work with the capacities and potential of men and boys to be actively involved in achieving gender equality. Positive aspects of traditional male roles can be drawn upon, such as strength, courage and leadership.
- Ground gender equality work with men and boys in the context of local cultures and traditions, as well as community practices and structures, that are supportive of equal relationships between women and men.
- Ensure that research on issues related to men and boys and the goal of gender equality include participatory or community-controlled research, with mechanisms to develop the capacities of communities to design and conduct their own research.
- Connect gender equality measures involving men and boys with a general framework of human rights and social justice. Within this framework, use shared experiences of multiple forms of oppression to promote solidarity between women and men for social justice and gender equality.

MAJOR ISSUES

A. Socialisation and education

(i) Rationale

21. Views about what it means to be a man have roots in early childhood. In most societies, a key aspect of gender inequality is that mothers and other female family members (or female staff at day-care centres) have the main responsibility for caring for babies and young children. This means that boys and girls come to see care giving as a “female” task.

22. At a very early age, children tend to imitate the behaviour of same-sex family members. Boys who observe fathers and other men treating women as inferior or being violent toward women, may believe that this is “normal” male behaviour. From early ages, girls are generally kept closer to their mothers and to home, while boys are often encouraged to spend time outside the home. In adolescence boys often spend more time in male or mostly male peer groups.

23. Boys often confront rigid codes defining what boys can and cannot do. They may be taught that to be manly is to be competitive and aggressive. Boys who show interest in caring for younger siblings, in cooking or other domestic tasks, who have close friendships

with girls, who display their emotions, or who are later than their peers in having sexual experience, may be ridiculed.

24. Stereotyped conceptions of attributes and roles, for women and men, may be reinforced by schools, religious institutions, cultural norms, mass media, relatives, friends or peers. Fairy tales, children's stories, oral histories, songs and games often reinforce gender stereotypes. Children's toys in most cultures are also sex stereotyped. In many school settings, boys and girls see messages in school materials, books and stories that reinforce gender stereotypes.

25. Child development is complex and there are many forces for change. When boys interact with adults and peers who reinforce alternative ways of being men – for example, men involved in caring for children or in domestic tasks, or women involved in providing for households or in leadership positions – boys are more likely to be flexible in their ideas about roles of men and women.

26. It is important to consider the subjective experiences of men and boys who are not passive recipients of gender norms but who instead filter and construct their own meaning from them. Boys and men have the ability to question views of gender equality, and often do so.

27. Education is widely recognised as contributing to the production of gender inequality. Schools, however, are also important sites for learning about gender equality, and education can be a key means of change towards a gender-equal culture.

28. Considerable experience has now been gained with programmes to increase gender equality in education, some programmes starting in early childhood. In many countries, both developed and developing countries, there have been sustained efforts to promote gender equitable curricula and practices, which have shown positive results in terms of both boys and girls being less rigid in their views about what is and is not “proper” behaviour – for instance, challenging notions that boys derive their identity only from physical strength.

29. Having realistic classroom discussions about gender roles, while not easy, is a key strategy to promote gender equality. Effective implementation of gender curricula requires teacher education. Teachers and school administrators often have their own deep-seated beliefs about these issues. Parents sometimes support, and sometimes resist, the questioning of traditional ways. Group discussions for teachers, school administrators and parents about these issues are also useful.

30. Introducing gender in the classroom is complicated by gender inequalities in the education system itself. In most countries, women are the majority of teachers at the elementary level, and are on average more poorly paid than men in the teaching profession. In many parts of the world, boys are socialised (or allowed) to be sexually aggressive toward girls within the school system, highlighting the need to engage school staff and boys in rethinking gender norms.

31. Within formal education, there are issues about differential access and treatment of boys and girls in the school system, and about the channelling of boys and girls into different areas of study. According to UNESCO figures in 2002, 86 countries achieved gender parity in primary education and another 35 were close to doing so. In parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, North America, Australia and in a few countries in the Pacific region, girls are not only enrolled at UNESCO, higher rates than boys but are

performing better in school. In spite of this, men continue to have access to better employment and professional opportunities and earn more than women.

32. There are differences in inequalities in the ways various groups of children participate in the school. In low-income urban settings, even when they are enrolled in school, boys may be relatively marginalised in the school system, especially boys from racially discriminated groups. Gender inequalities in the school system must be seen within the context of reduced educational and social sector budgets, themselves a product of structural adjustment policies and the debt burden.

33. Education occurs beyond the family and the school. Sites of importance for gender equality include:

- The mass media, particularly media and advertising targeting children and youth: In many parts of the world, the number of hours children and youth spend watching television has increased. While mass media can sometimes offer exposure to new gender roles, they more often present women and men in traditional gender roles;
- The Internet: Internet has become an important space for youth socialisation in many parts of the world. Boys usually have more access to the Internet and video games, which tend to present violent versions of masculinity, and which have been shown in some studies to contribute to aggression in boys. A “gender digital divide” has developed, with boys and men using computer technology more than girls and women;
- Informal peer groups, particularly peer groups made up of other boys and men: In most cultures, manhood is judged and proven in front of male peers. While some male peer groups reinforce traditional and sexist norms, there are also male peer groups which promote alternative, more gender-equitable norms. Male peer groups can be important spaces for holding boys accountable for sexist behaviour;
- Youth clubs, sports groups and armed forces: Sports groups, while promoting teamwork, are often places that promote competitive and violent forms of masculinity. Police forces and the military also participate in this socialisation. In many parts of the world, thousands of young men are recruited to armed forces, which generally reinforce notions of manhood associated with violence, but could also be an important venue for gender sensitive adult education.

(ii) Recommended changes at policy level

- Carry out critical reviews of curricula, including at the preschool, primary and secondary level, to include ways of promoting gender equality that engage boys as well as girls;
- Develop training for teachers, administrative staff and other groups dealing with children and youth (for example, health and social service professionals and police), to promote ways to engage boys and young men in gender equality. This should include sessions in which adult staff examine their own views about gender equality and assumptions about boys and male youth; Value, in school reform efforts, gender equality as an educational outcome which is as important as basic literacy and numeracy;
- Include messages and activities targeting boys and young men and promoting gender equality within existing sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention education and family life education curricula;

- Strengthen use of mass media campaigns (using television, music videos, billboards and other), for positive, non-violent messages about manhood, including participation in domestic and household tasks and care giving, and respect for women;
- Promote the engagement of young people in action for gender equality. Since there are many young men who already question gender inequalities, change agents already exist. Young people themselves can advise on, and create, programmes and campaigns addressed to boys and young men;
- Incorporate a lifecycle approach in strategies for gender equality education. This includes, among others, early childhood education, an appropriate approach in adolescence when the potential for critical thinking provides the opportunity to question gender stereotypes, and skills-based approaches during the transition from school to work.

(iii) Recommended programmes

- Use existing programmes with well-developed curricula and group education processes, which have been evaluated and are successful in leading to attitude change, to engage boys in gender equality. Partnerships between Governments and non-governmental organisations should be encouraged to make such curricula and strategies widely available;
- Develop programmes to provide boys and youth with specific skills, such as on child care or domestic work;
- Engage religious organisations as partners in gender equality education for men and boys, inviting them to explore religious teachings (for example, about husbands in marriage relationships) that promote gender equality and social justice;
- Engage sports groups in the public and private sector, to promote gender equality among boys and men. This should draw on existing experiences to engage boys through football coaches in Latin America, and “locker room” projects used in some countries;
- Provide information in parent education programmes to fathers about non-sexist and gender equitable ways to rear children, emphasising the advantages of such approaches, and taking advantage of existing materials and strategies;
- Engage the military in re-defining their formal and informal education programmes related to gender identities and relationships, building on existing efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention, and gender-based violence prevention initiatives for the armed forces that have been implemented in the Pacific region, Latin America and elsewhere.

(iv) Research needs

- Carry out impact evaluations on efforts to engage boys and men in promoting gender equality (at the primary school level, in preschool programmes, among youth);
- Study socialisation and learning processes through which men learn about gender issues in different parts of the world, and among different ethnic groups and social classes;
- Undertake research which can contribute to formation of positive gender identities in diverse contexts, such as religious organisations, military, and sports groups;

- Examine pathways towards change in boys' and men's attitudes related to gender equality at both individual and societal levels, taking into account generational differences and similarities.

B. Workplace and economy

(i) Rationale

34. There is a need to approach the issue of gender equality holistically, in line with the mission statement of the Beijing Declaration which affirms that “the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities...”

35. The workplace is a major site of inequality between women and men, and therefore a major arena for men to participate in promoting gender equality. However, many men gain benefits from gender inequality in the workplace and may feel compelled to defend it. Work is an arena in which masculinities are formed and/or consolidated. In many regions, the gender segmentation of work is sustained by cultural definitions of masculinity. Work is characterised by specific structural arrangements which simultaneously reflect and shape broader societal hierarchies.

36. The workplace is generally a space of male privilege. Different groups of men – from different races, ethnic backgrounds and classes – experience both privilege and inequality/vulnerability in the workplace in different ways.

37. Gender equality at the workplace must include a commitment to eliminating income inequality based on gender, which disproportionately affects women. Embracing gender equality requires a redefinition of “work” itself, to include the informal sector and domestic labour as well as labour in the formal economy. This redefinition addresses the structural inequality that comes from valuing the private and public spheres differently.

38. The outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly “Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” very clearly states the need to reconcile employment and family responsibilities and the positive effect of such measures as maternity and paternity leave and also parental leave, and child and family care services and benefits. Men should be provided the opportunity to redistribute their time between productive and reproductive labour. Work in the domestic sphere has to be granted more status, for example by including reproductive labour as a key issue in considerations of labour market reform and taxation policy.

39. The “workplace” includes not only worksites in the formal labour market, but also in the informal sector, where millions of people, particularly in the South, make their living. The informal sector poses different problems of gender inequality and vulnerability for men and women. The impact of global economic restructuring which has changed the nature of work, and in many places has affected the pattern of participation of women and men in the workplace, should also be considered.

40. Given men's investment in work and the widespread cultural acceptance of the role of men as breadwinners in many countries, the experience of unemployment poses major problems for masculine identity across class lines, which can have serious consequences for gender equality. The psychological impact of unemployment on men must be carefully examined. When men are unemployed they cannot be the “breadwinners”, yet they may still

feel the pressure of social expectations that presume men are breadwinners. In this regard, men place heavy burdens on themselves, and sometimes families and society compound these pressures on men. Limited prospects of employment for younger men (particularly in poorer countries in the South, but also in some places in the North), is devastating to their sense of self-worth. Unemployment and work insecurity are therefore very important areas of concern for the mental and social health of men and boys in society.

41. As research in many countries shows, the great majority of senior managers, both in the corporate sector and in public sector organisations, are men. Using managerial authority, and managerial capacity for initiative, is one of the most immediately available ways for men to promote economic and workplace gender equality. At the same time, the majority of union leadership positions are held by men – so union initiatives are also important ways for men to act towards gender equality.

(ii) Recommended change at policy level

- Use legislation, organisational restructuring and industrial bargaining to reduce gender segmentation in the workplace, both in public sector employment and in the private sector;
- Use legislation, regulatory authority and wage bargaining to reduce income inequality between men and women;
- Ensure support from men in leadership positions in all types of organisations – public sector, corporations, unions and community organisations – including through role-modelling and publicly endorsing gender equality in their workplaces;
- Define the fiduciary responsibility of employers for promoting gender equality;
- Introduce or expand specific parental leave policies, providing for both women and men;
- Frame “family-friendly” employment policies in such a way as to encourage men, as well as women, to use employment flexibility;
- Design promotion policies so as to create incentives for male employees to share domestic work and care;
- Encourage the recruitment and training of men for occupations involving “care” work (for example, early childhood education and nursing), while at the same time ensuring that this does not have negative consequences for women’s employment;
- Examine public sector budgets for the specific impact of public expenditures on men as well as women, especially for the incentives or disincentives they create for men to support gender equality;
- Review economic and workplace policies for the way they define men’s contexts (for example, as breadwinners for families) and create incentives or disincentives for men to support gender equality;
- Encourage mass media to communicate messages about broader, less segregated economic roles for both men and women, for instance by reducing the stereotyped presentation of men’s and women’s work in advertising;
- Develop and use gender sensitive policies in the informal economy, to redefine the roles and responsibilities of both women and men;
- Encourage trade unions to define gender equality as a central part of economic democracy, and expand the traditional concept of collective bargaining to address care work and gender equality issues for both men and women;

- Encourage trade unions to address the gender gap in representation and leadership positions in these organisations.

(iii) Recommended Programmes

- Develop community education and support programmes to assist men in dealing with unemployment in a gender-equitable way, encouraging negotiation and sharing with women in response to economic crisis;
- Support skills programmes for youth at the point of transition from school to work, especially male youth with limited educational qualifications, expanding the spectrum of opportunities beyond narrow conceptions of masculinity, and encouraging youth to adopt a gender-equal approach to the workplace;
- Expand employer and union-based programmes that involve men in efforts to end harassment and violence in the workplace;
- Fund trade union education programmes that involve men in discussion of gender equality issues, and involve men in developing workplace equality measures;
- Provide mandatory gender equality training programmes for public sector managers and legislators to promote more responsible decision-making.

(iv) Research needs

- Research the connections of work and masculinity, including work and life cycles, male networks and social capital, and men and unemployment;
- Investigate men's perceptions of appropriate male behaviour in the workplace and their support for workplace gender equality;
- Study the impact of global economic restructuring on patterns of men's work and involvement in the domestic sphere.

C. Sexuality, health and HIV/AIDS

(i) Rationale

42. Health and sexuality are significant areas of life where gender inequalities appear, or are constructed. Men often have the capacity to influence women's health outcomes and their access to health services. Men exert power and influence in households through their interpersonal relations, and in communities and societies, through their institutional roles as decision-makers and leaders in political, economic and cultural spheres. At the interpersonal level, men can hinder women's access to health clinics – or inhibit women's positive health practices. At the institutional level, male decision-makers and leaders often exert control over health services and resources.

43. Gender inequalities in sexual relations have a pervasive influence on women's well-being and on both women's and men's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. This is recognised in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the 2001 General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. The Declaration stresses that gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS.

44. The spread of HIV and progression to AIDS are significantly related to the position of men in gender relations. In most societies men have predominant control, or predominant initiative in sexuality. Men who hold attitudes and beliefs which prioritise men's pleasure over women's, or assume men have rights to women's bodies, increase women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. There are specific sexual practices, sometimes preferred by men, which also increase women's vulnerability. Yet there is significant diversity among men, shaped by local contexts and cultures, and many men act in responsible and caring ways.

45. Promoting men's positive and responsible involvement in sexual and reproductive health is a key element in building gender equality. Men can make important contributions to gender equality in the area of sexuality by striving for egalitarian and consenting sexual relations and by taking a responsible and caring role in relations to pregnancy, birth and child-rearing.

46. Men as well as women are placed at risk by certain norms of masculinity. Masculinity is understood in many contexts as stoic, self-reliant, tough, brave, vigorous, daring and aggressive. Men's engagement in high-risk behaviour, including unsafe sex and intravenous or other drug use, may be seen to enact and confirm masculinity. Norms of men as tough and invulnerable also shape men's unwillingness or inability to seek help and treatment when their physical or emotional health is impaired. Such norms of masculinity increase men's vulnerability to HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and this in turn may have negative consequences for women's health and well-being.

47. Specific circumstances or practices place men at special risk. Impoverished young men, economic migrants and refugees may use sex as an escape in the context of lives with low job security, lack of control over life chances, and personal frustration and dissatisfaction. Some men use intravenous drugs, placing themselves at risk of HIV and other blood-borne viruses and of passing these on to their female partners. Men's HIV risk is heightened in prison, because of unprotected and/or forced sex, injecting drug use, and other risky practices such as tattooing, skin piercing and blood-brother rituals. Male police and soldiers in the male-dominated cultures of these services may have greater numbers of sexual partners than men elsewhere; they are more likely to have sex with sex workers; some may rape women; and they may also have been brutalised by their own victimisation.

48. There is also sexual diversity among men, with complex impacts on gender inequality. Men who identify themselves as heterosexual may have sex with other men, and some may sell sex to other men. Homophobic stigma, discrimination and prejudice limit men's ability to disclose their sexual identities and practices, and therefore can compromise women's well-being. Homophobia reinforces narrow and dominating constructions of masculinity, further contributing to gender inequality.

49. There has been little effort to make existing male methods of contraception – condoms, withdrawal, vasectomy, and periodic abstinence – acceptable to a much larger audience. New reversible methods for men could help address the gender imbalance in contraceptive responsibility. These methods are, however, still years away.

50. Increasing attention is being paid to the role of men and boys in sharing the responsibilities to provide comprehensive care and support to those infected with HIV. Family members – almost overwhelmingly women and girls – usually provide care services, which are often unrecognised and unpaid. The unequal distribution of care giving between women and men in relation to HIV/AIDS in the household and community, especially in worst-affected countries, impacts negatively on women's access to work and

girls' participation in schooling. Men have an important role to play in promoting women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions, control of economic resources and full participation in decision making.

51. Some men are already striving to have consenting and respectful sexual relations with women and other men, involved in care and support for those living with HIV, and involved in advocacy in support of sexual diversity and sexual rights. These efforts must be built on.

(ii) Recommended changes at policy level

a) Promote responsible sexual behaviour of men and boys

- Support responsible sexual behaviour by youth and men through Government educational policies, and allow youth to explore alternatives to those social norms which promote risky behaviour, the sexual double standard regarding women's and men's behaviour, and the association between men's sexual experience and sexual status;
- Implement sexuality education that promotes a diverse and positive view of sexuality with a gender equality perspective inclusive of men; Promote men's condom use through diverse media, such as television soap operas, advertising campaigns, and other fora;
- Make condoms widely available to men and boys, as well as women and girls, in secondary schools, from retail centres and elsewhere;
- Engage men with leadership positions in Government and community life to publicly encourage men and boys to play an active role in supporting both their own sexual and reproductive health and that of women and girls;
- Remove any organisational and programme obstacles that prevent men from supporting their own and women's sexual and reproductive health;
- Endorse and enforce codes of conduct in uniformed institutions and services prohibiting the use of sexual violence within institutions and against communities.

b) Address health care needs of men and boys

- Promote men's participation in and responsibility for contraception, including through increased use and acceptance of existing and effective male methods of contraception and take steps to increase the social acceptability of such methods;
- Ensure that funding for men's health programmes complements and supports, and does not compete with or undermine the provision of health care for women;
- Endorse and promote harm minimisation strategies in prisons, including the provision of condoms and injecting drug equipment to inmates;
- Guarantee the right to diverse sexual expression. Work to remove the stigma, prejudice and discrimination which hinders men's ability to disclose particular sexual practices and orientations and thus compromises the health of their female partners;
- Adopt, implement and enforce measures that reduce vulnerability by protecting the rights and facilitating access to services tailored to the particular needs of highly vulnerable populations including men who have sex with men;
- Ensure that sexuality education includes content focused on sexual diversity;
- Address men's involvement in sexual exploitation in their roles as clients, organisers and traffickers in commercial sex work/prostitution;

- Ensure that, in adopting laws which sanction or regulate commercial sex work/prostitution, such laws impose at least as significant a burden on clients (the vast majority of whom are male) as they do on sex workers/prostitutes (the majority of whom are female). Governments should consider the adoption of models of regulation in which clients rather than sex workers/prostitutes are subject to legal sanction;
- Adopt and ensure strict enforcement of laws prohibiting trafficking of women and girls.

c) Promote involvement of men and boys in care and support

- Ensure promotion of education by national and international public sector agencies to funders, policy makers and service providers about the importance of increasing men's involvement in HIV/AIDS care and support activities.

(iii) Recommended programmes

a) Promote responsible sexual behaviour of men and boys

- Address, through family planning, reproductive and sexual health agencies, the relationships between HIV and STI transmission, unplanned pregnancy, other sexual health problems, and men's violence against women. This should include issues of sexual communication, negotiation and consent. Agencies should work to promote alternatives to stereotypical male attitudes which underlie sexual coercion, such as a sense of entitlement in controlling sexual encounters;
- Develop partnerships between family planning, reproductive and sexual health agencies and anti-violence services, human rights agencies and legal bodies, to facilitate integrated programming on men's sexual violence;
- Develop programmes that prepare young men and women to negotiate in a gender-equitable manner sexual, reproductive and health decisions;
- Build the capacity of Governments and civil society to develop public education, community mobilisation and service provision strategies that address men in the multiple roles of men and boys in relation to sexual violence and abuse, as perpetrators, witnesses and bystanders, victims and survivors;
- Urgently expand sexual health and gender equality programmes within uniformed institutions and services, building on existing initiatives which engage men as partners in such contexts.

b) Address health care needs of men and boys

- Adopt, in addressing intravenous drug use, a gender-sensitive perspective which recognises the relationships between men's drug use, masculinity and women's health. Health, medical and community agencies should address the ways in which men's intravenous drug use puts both themselves and their intimate partners at risk of infection with HIV and other blood-borne viruses, whether through sexual transmission or shared drug use;
- Examine the role of male doctors, decision-makers and policy-makers in health and medical services in sexual and reproductive health, and determine and provide for gender-specific in-service training needs;
- Consistently invite men's positive participation in reproductive and sexual health provided by health and medical services, including HIV/AIDS related activities and services, as well as antenatal care and childcare programmes;

- Provide in-service training for male staff in health services to sensitise and equip them for positive roles in fostering both men's and women's sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS awareness.

c) Promote involvement of men and boys in care and support

- Develop training curricula for teacher training colleges, social work programmes and nursing programmes to encourage men's involvement in HIV/AIDS care and support activities in both the formal and informal sector;
- Develop campaigns to increase men's involvement in HIV/AIDS care and support activities, fostering relationships with media and with well-recognised male celebrities.

(iv) Research needs

- Carry out studies of men's health-related attitudes and practices that promote men's involvement in care and support, including HIV/AIDS-related care and support;
- Evaluate the efficacy of initiatives aimed at increasing men's involvement in care and support;
- Conduct research in rural and semi-rural areas to determine local specificity in men's involvement in promoting gender equality;
- Investigate men's roles in facilitating or adversely affecting women's reproductive and sexual health, access to health services, and involvement in HIV/AIDS care and prevention;
- Study the development of new male methods of contraception, including hormonal and reversible surgical methods;
- Identify local practices and traditions which can be drawn upon to promote men's involvement in efforts to achieve gender inequality in the fields of sexuality and health.

D. Family life, domestic work and work/life balance

(i) Rationale

52. Many gender inequalities have their bases in imbalances in domestic work and in the relationship between paid work and family life. Men as well as women suffer negative consequences from these imbalances, and have much to gain from better contact with children and inclusion in family life. There is wide recognition of a need to increase the participation of men in domestic work, to adopt family support policies, and to encourage reconciliation of family and working life for both men and women. These principles have been stated in documents such as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, and the Agreed Conclusions 1996/3 of the fortieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

53. Contemporary social transformations of the public domain have had a major impact on the private domain. One of the significant changes has been the accelerated movement of women into the public world of paid work. This movement has in some part been accompanied by affirmative policies that have enabled the continued and expanded presence of women in the paid workforce.

54. However, the counter movement of men into the world of domestic labour and care work has not been so substantial, and is less well documented. It is important to consider the extent to which men are already involved in care and domestic work, and identify what men actually do in the domestic domain. To the extent men are not already involved, it is necessary to consider how their move into care work can be enabled, and what gains and benefits flow from men's role in domestic life for women, for children and for men themselves.

55. The adult-child relationship has been placed within a human rights frame. Children have a right to expect parental care. However, it is equally important for all adults to have the opportunity to be part of children's lives, including men. There is a basic human value embedded in the work of childcare and the reproduction of human life and culture into the future.

56. How can this desire of men to be active partners in promoting gender equality be enabled in families and domestic life? Who is responsible to translate this desire into active practice? Men themselves have the primary responsibility. Women can play a role in enabling changes in men's lives. Governments can promote "care enabling and enhancing" policies. It is important that these policies reach across different sectors of Government and are sensitive to a civil society-government interface.

57. In many cultures, groups of men are already present in care work and domestic work. But this aspect of men's lives has remained poorly documented. It is important to document these care practices. Disseminating information about men's involvement in care is, in itself, a positive step. Policy can draw on and enhance existing good practices in families and communities.

58. Public sector programmes that encourage active parenting by men now exist in many countries. Outstanding examples can be found in the Nordic countries, which introduced leave systems in the 1970s, and now include specific provisions for both fathers and mothers, and parenthood training for fathers-to-be. Pioneering public policy and institutional practice provide a framework for a wider social transformation in which active fatherhood has become a norm.

59. Other programmes exist at the level of civil society, including those that focus on adolescent fathers, using venues in the health care system (hospitals and public health centres) and cover issues of pregnancy, birth, infant care and fatherhood. Other programmes draw men into active involvement in the reproductive health of their wives and the post-natal care of children.

(ii) Recommended changes at policy level

- Use financial and social policy to improve the balance between work and family life, and encourage men to make an equal contribution to domestic work;
- Expand paternal leave provisions;
- Create disincentives for employers to demand overtime work;
- Create a legal structure for permanent part-time work and incentives for men to use it;
- Develop aspects of family law that enable men to be active partners in the lives of children and dependents; review and make appropriate changes in adoption policies and the care of orphans and adopted children;

- Take measures to help teenage and young fathers be involved in the support and care of their children while continuing their education and training. Such measures include:
 - Requiring education and training institutions to design their programmes and schedules to facilitate care work by teenage and young fathers without breaks in study; and
 - Structuring health services concerning pregnancy and early childhood to promote the participation of young fathers;
- Recognise workers' childcare obligations in setting terms of employment and schedules of work;
- Include incentives for childcare contributions in recruitment and promotion policies;
- Build into collective bargaining strategies the possibility for men's involvement in care work.

(iii) Recommended programmes

- Provide work-based day-care centres in all enterprises with a certain number of employees, counting men as well as women in calculating child care needs;
- Create education programmes that give boys and men the skills and knowledge to take on new roles in households, families and the domestic sphere. Such programmes include:
 - School-based "life skills" courses;
 - Adult education programmes directed at men and boys at community level; and
 - Teacher education programmes to increase capacity for gender education of boys and youth.

(iv) Research needs

- Document the actual involvement of men and boys in care and domestic activities, and identify areas where action is needed;
- Carry out time use surveys documenting patterns of domestic work by women and men;
- Monitor men's use of parental leave and flexible employment provisions;
- Study the family involvement of men working in international and transnational organisations, as well as of men as decision-makers and role models for other men;
- Research long-term effects of fathers' involvement, both on the children and on the fathers' lives;
- Document "fair families" which have adopted more equal models of family responsibilities, to understand what leads to success in terms of gender equality;
- Study the diversity in participation in family responsibilities between different cultures, both inside countries and between countries;
- Research the different forms of fathering, including young fathers, sole fathers, old fathers and gay fathers.

E. Gender-based violence

(i) Rationale

60. Violence against women was identified as one of the twelve critical areas of action in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Fourth World Conference on Women recognised that gender-based violence is a major obstacle to the achievement of the goals of equality, development and peace. Programmes to address this issue have closely examined the causes of violence and concluded that it is founded in unequal gender power relations.

61. One definition of gender-based violence is any form of violence used to define or keep in place strict gender roles and unequal relationships. In other words, gender based violence is a policing mechanism to "keep women (or different types of men) in their place", to assert "who makes the decisions" in a relationship or "who holds the power".

62. This violence is related to dominant and often repeated definitions of what it means to be a man and a woman – such as masculine norms that equate being a man with being strong, powerful, heterosexual, successful and entitled to privileges over women. Violence is often used by men when they do not live up to these ideals or feel that they are being challenged.

63. Gender-based violence is mostly men's violence towards women and girls, but it can also be violence toward other men and boys (in the form of bullying, baiting, violence against homosexuals or transsexuals, sexual abuse, etc.). Gender-based violence takes many forms – physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as restricted freedoms and rights, coercion and/or threats.

64. The term "gender-based violence" is useful in prevention work in that it helps ground violence firmly in gender which opens doors to more carefully explore the gender socialisation processes surrounding boys and girls, men and women. It also highlights the connections between gender-based violence and other types of violence used as "policing mechanisms" to keep social hierarchies in place and to perpetuate inequality – such as the violence behind racism, homophobia and other types of discrimination.

65. Gender-based violence is influenced by the socialisation of boys and men. Many men come to believe that violence against women is part of masculinity, and that subordinating and undervaluing women is a mark of manhood. These men do not see gender-based violence as a problem, and it is justified as "normal" or as a means of discipline and correction. However, as research on boy's education and socialisation shows, there are alternative paths of learning for boys, which can lead to non-violent adult masculinities committed to equality between men and women.

66. In the past, efforts to challenge gender-based violence focused on women as victims or potential victims through programmes focused on protection and victim support. Men were generally regarded as perpetrators, even though in reality many men do not violate women. Development organisations and grass-roots groups working on this issue have stressed the need for gaining more knowledge about the contextual and relational aspects of gender-based violence. Taking into account the context in which violence occurs also means focusing on attitudes and behaviours of men, as they are the main perpetrators of violence against women and play a significant role in the lives of many women as intimate partners, fathers, sons, work mates and peers. Challenging the dominant model of masculinity is one of the main ways to deal with unequal gender relations and violence against women.

67. During the past decade, there has been a rising interest in men's involvement in programmes that hitherto targeted women only, including reproductive health and gender based violence. Methods for involving men have been developed and men's initiatives have emerged in many parts of the world. Projects on gender-based violence focused on men

have developed an approach which analyses and challenges gender inequalities and concepts of masculinity. In this approach men are not seen as the problem or as criminals who should be punished, but as allies and partners who are part of the solution.

68. A gender equal society is one that is free of gender based violence. Involving men and boys is a strategy for creating a non-violent and gender equal society. Men and boys are important agents for changing attitudes, behaviour and the wider power relations which sustain gender-based violence. Programmes for men against gender based violence aim at positively influencing both men who oppose violence and those who do not. Men have merits, capacities and attitudes that can be utilised to positively influence gender power relations and end gender-based violence. Men also play critical roles as protectors, supporters, and partners.

69. Gender-based violence should be tackled as a violation of basic human rights and a manifestation of gender inequality. Gender-based violence should be identified and dealt with in all development and human rights interventions.

(ii) Recommended changes at policy level

- Review and implement international commitments related to prevention, protection, and service provision regarding gender based violence;
- Involve men and boys in all gender-based violence programmes as agents for change (as allies and targets);
- Develop or review national gender equality policies, in relation to the role of men and boys in combating gender based violence;
- Formulate programmes to combat gender-based violence at different levels (national, regional, and international) reinforcing the involvement of boys and men in programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

(iii) Recommended programmes

a) Awareness-raising and educational campaigns

- Raise awareness among policy makers, politicians, and faith groups on the magnitude and implications of gender-based violence;
- Develop gender-based programmes for boys and girls which foster an antiviolence masculinity, in schools, sport clubs, community service organisations, and trade unions, etc.);
- Raise awareness of key Government officials on gender-based violence (police, judiciary, security forces, prison authority, lawyers, military, etc.) and provide tools for promoting gender equality;
- Initiate public debates to promote understanding of the relationship between power relations between women and men and gender-based violence.

b) Network and alliance building on gender based violence

- Support networking of non-governmental organisations that work with men to end gender-based violence;
- Support partnerships and alliance building between women's organisations and men's organisations working to end violence and/or promoting human rights;
- Support strengthened networking among different organisations working with men nationally, regionally and globally;

- Create local, national, regional, and global resource centres for materials on gender-based violence, particularly on materials on men and masculinity;
 - Support learning and sharing of experiences among organisations working with men and violence against women (including through internet dialogues).
- c) *Capacity building on gender based violence*
- Support training of male programme staff in development agencies on gender based violence as a human rights and gender equality issue;
 - Provide technical support to Government agencies to integrate gender-based violence in their health, educational, and poverty reduction programmes, including allocation of budgets for working with men and boys to combat gender-based violence;
 - Include gender components, particularly on gender-based violence, in the training curriculum of police, military, prison authority, judges and prosecutors;
 - Train community leaders on gender, masculinity and gender-based violence, and the importance of creative non-violent role models and mentors for boys.
- d) *Service provision and integration*
- Provide telephone hotline services to men and boys who use violence and/or are the victims of violence;
 - Provide protection, healing and justice for the victims and survivors of gender-based violence;
 - Provide effective and accountable responses to the perpetrators of violence, by both criminal justice systems and the community agencies that both hold perpetrators accountable for their violent behaviours and support their healing process.
- e) *Advocacy and lobbying*
- Advocate among policy makers (in Government, Parliament, civil society organisations, universities and the private sector) to further understanding of the critical role of boys and men in achieving non-violence and gender equality;
 - Advocate for the allocation of resources from different stakeholders (for example, Governments, the regional development banks, World Bank, United Nations entities, bilateral agencies, national social funds and foundations, international non-governmental organisations, etc.);
 - Lobby parliamentarians, judges, religious leaders, and community leaders to support programmes that aim to end gender-based violence and to change behaviours and attitudes of men and boys.

(iv) Research needs

- Conduct action oriented research in the area of masculinity and violence against women, within the life cycle, and in the context of different social classes;
- Measure men's and boys' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) regarding gender-based violence, and identify strategies that encourage men and boys to take actions to end gender-based violence;
- Study the social and economic cost of gender-based violence and use the findings for advocacy to encourage greater involvement of men and boys in combating gender-based violence and for justifying the investment of resources;
- Research the interlinkages between gender-based violence and masculinity.

RESOURCES

70. Gaining men's involvement in promoting gender equality requires an investment of human and economic resources. There are many compelling reasons why these resources should be made available.

71. While promoting men's involvement in gender equality may require a substantial investment of resources in the short term, it produces significant cost savings over the long term. This becomes especially clear when the costs of continued gender inequality are taken into consideration. Men's violence against women, for instance, produces staggering economic and social costs, detrimentally affecting economic performance and efficiency, while taking a devastating toll on millions across the world. Two examples make this clear; domestic violence in Canada is estimated to cost the country some \$1.6 billion per year; while, for the United States, losses have been estimated as high as \$67 billion. Investing resources in efforts to increase men's involvement in the promotion of gender equality offers important cost savings. In New Zealand, the cost of family violence in 1993 was at least \$1.2 billion, more than the earnings from the export of wool.

72. As long as systematic gender inequalities persist, which deliver advantage to men over women and promise future advantage to boys, men and boys have an ethical responsibility to use their resources to change the system. The existing pattern of gender inequality – men's predominant control of economic assets, political power, cultural authority, and armed force – means that men (often specific groups of men control most of the resources required to implement women's claims for justice. Thus, involving men in efforts to promote gender equality will free up significant resources not currently available. Furthermore, research indicates that a growing number of men support the investment of these resources and recognise that they benefit in the long run from the growth in collective well-being that flows from the better education of women, from improvements in women's health and from women's overall empowerment.

73. Recommendations on resource allocation should be targeted to national Governments, the United Nations, philanthropic foundations; private sector and nongovernmental organisations.

Recommendations

- Utilise existing volunteer programmes (for example, United Nations Volunteers) in involving men and boys in promoting gender equality;
- Utilise existing funding and initiatives to promote men's active involvement in efforts to achieve gender equality;
- Utilise existing poverty reduction initiatives, health outreach programmes, rural development schemes, trade union activities and other public and private sector initiatives reaching families to tackle the relationship between poverty, gender inequality and poor health outcomes;
- Encourage corporations, particularly those that may have a self-interest in promoting gender equality with men; for example condom manufacturers, sporting goods manufacturers, car makers and sporting events organisers, producers of products for men and boys, to commit resources to increase men's involvement in promoting gender equality;

- Build the capacity of local communities and civil society to engage in advocacy efforts to persuade their national and/or local Government to make resources available for initiatives that increase men's involvement in promoting gender equality;
- Promote partnerships between civil society and the corporate sector to fund and implement initiatives aimed at increasing men's involvement in promoting gender equality. These should include effective workplace HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services and initiatives aimed at violence prevention;
- Provide sustained funding that allows for effective programme implementation and that facilitates taking effective programmes to scale;
- Encourage cooperation among stakeholders with a view to sharing costs;
- Encourage the use of existing budgets for funding gender equality measures that offer alternative and more effective ways of achieving budget goals, for example, use Government military budgets to fund gender equality conflict resolution and peacekeeping initiatives.

KEY ACTORS IN PROMOTING THE ROLE OF MEN AND BOYS

A. Public sector organisations

74. Public sector organisations, whether national Governments or international development organisations, have a powerful influence on the gender related attitudes and practices of men. One of the most important arenas of action for change concerns the public sector as employer. Together, national Governments and multilateral development organisations employ very large numbers of men and women, and put them to work in organisations that have internal gender divisions of labour, and organisational cultures that define gender in specific ways.

75. In many parts of the world Governments have moved strongly towards equal opportunity principles and practices, often ahead of the private sector. One result is that the public sector has a relatively high proportion of women, and women are more likely to be promoted to very senior positions than in the corporate sector. Government can thus provide a socially important model of fair employment. This is also true of development organisations which have a wide reach and influence in settings where there are still few examples of equitable public cooperation among women and men. Indeed, for development organisations, with their unique positions as mediators between societies and individuals, advocating for more equality through example (in addition to words) is a critical way forward.

76. Many public sector workers are committed to an ideology of public service. Many believe that the public sector exists to serve the common good, and see their work as defined by the public interest. These beliefs may be a powerful support for men to act in the cause of gender equality. To ensure that men act to promote gender equality within the public sector, it is crucial to have support from men at the top organisational levels. It is also important that men in power support women involved in promoting gender equality processes.

Specific recommendations to public sector organisations regarding internal gender equitable policies and practices

- Develop policies to reduce gender segmentation in the workplace, both in public sector employment and in policies affecting the private sector;
- Take initiatives to reduce income inequality between men and women;
- Encourage men in leadership positions within the public sector to support and publicly endorse gender equality in their workplaces;
- Widely disseminate examples of public sector initiatives to improve men's roles in promoting gender equality;
- Implement and publicise organisational policies that nurture more gender equitable norms – such as gender competencies for staff, paternity leave, flexible work hours, childcare facilities, and enforced sexual harassment policies;
- Frame flexible family-friendly employment policies to encourage both men and women to use employment flexibility;
- Design promotion policies so as to encourage male employees to share domestic work and care;
- Encourage the recruitment and training of men for care work, with attention to potentially negative consequences for women's employment;
- Examine public sector budgets for the specific impact on men and for the incentives or disincentives for gender equality;
- Review all workplace policies for the ways they define men's situations and create incentives or disincentives for gender equality;
- Make specific provisions to support the involvement of male officials in childcare and family responsibilities within international organisations;
- Establish venues for men to talk to other men about gender issues, in addition to opportunities for men and women to discuss these issues together. Both men and women need their own spaces to discuss personal and difficult issues;
- Develop policies and practices that encourage perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence to seek rehabilitation.

B. Private sector and civil society

77. Organisations in the private sector have their own internal gender order that affect the social positions of women and men. Corporations may function as exemplary employers in terms of gender equality, introducing fair employment practices, anti-discrimination measures and gender-inclusive decision-making. Here, as in the public sector, the men who hold predominant organisational power are critical in the process of change.

78. In addition, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played a pioneering role in successfully promoting women's rights and forwarding a gender equality agenda. Important lessons have been learned that can be applied to efforts to increase men's involvement in promoting gender equality. Like the public sector, the NGO sector is built on a spirit of volunteerism and is characterised by a commitment to social justice. Many men within civil society organisations have a commitment to these principles and, as such, are often eager to take action to promote gender equity.

Specific recommendations to private sector and civil society organisations regarding internal gender related policies and practices

- Encourage and support men in management and in the wider workforce to turn gender equality principles into practice;

- Disseminate examples of good practice, and find ways of sustaining positive initiatives;
- Develop strict and rigorously enforced sexual harassment policies;
- Develop internal policies and practices that encourage perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence to seek rehabilitation;
- Facilitate and encourage a balance between work and family life in the workplace.