



## Overview

This core module provides training activities to introduce the gender management system (GMS). It is based on the *GMS Handbook*, the guide to setting up a GMS and to the general elements – enabling environment, structures and mechanisms, and processes – that apply across all sectors.

## What's in this module?

As the foundation for the rest of the Trainer's Guide, this module introduces the key elements of the gender management system and how to apply them. It includes basic introductory activities that can be adapted for any of the sectors. The first two activities introduce the GMS (1.1) and the idea of the enabling environment (1.2). The second two give people a chance to start relating the GMS to their own sector or institution – setting up a GMS (1.3) and starting work on a gender action plan (1.4)

## Checklist

- Make sure you are familiar with the contents of the *GMS Handbook* before you start to deliver the training activities in this module.
- The Toolkit Action Guide Unit 3 'Using the *GMS Handbook*' will give you an overview and help you find out what is in the manual and where, and which sections will be most useful.
- Look through the 'To help you choose' table in the Introduction to this Trainer's Guide for activities, topics, methods and handouts from other modules and sectors that you can adapt to fit your purposes.
- Always start planning your training with an analysis of your learners and their needs.
- Use the 'How to' briefings in the Introduction to this Trainer's Guide to help you design your training.

## Background

Make sure too that you are familiar with the issues for your sector by working through the Toolkit Action Guide Unit 4 'Using the sector manuals' and your relevant sector manual(s).

## ACTIVITY 1.1

### Introducing the GMS

**Aim** To introduce the gender management system (GMS)

**Outcomes**

- Outline the main elements of the GMS, such as background, definition, role of national women's machineries (NWMs) and key tools
- Compare with own experiences of mainstreaming gender

**Time** 30 mins

**Materials** Prepared overhead slide, Handouts 1.1a, b and c

**Steps**

- 1 Introduce the gender management system by going through some of the history and background of gender mainstreaming. Outline the definition, mission, objectives and approach of the GMS and the role of national women's machineries (NWMs). Put up the terms 'empowerment', 'integration' and 'accountability' on a flipchart. Explain why these are broad principles underlying the GMS stakeholder approach to gender mainstreaming. (10 mins)
- 2 Using an overhead slide of Handout 1.1c of the GMS, go through the system. Explain how the three 'levers of change' (the communication lever, the awareness lever and the incentive/boundary lever) are key tools for the implementation of a GMS. (10 mins)
- 3 Lead a discussion in the group. Clarify any questions. Ask participants about their experience of other mainstreaming strategies, and ideas about the GMS itself. (10 mins)
- 4 Distribute Handouts 1.1a, b and c at the end of the activity.
- 5 If you are working within a particular sector, you could now go on to apply the GMS to that sector, using activities in the relevant module.

**Notes**

- Keep this introductory activity short. Make sure that participants understand the ideas introduced within the GMS, but don't get involved in more in-depth discussion. This will happen in the following activities in this module, or in other modules.
- A PowerPoint presentation would be a useful way to present this material, but a series of OHPs based on the handouts would work equally well.
- You will find further information about the GMS in Chapter 1 of the *GMS Handbook*, as well as the supplied handouts. The GMS diagram comes from page 13.
- If you are working in a particular sector, look at the sections on gender mainstreaming in the relevant manual.



## Gender mainstreaming in the Commonwealth

HANDOUT

1.1a

The **1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development** sets out a series of gender mainstreaming strategies and measures for governments, through:

- forging and strengthening the political will to achieve gender equality and equity, at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- incorporating a gender perspective into the planning processes of all ministries and departments of government, particularly those concerned with macroeconomic and development planning, personnel policies and management, and legal and constitutional affairs including the administration of justice;
- integrating a gender perspective into all phases of sectoral planning cycles, including the analysis, development, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;
- using sex-disaggregated data in statistical analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men;
- increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in government and the public and private sectors;
- providing tools and training in gender awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision makers, senior managers and other key personnel to ensure that they know how to integrate a gender perspective into their work; and
- forging linkages between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure a co-ordination of efforts and resources.

### National Women's Machineries

Strong leadership in gender mainstreaming should be provided by the national women's machinery (NWM).

NWMs were set up in response to the UN Decade for Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, the 1987 Commonwealth Plan of Action, and ensuing international programmes. The NWM is the body or system of bodies recognised by the government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women. NWMs may be ministries responsible for gender or women's affairs, women's bureaux, or other government ministries or departments set up to address gender and/or women's issues.

Considerable differences exist in the status, structure and functioning of NWMs in the Commonwealth. Whether the NWM's location is central or marginal has a key effect on its status within government and the wider society, its access to resources and its ability to influence mainstream policy-making. Normally, the NWM would be responsible for the management information system (see below), one of the key mechanisms for the GMS.

### The three 'levers of change' for implementing the GMS

- 1 The communication lever** has two main elements: the management information system and gender analysis. Its function is to:
  - Gather, synthesise and disseminate information on the goals, activities and achievements of the GMS and on gender mainstreaming in general;
  - Transmit and renew gender analysis of the external and internal environment for policy-making;
  - Promote knowledge management, which builds on experiences and responds to institutional needs; and
  - Encourage the use of gender-sensitive indicators as a measurement tool for analysis, learning and institutional response.
- 2 The awareness lever** uses gender training and awareness-raising as the main strategies for changing ideas, beliefs and behaviours at the individual and institutional levels.

**HANDOUT****1.1a**

**3 The incentive/boundary lever** consists of the performance appraisal system, which essentially motivates staff through reward and defines limits to behaviour with sanctions. For the performance appraisal system to be gender-sensitive, it must:

- Measure performance against gender equality goals set by a gender action plan (or other institutional standards on gender); and
- Ensure that the promotion and achievement of gender equality is a criterion for the measurement of performance in management practice and all staff behaviours, as well as work-related goals.

**HANDOUT****1.1b**

## Definition of a gender management system

*A gender management system (GMS) is a network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place within an existing organisational framework, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development.*

A GMS may be established at any level of government, or in institutions such as universities, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations or trade unions.

### Mission, goal and objectives

**The mission** of a gender management system is to advance gender equality and equity, through promoting political will; forging a partnership of stakeholders including government, private sector and civil society; building capacity; and sharing good practice.

**The goal** of a gender management system is the mainstreaming of gender into all government policies, programmes and activities.

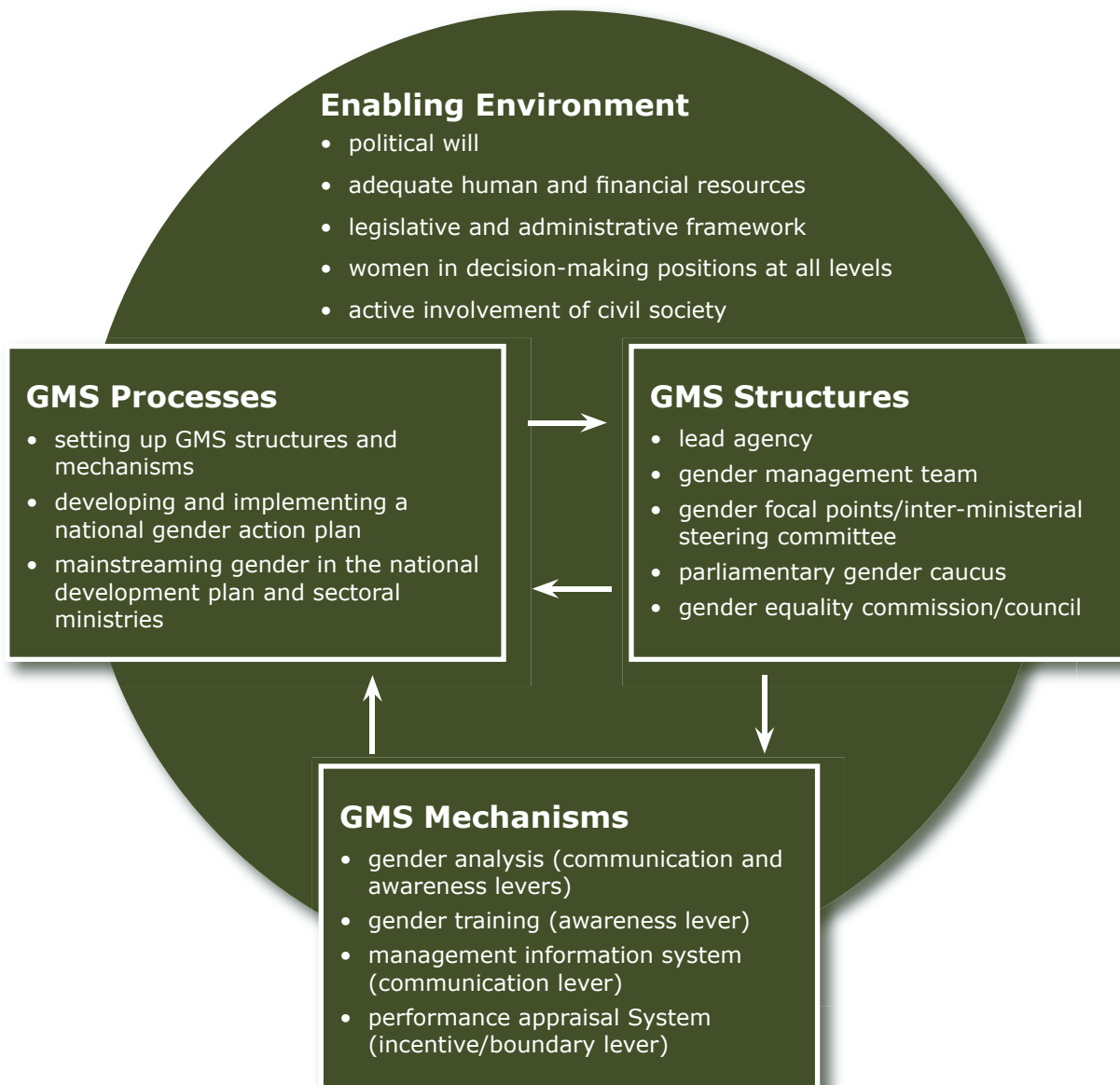
**The objectives** of a gender management system include the following:

- to assist government and non-state actors in implementing the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and other gender-aware international mandates;
- to strengthen national women's machineries (NWMs);
- to strengthen the capacity of NWMs, core and sectoral government ministries, development NGOs, the private sector and other non-state actors in civil society to make gender-aware development policies, plans and programmes at all levels, and to facilitate partnership-building among these actors so as to create a broad-based national constituency committed to effecting gender equality and equity of outcomes; and
- to create an enabling environment which takes into account the various factors that enhance and/or inhibit the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-aware plans and programmes.

### The GMS approach to mainstreaming

The gender management system adopts a stakeholder approach to gender mainstreaming. This is based on the recognition that the state is not the only player in efforts to achieve gender equality and equity, and must work in partnership with other social partners or stakeholders.

## Gender management system diagram





## ACTIVITY 1.2

### The enabling environment

**Aim** To identify strengths and weaknesses in the national and institutional context

#### Outcomes

- Describe the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for selected topics (SWOT analysis)
- Identify the essential elements for an enabling environment

**Time** 45 mins

**Materials** Prepared flipcharts, pens, coloured cards in two different colours

#### Steps

- 1 Give a short input on the elements of an enabling environment as set out at the beginning of Chapter 3 of the *GMS Handbook*, p 24. (5 mins)
- 2 Break the group into six small buzz groups and give each group one of the following six topics:
  - political will and commitment
  - global, regional and national mandates
  - human and financial resources
  - constitutional and legislative framework
  - women in decision-making positions
  - the role of civil society
- 3 Ask the small groups to discuss the issues for 10-15 minutes, noting ideas and pooling information. They should note what they see as strengths or opportunities on one colour card, and what they see as weaknesses or threats on a different colour. (10-15 mins)
- 4 Bring the group together. Ask a spokesperson from each group to stick the cards showing first the strengths, and then the weaknesses on prepared flipcharts in the relevant columns. They should briefly explain the rationale behind each one. Allow the members of the other groups to add any further points.
- 5 Ask the group whether they would add any other elements as essential for the creation of an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in addition to the six topics. (15-20 mins)
- 6 Wrap up, pulling out the key points. Leave the flipcharts on the walls. (5 mins)

#### Notes

- Before the activity, prepare several flipcharts with two columns. Write the headings 'strengths and opportunities' on the left-hand column, and 'weaknesses and threats' on the right-hand column.
- This activity will set the scene for the next one, which looks at the GMS structures and mechanisms, and potential entry points and difficulties.

## ACTIVITY 1.3

### Setting up a GMS

**Aim** To work through key interventions for establishing a GMS

**Outcomes**

- Identify the key interventions for establishing a GMS
- Explore one intervention in greater depth, through an exercise

**Time** 2 - 3 hrs

**Materials** Flipcharts, pens, Handouts 1.3a, b, c and d, OHPs

**Steps**

- 1 Remind participants of the main elements of the gender management system presented in Activity 1.1. Explain that they will also be drawing on the enabling environment in Activity 1.2. (5 mins)
- 2 Give out Handout 1.3a. Go through the list of interventions for establishing a GMS, using an OHP based on the handout.
- 3 Lead a ten-minute discussion on these interventions, clarifying any questions. Ask whether any key interventions are not on the list. If this is not a government group, ask participants to adapt the interventions to their own institution. (10-15 mins)
- 4 Divide the group into three smaller groups. One group will conduct a stakeholder analysis, the second will conduct a feasibility study, and the third will look at the institutional arrangements necessary to implement a GMS. Give each group several copies of the guidelines for their task (Handouts 1.3b, 1.3c and 1.3d). Ask the groups to choose people to write up the notes on flipcharts and present the results to the plenary. Give them one hour for this task. (60 mins)
- 5 Back in the plenary, each group presents their findings for up to ten minutes. (30 mins)
- 6 Wrap up, with a brief summary of the recommendations from the groups. (5 mins)

**Notes**

- Make sure you are familiar with Chapters 4 and 5 in the *GMS Handbook*.
- There are a number of ways of doing a stakeholder analysis. The participants should draw up their own table, or tables, but you could provide them with models that are available from organisations such as the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development.
- This activity is designed primarily for government officials, but can be adapted for other institutions.
- Participants may find it useful to have all the handouts from Activity 1.1 for this activity.



## Establishing a GMS

	<b>Important Interventions</b>
<b>1</b>	Feasibility study/stakeholder analysis, including assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the enabling environment
<b>2</b>	Feasibility study tabled in cabinet
<b>3</b>	Review of national gender action plan – integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into the plan in consultation with key stakeholders, and seek approval at cabinet level through the NWM
<b>4</b>	Engendering of the national development plan through the implementation of mechanisms defined in the national gender action plan
<b>5</b>	Setting up of GMS structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• gender management team</li><li>• gender focal points/inter-ministerial steering committee</li><li>• gender caucus in parliament</li><li>• gender Equality commission/council</li><li>• management information system</li></ul>
<b>6</b>	Strengthening of national women’s machinery to act as lead agency in implementing the GMS
<b>7</b>	Development of a gender mainstreaming training programme in collaboration with higher education/training institution(s) at the national or regional level
<b>8</b>	Building of gender analysis/planning expertise in the different sectors in government, towards engendering their sector plans
<b>9</b>	Establishment/strengthening of linkages between the nwm and other state and non-state stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parliamentarians</li><li>• NGOs, academic institutions, media, etc.</li></ul>
<b>10</b>	Establishment of monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
<b>11</b>	Development of a programme of public awareness through media
<b>12</b>	Networking with donor agencies (inter-governmental, other multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the private sector), to find resources for the gms and gender mainstreaming

**HANDOUT****1.3b**

## Stakeholder analysis

The purpose of the stakeholder analysis is to gain a better understanding of the range of people and institutions who have an interest in, and can influence, the project, policy or programme. The stakeholder analysis also looks at the relative power of different individuals and groups. It is important to identify where support and resistance may lie, and how to build on the support and reduce resistance. The stakeholder analysis must be gender-sensitive.

- 1 Read through the method and then design tables or matrices to record the information.
- 2 Carry out the following four steps:
  - (i) *Identify the stakeholders.* Identify all the people, groups and institutions who affect or who are affected by the proposed programme, in this case the implementation of a GMS. List them in the first column under the heading 'stakeholders'. How can you ensure that the stakeholders identified are equally representative of women and men and their interests?
  - (ii) *Identify stakeholder interests.* Consider issues like the benefits of the GMS to the stakeholder, or whether some stakeholders' interests might be threatened. Identify these for each stakeholder. How far are these interests gendered?
  - (iii) *Assess stakeholder power and influence.* Consider not only the roles, positions and decision-making powers of stakeholders, but also the relationships between them, paying attention to gendered power relationships.
  - (iv) *Strategies for positive participation.* Consider ways in which you can build on positive interests, and ways in which you can minimise opposition. What kinds of strategies can be developed?
- 3 Prepare recommendations for ways to involve stakeholders in the setting up of the GMS. Aim to maximise the potentials and to minimise obstacles. Ensure this involvement is gender equitable.
- 4 Some questions to help identify stakeholders' interests:
  - What do stakeholders expect of the GMS?
  - What benefits are there likely to be for stakeholders?
  - What resources will the stakeholder wish to commit or avoid committing to the GMS?
  - What other interests does the stakeholder have which complement or conflict with the GMS?



## Feasibility study



The feasibility study should include:

- a status analysis of all sectors with regard to gender equality and gender equity
  - reviewing government decision-making structures, mechanisms and planning processes
  - identifying the major links between government and non-state actors
  - assessing the enabling environment for a GMS (see Activity 1.2)
  - examining available human and financial resources
  - assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the national women's machinery and other GMS-related structures
  - identifying key entry points for gender mainstreaming
- 1 Pull together as much information as you can from within the group, and note it on a flipchart under the relevant headings.
  - 2 What information is missing? How would you go about getting it?
  - 3 How would you ensure that your information is not gender-biased, and that relevant data is sex-disaggregated? Note ideas on a flip chart.
  - 4 Put together recommendations for the plenary on:
    - carrying out a gender-sensitive feasibility study for the GMS
    - strategic entry points for gender mainstreaming
    - addressing weaknesses in the policy environment and institutional arrangements
    - strengthening key actors and agents for the implementation of the GMS

**HANDOUT****1.3d**

## **Institutional arrangements: structures and mechanisms**

Examine the GMS structures, mechanisms and processes to determine which are the most useful in the national context, and the easiest to establish or to adapt. This will inform the decisions as to which structures and mechanisms to prioritise. A simple approach is a SWOT analysis – identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in each area where the GMS is expected to have an impact, and prioritising the areas accordingly.

Setting up or strengthening of the GMS structures and mechanisms may include the following concrete steps:

- institutionalising the GMS through the lead agency, making appointments to the gender management team and designing its work schedule, ensuring that sectoral ministries nominate their gender focal points and determining the meetings schedule of the inter-ministerial steering committee (e.g. quarterly);
- liaising with the gender equality commission/council or similar body (or establishing such a body if none exists) and identify their representative for a gender management team;
- ensuring that stakeholders represented in GMS structures meet regularly (i.e. not just in the policy development and planning stage but also throughout the implementation of the gender action plan and in its monitoring and evaluation);
- setting and meeting targets for women in decision-making positions in the political, public and private sectors; and
- ensuring that all the members of the GMS structures (particularly the gender management team and the gender focal points) receive gender training.

Answer the following questions:

- 1 What institutional structures already exist, and where are the gaps?
- 2 What are the obstacles and limitations that prevent the current institutional structures from functioning effectively?
- 3 What are the most important strategies and mechanisms necessary to enable the structure to function effectively?

Prepare recommendations to the plenary for the most important and most appropriate structures, strategies and mechanisms needed to implement the GMS.



## ACTIVITY 1.4

### The gender action plan

**Aim** To get experience of developing a gender action plan

#### Outcomes

- identify the key components of a gender action plan
- design a model outline gender action plan for their institution or sector

**Materials** Handouts 1.4a, 1.4b, 1.4c and 1.4d, flipcharts, pens

**Time:** 1 1/4 hrs

#### Steps

- 1 Explain the aim of the activity. Participants will devise an outline gender action plan, based on the model presented in the *GMS Handbook*.
- 2 Make a short presentation of the elements of a gender action plan based on Handout 1.4a. (10 mins)
- 3 If this is a group outside the state sector, lead a short discussion to adapt the gender action plan outline to their own institutional context. (5 mins)
- 4 Give out Handout 1.4b and explain that they will work on the gender action plan using the table provided in the handout. Depending on the group, they will work on their own institution, department or ministry, or at the level of national plans. Go through the table to clarify any doubts. They should focus on concrete outcomes first, and then look at the planning and resources implications. (5 mins)
- 5 Divide the participants into two groups (or if they belong to several institutions or departments, they can be divided accordingly). Give the groups Handout 1.4c 'Summary of the Commonwealth Plan of Action' (see also Handout 1.1a in this module) and Handout 1.4d 'Highlights of the Secretary-General's Report on Progress'. Give the participants five minutes to read through the materials; suggest they mark the most important points on Handout 1.4d. Answer any questions that arise. (5 mins)
- 6 The groups will work on a gender action plan, drawing on the handouts, the work in previous activities in this module, and their own experience and knowledge. They will fill out the action planning chart on flipcharts in order to feed back to the plenary. (45 mins)
- 7 Back in the plenary, each group reports back for five minutes. (10 mins)
- 8 Wrap up, drawing out any important points that have come up.

#### Notes

- The table has room for three actions per category, so the exercise can be done in the available time. These actions should be specific, rather than general. With more time, a fuller plan can be developed.
- When participants work with the table, make sure they identify the key outcomes first, then go back and look at the ways to achieve them.

**HANDOUT****1.4a**

## The gender action plan

The gender action plan is a central component of a gender management system (GMS). In countries where a national gender action plan exists, the GMS should help to ensure that the plan is effectively implemented; in countries that are in the process of developing a national gender action plan, the GMS may help give shape to the plan.

The gender action plan is designed to ensure that concrete measures are taken at the national level to achieve policy goals. It should complement the national development plan to make government decision-making processes more equitable, and include provisions for the engendering of the national plan.

The gender action plan must be based on gender analysis, including tools such as a feasibility study and stakeholder analysis.

The gender action plan should include:

- a policy statement and sectoral plans to mainstream gender in all policies, plans and programmes in all sectors of government;
- a policy statement with clear goals and objectives, including sectoral targets, which reflect national priorities in relation to international and Commonwealth action plans;
- a strategy and timetable for the revision of existing policies and administrative procedures to bring them in line with the goals of the plan, including legislative or administrative instructions or procedures from the highest political authority, and accountability measures at all levels;
- broad guidelines on engendering macroeconomic and sectoral government policies and programmes, which reflect the priorities of the plan and outline how to put them into operation;
- a strategy and timeframe for the review of national legislation and practices to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, and to adopt necessary legislation for promoting and protecting women's human rights; and
- a strategy for the mobilisation of resources – human, technical and budgetary – to support the priorities of the plan.

### Implementing the gender action plan

Key initiatives include:

- securing political and administrative commitment at the highest level, including that of the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet, individual ministers or equivalent office holders, and senior managers;
- putting in place integrated structures and mechanisms, and appropriate administrative processes and procedures including accountability measures, to implement the plan;
- securing partnership and collaboration among the key stakeholders;
- developing an effective monitoring and evaluation process;
- designing and implementing a programme of gender training research and information dissemination; and an effective communication strategy to raise public awareness about and support for the gender action plan, particularly through partnerships with the media.

A timeframe should be established for the gender action plan. This should be flexible, with phased targets and deadlines, preferably on a yearly basis to coincide with the national budgetary and sectoral development planning processes.

### Promoting the gender action plan

The management information system will assist in developing a communications strategy that will launch timely and targeted communications campaigns on a regular basis to promote the objectives and goals of the plan and convey the mission of the GMS to the media. The media are a stakeholder in the plan's development and have a special role in promoting it.



**HANDOUT**  
**1.4a**

The communication strategy should seek to:

- inform public opinion of the need for gender mainstreaming;
- build and promote the advocacy efforts of a gender management system;
- keep women's concerns high on the national agenda and bring more women's voices into the national policy-making process;
- create opportunities to address national priorities in the context of international and Commonwealth plans of action by sponsoring roundtables, workshops, strategy meetings and news bulletins to coincide with such events as International Women's Day; and
- build a partnership with the media that will engender the media.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of the gender action plan**

The gender action plan must include clear and measurable goals for gender equality, including sectoral targets, as well as concrete strategies to reach these goals. Monitoring and evaluation require the use of impact indicators to measure the outputs and performance of all government ministries and departments, and to track the allocation of resources.

The gender management team, in collaboration with the national women's machinery (NWM), should play a primary role in monitoring and evaluation. The NWM, as the institutional home for the management information system, will be responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of data on key gender-sensitive indicators which, in the first instance, should be reported quarterly to the inter-ministerial committee and annually to parliament.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of the gender action plan involves the following areas:

- reviewing key gender-sensitive indicators in all sectors, especially in the areas of macroeconomics, political decision-making, and the legal and social status of women in the national context, as well as health, education, agriculture and other sectors;
- fulfilling reporting obligations under CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, and its Update 2000-2005; and
- feeding findings into the next planning cycle.

**Gender action plan table**

What?	How?	Who? How much?	Which?	When?
Strategies Objectives	Planned actions	Financial and human resources	Gender equality and equity outcomes	Target date
1. Policy and planning (i) (ii) (iii)				
2. Implementing the plan (i) (ii) (iii)				
3. Promoting the plan (i) (ii) (iii)				
4. Monitoring and evaluation (i) (ii) (iii)				



## Summary of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development

HANDOUT  
1.4c

### Focus on results

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, and its Update 2000-2005 seeks to accelerate the achievement of women's empowerment, focusing more on achieving results than establishing rights or obligations. Commonwealth governments have agreed that strengthening institutional capacity is therefore essential for the Plan's successful implementation.

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action aims to strengthen women's machineries within governments and integrate gender issues into the mainstream of all government and Commonwealth Secretariat activities in order to achieve equality and equity of outcomes for women.

### Strengthen national women's machineries

National women's machineries (NWMs) include ministries for women's affairs, focal points for gender issues within ministries, commissions and departments. Existing machineries set up within member governments often lack the resources and influence they need to achieve change and to shape policy and programmes. The 1995 Plan therefore has as its primary objective the strengthening of these machineries. Governments should ensure they are staffed by people trained in gender issues, that they have access to and linkages with all the apparatus, and that they are placed at a sufficiently high level to influence decision-making processes.

### Integration of gender issues into the mainstream of all government and Secretariat activities

If women's rights and needs are to be fully integrated into decision-making processes, then decision makers and their advisors must be aware of and committed to those needs and rights. Women must also participate more fully in government policy and planning. The 1995 Plan of Action therefore seeks to ensure that decision makers and those implementing policies and programmes in all areas of member governments and in the Secretariat itself are equipped to build gender issues into their activities.

### Equality and equity of outcomes for women

Policy commitments must be delivered in practice if the 1995 Plan is to change the reality of women's lives in the Commonwealth. It therefore recommends monitoring and evaluation at the highest level to turn the vision into reality.

There are two key elements to establishing institutional arrangements for enhancing the status of women:

- 1 *Make the plan:* Gender action plans provide the framework for establishing what interventions are necessary to integrate gender equality concerns into development policies and programmes within a particular country.
- 2 *Manage the plan:* A system for managing the integration of gender in mainstream policies and programmes is required in order to ensure that the plan's objectives are met. The system should be such that gender issues are considered as integral parts in formulating, implementing and monitoring policy and programmes. This system is called a gender management system (GMS).

### Gender budgeting and accounting

Gender budgeting and gender accounting identify and monitor the flow of sufficient financial resources to: (a) activities to ensure that women as well as men are equal beneficiaries of programmes; and (b) specialist projects aimed at benefiting women only.

### Positive and affirmative action

Positive action means taking specific temporary measures to achieve equality. For example governments may undertake an awareness campaign to promote the idea of women continuing in education and may advertise for women to apply for places. Affirmative action includes all

**HANDOUT**  
**1.4c**

that is positive action but goes a step further, giving special privileges to compensate for a long history of discrimination and inequality. For example, points may be added to examination results for girls to enable them to get into university. The thinking behind this is that girls often have less time to spend on school work than boys due to domestic chores. The affirmative action taken recognises that exam results can be affected by gender inequalities.

### **Strategic objectives**

The new directions of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development are translated into strategic objectives for both member governments and the Secretariat. The strategic objectives provide a framework for Commonwealth action at two levels:

- strengthening institutional capacity to mainstream gender issues into all sectors of society is the first and most important strategy of the new Plan;
- secondly, the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action focuses on a limited number of critical gender issues for Commonwealth action in the areas of political and human rights and social and economic development.

Issues selected for Commonwealth action under the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its Update 2000-2005 are those where the Commonwealth can claim to enjoy a comparative advantage because it has developed considerable experience and expertise in those areas. They include:

- conflict resolution and building of sustainable peace;
- women's participation in democratic political processes;
- women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women;
- the impact of macroeconomic policies, and globalisation and trade on women; and
- women and sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty.

### **Strategic objectives of governments**

- Develop national capacity in gender training, gender planning, gender policy appraisal and impact assessment, gender management and accounting systems.
- In particular, strengthen national women's machineries so that they can formulate and influence policies, plans and programmes to address women's concerns as integral components of socio-economic development.
- Integrate gender equality into all government agendas, policies and programmes and create a culture within government that is gender-sensitive and where gender issues become the responsibility of all, not only of the women's bureaux.
- Provide gender sensitisation and training across the board in government, and ensure that regular government training programmes are gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.
- Link the 1995 Plan of Action and its Update 2000-2005 to government policies on women and to national development plans and programmes.
- Take positive and/or affirmative action to provide equal opportunities in educational institutions and develop equal employment opportunities policies in public services and the private sector.
- Increase women's representation in decision-making positions. Adopt special measures to include women in senior posts, committees and government programmes.
- Nominate women for Commonwealth Secretariat and other international postings, committees, boards, councils and programmes.



## Highlights of the Secretary-General's Report on Progress Achieved To Date in the Implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development

HANDOUT  
1.4d

1. The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA), and its Update 2000-2005, were designed to complement and strengthen the impact of global action resulting from the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing+5 process. Monitoring and reporting on progress is invaluable for assessing the gains made in the implementation of the 1995 PoA and addressing the challenges facing governments and the Secretariat. The data is critical to the development of new strategies, the identification of future priorities, the refinement of mechanisms and tools, as well as the adjustments to programme areas for action by governments and the Secretariat.
2. For the purpose of analysis and assessment, the 15 areas for action by governments listed in the PoA were grouped under two main categories:
  - action related to national women's machineries (NWMs), gender mainstreaming and gender management systems (GMS); and
  - action related to political participation and human rights, and economic and social development.

### Action related to NWMs, gender mainstreaming and the GMS

3. Governments' political commitment to advance gender equality may be measured, in part, by the public policy agenda, government priorities and allocation of resources, gender mainstreaming mechanisms and processes, and the extent to which national development plans and sectoral programmes take into account gender impacts.
4. Some notable developments in this area demonstrate the increased importance that Commonwealth countries attach to gender equality within the processes of sustainable development and nation building. For some countries, the integration of gender perspectives into national processes is taking place in conjunction with economic and structural reforms. A large number of countries are implementing some elements of gender mainstreaming strategies, nationally and sectorally. As a result, most NWMs reported improved collaboration with other ministries as well as more effective co-ordination with stakeholders, including regional institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society. Further, there has been a marked progress overall in the development and implementation of national gender and development action plans, an essential component for effective and sustained gender mainstreaming.
5. In a number of countries, the process of gender mainstreaming is far advanced through a strategy based on gender analysis, as a component of a GMS. When applied at all stages of policy or project development, gender analysis leads to an improved understanding of the differential impacts and opportunities that policies and activities may have on women and men. The gender analysis strategy is complemented by the provision of training, the development of guidelines and materials, models of gender analysis and planning in various sectors, statistical indicators and accountability measures. Many countries face constraints in terms of resources, including local expertise to develop gender analysis and monitoring skills. The Commonwealth Secretariat also has an important role to play in the promotion of gender analysis throughout all its activities.
6. Sex-disaggregated data is an important component of gender mainstreaming and gender analysis. While all countries reported that they were collecting sex-disaggregated data, many indicated that the data were not available for all sectors and all levels.
7. With respect to the situation of NWMs, reports indicate that all countries have such mechanisms, in one form or another. However, their capacity and level of resources differ greatly. In many countries, NWMs suffered setbacks whereby they were downgraded and subsumed within larger ministries. Most countries reported an

**HANDOUT**  
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overall reduction of resources over the past years. However, the situation was at times aggravated by the further reduction of resources as a percentage of the total budget of the parent ministry. Some indicated that they were operating under tight constraints regarding human, financial and technical resources that have led to serious operational difficulties.

8. All respondents reaffirmed the pressing need for capacity building and training for NWMs and gender focal points in areas such as gender planning, data collection, research, analysis and policy development, communications, and negotiating skills.
9. Most countries have NGO umbrella organisations, commissions or councils that are powerful, dynamic and active on gender equality issues. Most countries reported good collaboration with these NGOs; many have fruitful programmes of activities with them and other representatives of civil society, including the private sector. Other important stakeholders are the regional organisations and institutions that work with countries as well as multilateral organisations in the areas of training and capacity-building.

**Action related to human rights and political participation, and economic and social development**

10. Although difficulties were encountered in establishing gender mainstreaming mechanisms, enormous steps appear to have been taken and progress made by governments and the Secretariat in the implementation of many areas of the 1995 PoA.

*A. Human Rights and Political Participation*

11. The Fifth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs in 1996 recommended that countries should achieve a target of no less than 30 per cent of women in decision-making by the year 2005 and that those already close to achieving this target should strive for parity, and called on governments to develop equal employment opportunities policies. All respondents reported that targeted training has taken or will take place, while half stated that the country either had a policy or was in the process of developing one. No country reported parity between women and men in senior decision-making positions in the political, public or private sectors.
12. A number of obstacles continue to affect women's ability to participate fully and equally in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors. Traditional perceptions often limit the role of women to the household. Socio-economic impediments affecting women in many countries include women's limited access to formal education, and the streaming of girls and women in traditional subject areas with the result that they are concentrated in low waged, low status occupational groups such as clerks, sales and personnel services. In most countries, girls' access to education in science and technology still lags behind that of boys. The political framework acts to inhibit the equal participation of women with the result, for example, of a lack of family-friendly policies, bias toward male candidates, lack of funding, and lack of training and support both prior to and after elections.
13. A number of countries noted that political parties and women's NGOs had initiated and supported campaigns for existing or potential women candidates, offering public speaking, presentation, media, negotiation and other skills training. In some countries, financial assistance was offered to women candidates to ensure they were able to contest elections. However, more effort is required to address impediments to women's involvement in the political process, such as family responsibilities, and to encourage women to transcend cultural barriers. Education systems have a role to play in providing encouragement for women's leadership and critical thinking skills.
14. Areas relating to the promotion, protection and respect of women's rights as human rights, the elimination of violence against women, including the trafficking of women and girls, and the protection of the rights of the girl-child remain key priorities for Commonwealth governments and the Secretariat.



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15. With respect to involvement in processes of conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, the reports suggest that women's activities are often limited to peace-building at the community level. Where women have been involved in mediating major national conflicts, they do not tend to be appointed by governments as peace negotiators or special envoys. It was recommended that women be involved in peace processes at the highest levels, and that governments take into account gender considerations in the design of programmes for victims of conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons.

*B. Economic and Social Development*

16. Commonwealth action on a limited number of critical issues in the areas of political and human rights and economic and social development was one of the priority areas identified by governments and the Secretariat. As agreed in the 1995 PoA, action has varied according to individual country priorities.
17. In the area of macroeconomic policy, governments reported that they were addressing gender equality issues within structural adjustment and poverty reduction programmes, in particular the 'feminisation of poverty' and economic empowerment. Some countries were primarily involved in analysing the impacts of national budgets on women and men. However, limited progress has been achieved in integrating gender considerations in macroeconomic policies. Where a degree of integration may have been achieved, the involvement of NWMs and the application of gender analysis at the early stages, as well as throughout the policy development process, has been instrumental.
18. Over half of the countries highlighted education, human resource development and training as priority areas of concern and policy focus, and approached these from many different and innovative perspectives. Apart from adopting policies that promote and support equal access and the full participation of females in education at all levels, all countries reported actions to promote women's involvement in non-traditional fields such as science and technology. These actions include quotas, awareness-raising, career counselling and training. Notwithstanding progress made, many countries report that tradition, religion and cultural values and practices have presented serious constraints in the advancement of gender equality.
19. While some countries retain a focus on women's health within the context of maternal health care and family planning, the current emphasis is on identifying and addressing women's wider health concerns. A number of countries have made considerable progress in the health sector, through the development of public education programmes, ensuring women's full access to all health services, retraining health workers and closely working with NGOs.
20. All countries stated that there is a need to enhance the awareness of the media to gender issues, and to use the media more effectively to raise the level of gender awareness among the population at large as well as disseminating strategic information to influence decision makers. It was also noted that appropriate training is essential to improving the situation.

**Action undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat**

21. The Secretariat has taken action in all nine special measures outlined in the 1995 PoA and sought to proactively advocate and promote the implementation of the Plan. In addition, the Secretariat's Strategic Plans (1997/98 - 1999/2000 and 2000/01 - 2003/04) included gender interventions in each area. Secretariat Divisions thus seek to mainstream gender in their respective sectoral agenda, including the identification and implementation of women-specific activities in line with the commitments made by Commonwealth Heads of Government and sectoral ministers.
22. Gender is also integrated into the agendas of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings and Ministerial Meetings such as Finance, Law, Health, Youth and Education.

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23. The Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) promotes gender mainstreaming and the strengthening of NWMs. It supports the integration of gender issues into processes of democratisation, peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, and encourages the development of gender-aware macroeconomic policies and programmes. STPD also promotes the protection of the human rights of women and the girl-child.
  
24. The Commonwealth Secretariat seeks to further enhance its capacity to mainstream gender in its activities. The current 4-year strategic plan being developed (2004/05 – 2007/08) will embed gender equality and equity even further in all the programmes of the Secretariat. Implementation of the new strategies will impact on governments through the Secretariat's enhanced ability to promote gender mainstreaming as an important component of good governance, and to provide gender-sensitive and gender-responsive technical support to meet the needs of countries in a more consistent and focused manner.