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ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO

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Appendix I: B. ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO

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Introduction

- 1. On International Women's Day, 8 March 1999, the Director-General called for the formulation of a coherent and integrated strategy for the mainstreaming of gender in the work of the International Labour Office. To this end a comprehensive plan of action was drawn up on the basis of substantial work carried out by several task teams comprised of gender focal points based at headquarters and with input from colleagues in the field. The *Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality* outlines principles, goals and implementation procedures to ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender in the promotion of opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The Plan lays out the institutional framework for establishing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in the achievement of the Organization's four strategic objectives of fundamental principles and rights at work, promoting employment and incomes, social protection and social dialogue.
- **2.** The Plan includes the issue of a policy statement in the form of a circular on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the work of the Office. The circular clarifies that responsibility for mainstreaming gender rests with all ILO staff, and in particular with management. ¹
- 3. The main elements of the Plan are
 - to strengthen institutional arrangements;
 - to introduce accountability and monitoring mechanisms;
 - to allocate adequate resources to gender mainstreaming;
 - to build up staff competence on gender issues;
 - to improve the gender balance among staff at all levels.
- **4.** This focus for action is considered critical now in order to strengthen the Office's capacity to design and deliver gender-sensitive programmes and services to ILO constituents and enhance their effectiveness in addressing gender inequalities in the world of work. The ultimate aim of the *Action Plan* is to improve the ILO's comparative advantage on gender, labour and employment issues with its constituents so as to ensure gender equality at work at the national level.

I. The ILO's mandate

5. A strong commitment to equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women in the world of work has long been part of the ILO's mandate. It is reflected in the adoption of a number of ILO labour standards, such as those concerning equal remuneration, discrimination in employment and occupation, and workers with family responsibilities. Recognition of maternity protection for working women as a fundamental requirement for promoting equality between men and women has always been a key issue for the ILO.

¹ The circular (No. 564) is appended.

These standards and the promotion of their ratification and implementation have been complemented over recent decades by extensive research and technical cooperation on equality issues, addressing concerns related to women's access to productive resources, income generation for poor women and their families, training and assistance for women to set up micro- and small enterprises, organizing women in the informal sector, occupational segregation, women in management affirmative action, sexual harassment at work, etc. In addition, a series of ILO policy statements in the form of declarations, resolutions and action plans to promote equality between men and women in employment have consistently been issued as an expression of the ILO's commitment to equality. In recent years, considerable efforts have been put into the production and dissemination of information and training packages on women workers' rights and on a range of gender issues relating to the ILO's areas of competence, such as collective bargaining, occupational safety and health and social security. Since the adoption of the ILO's Active Partnership Policy, efforts have been made to raise the awareness of ILO staff and constituents on gender equality concerns and to enhance their skills through a series of gender training activities at headquarters and in the regions.

- **6.** Like other institutions, the ILO's work on equality between men and women mainly focused in the past on improving the situation of women in the labour market. While it is still valid today to focus on women as target groups to address persistent gaps, concerns have arisen that this approach can lead to the *marginalization* of women from mainstream ILO programmes and projects, the design and implementation of which they have little influence over and from which they derive little benefit. Only in the past ten years has the concept of *gender equality* developed in the international community and in international organizations such as the ILO. This has led to a sharper focus on drawing on the perceptions, experience and interests of both women and men to shape development *agendas*, as compared to integrating women into existing development programmes.
- 7. Adopting a gender perspective for the ILO means focusing systematically on both women and men when analysing social and labour issues and planning and implementing programmes and activities. It means understanding the roles of men and women and their relationships in the world of work so as to comprehend more fully the complexity of gender differences in labour market participation (in both the formal and informal sectors) and of the constraints and opportunities in relation to knowledge and skill requirements, conditions of work, social protection, family responsibilities and economic and political decision-making.

II. Gender mainstreaming in the ILO

Definition

8. "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experience an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women

- and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." 2
- **9.** To effectively assist member States the ILO needs a more systematic approach and commitment by staff at all levels. This approach is a powerful strategy to increase gender equality and enhance the effectiveness of the ILO's contribution to social and economic development. Mainstreaming gender in ILO programmes and technical cooperation projects requires conducting a gender diagnosis and explicitly reflecting the results in agenda setting, the definition of objectives and indicators, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The ILO can use gender-sensitive staffing and budgetary practices, training programmes and policies, procedures, guidelines and indicators to increase gender equality within the Organization and its work with constituents, thereby helping attain the Organization's central objectives.
- 10. It is important to recall that mainstreaming is not a goal in itself it is a means to an end. A *mainstreaming strategy* for the ILO is one which aims to achieve gender equality in the world of work. A mainstreaming strategy is also complementary to the strategy of special targeted inputs for promoting gender equality. There is no conflict between the two. On the contrary, special interventions for gender equality are seen as essential for mainstreaming, since they can target women exclusively, women and men together or men exclusively in instances where this is called for to redress imbalances and inequities between men and women. Positive action measures, focusing specifically on problems that in practice affect women more than men (such as the feminization of poverty, access to credit, flexible employment contracts, sexual harassment, family responsibilities and the "glass ceiling") are also justified. However, such work must be undertaken using a "gender lens" in order to take into consideration the gender context of the problem and examine the implications of proposed solutions for both women and men. It is a question of strategic choice, which needs to be based on a gender analysis of the realities of women and men in specific work, organizational, community and family contexts.

III. The need for an ILO Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming

- 11. Efforts have been made in the ILO to launch a mainstreaming approach in recent years, and gender training activities have been organized for staff and constituents. However, a somewhat ad hoc approach in the Office to gender concerns has limited the ILO's role in advocacy and substantive work on gender in the world of work. In order to sustain the efforts already undertaken, gender mainstreaming needs to be institutionalized. Adequate resources for follow-up are required to extend capacity-building opportunities to all staff at headquarters and in the field so as to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender concerns in their day-to-day work. The development of methodologies and tools specific to ILO areas of competence is also a critical area for development.
- **12.** Now that gender has been endorsed as a cross-cutting issue in ILO policies and programmes, this has to be matched by fundamental changes in approaches and practices to build consensus and establish accountability. It is on this basis that the Action Plan on

² Coordination of Policies and Activities of the Specialised Agencies [...] Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System. Draft Agreed Conclusions, Economic and Social Council, 14 July 1997, para. 4.

Gender Mainstreaming has been elaborated. It is designed to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms and arrangements are in place so that the gender dimension permeates and inspires all ILO work, and all staff are competent on gender issues and can better respond to the increasing demands of constituents for expertise in this area.

IV. Key features

- 13. Ongoing consultations have been held on the attached Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming. It will be available on the ILO Intranet, and all staff have been invited to give their suggestions for improvement. A detailed timetable is being developed for the first stages of implementation. Capacity-building activities to assist staff at all levels, both at headquarters and in the field, to implement a mainstreaming strategy are a key component of the Plan. Its implementation will be a process of experimentation, exploration and adaptation. Creative arrangements and approaches relevant to the ILO context are encouraged.
- **14.** The Action Plan provides a framework to develop coherent and substantive programmes and activities on gender in each strategic objective area. The most immediate task is to ensure that a gender perspective is systematically integrated into the design and implementation of the Programme and Budget for 2000-01, and more substantively in the Office's longer term Strategic Plan to be finalized by September 2000. Earmarking regular budget resources and mobilizing extra-budgetary resources for both mainstreaming and gender-specific activities are essential for effective gender mainstreaming.
- **15.** The key features of the Action Plan are the following:

1. Director-General's policy statement on gender equality and gender mainstreaming

16. The objective of the statement is to reinforce the strong consensus and understanding on the ILO's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the Office. It describes the benefits and requirements of the policy for the ILO's mandate and responsibility towards constituents. The policy statement identifies all staff, and particularly managers, as responsible for gender mainstreaming. This policy shifts the main responsibility for mainstreaming from gender focal points and gender specialists to senior managers.

2. Gender mainstreaming in the structure of the International Labour Office

- 17. The objective is to create an enabling environment to make the ILO's commitment to gender equality operational. A strong and adequately staffed central Bureau for Gender Equality is needed to coordinate and promote this strategy. Each sector at headquarters and in the field will need to make appropriate arrangements for gender equality mainstreaming suitable for the specific technical areas. The roles of the gender experts and focal points are to be defined.
- **18.** While the modalities of the gender team are to be worked out by each sector, it is expected that a collegial institutional arrangement will emerge to encourage teamwork and horizontal communication between gender experts and focal points and other technical specialists. The Plan aims to build a critical mass of gender expertise in the ILO for effective programme delivery.

19. In addition, a Cross-Sector Gender Advisory Group, including the Bureau for Gender Equality and gender specialists and experts, will meet regularly and provide for a holistic analysis of gender issues throughout the Organization and across sectors. The Gender Advisory Group is expected to play a key role in creating synergies between the different programmes and activities on gender, identifying issues requiring particular attention and improving coordination.

3. Capacity building

20. The objective is to ensure that all ILO staff have the capacity to mainstream the commitment to gender equality and provide gender-sensitive and responsive services to governments and to employers' and workers' organizations, as well as to the general public. To help staff acquire the necessary skills, capacity-building activities will be offered, including awareness raising, gender analysis and gender planning on the substantive technical areas of each strategic sector. These activities will be accompanied by the development of gender mainstreaming tools, such as guidelines, checklists, indicators and methodologies specific to each strategic area.

4. Gender equality mainstreaming in the work of the ILO

- 21. The objective is to ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed in practice as a cross-cutting issue in the ILO's work. The Plan proposes an accountability system to ensure adequate resource allocation, expenditure and performance in regard to integrating gender into all areas of policy and programme development and implementation, including technical cooperation.
- 22. A critical element is the generation of statistical data disaggregated by sex in all programmes and projects to highlight areas where gender inequalities occur and to enable gender-sensitive responses in planning and implementation. The mainstreaming process is expected to improve the ILO's gender expertise in the four strategic areas. Coordination, communication and the dissemination of information are central to ensuring visibility and an authoritative image for the ILO in working with the constituents and attracting extrabudgetary resources. The Plan also provides for the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and budget procedures and for the development and effective use of information and communication strategies and tools. All are critical and underpin the overall achievement of the objectives of the Plan.

5. Gender-sensitive human resources and staff policy

23. The objective is to ensure that human resources policy is gender-sensitive and that there is a gender balance in the Organization's staff. The Plan reflects the commitment to achieve a gender balance in all posts at the Professional level. The Plan proposes to set appropriate targets by grade for recruitment, internal mobility and promotion. Increasing the proportion of staff and managers who are women is a small part of reducing gender inequality, but it is not a guarantee of gender being mainstreamed into policies or programmes. However, a critical mass of women, particularly in senior decision-making positions, will help transform organizational culture and thus create a more conducive environment for mainstreaming. The Organization will be more credible in advising member States and other constituents if the commitment to gender equality is internalized. The Plan includes the development of positive action measures to improve the gender balance, especially in senior and managerial positions. The Action Plan also proposes that training programmes

be adapted to enhance the careers of both male and female officials and to promote a gender-sensitive and family-friendly ILO working environment.

V. Implementation: A phased approach

- **24.** The Plan's objectives, main outputs and main activities are set out for easy reference in the attached table. These can be regarded as milestones on the road to institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in the ILO. One of the first steps was to issue, by the end of 1999, a policy statement to provide orientation on the gender mainstreaming strategy, to reaffirm commitment to achieving gender equality and to clarify responsibilities. ³
- 25. The establishment of gender teams and other institutional arrangements, already begun in 1999, is another initial step that is vital to facilitate the ongoing process of integrating gender in the work of the sectors. By early 2000 the sectors should be able to establish arrangements concerning the role of headquarters, and towards the end of the same year the sectors are expected to have finalized arrangements in relation to the field. Establishing roles and responsibilities, including managerial accountability and the development of indicators, will be part of this process during the year 2000.
- **26.** Staff capacity building to apply mainstreaming in their work is a central priority for achieving the objectives of the Plan. The availability of funds has allowed a range of capacity-building activities to be carried out at headquarters, with some participation also by the field, during the second half of 1999. This will need to be followed up and expanded in all sectors, both at headquarters and in the field, and the period 2000-01 will be of key importance in this respect. Refining the ILO's training methodologies on the basis of capacity-building experience in the different sectors will be part of this process and will contribute to our knowledge base for working with constituents.
- **27.** Capacity building will be accompanied by the development of methodologies for gender analysis and gender impact assessment and tools, such as checklists to support officials and constituents in their efforts to promote gender equality. These will take longer to develop, but by the end of the 2000-01 biennium a range of ILO-specific tools should be available and the majority of staff using them.
- **28.** Staff gender balance and equality of opportunity and treatment in career development also help strengthen the gender perspective in the ILO's work. The year 2000 will be important for laying the groundwork for procedures and practices to promote these.
- 29. Coordinated efforts in all these areas are meant to support and strengthen the Office's capacity and thereby the work of ILO constituents in the area of gender equality in the immediate and long term. The generation and sharing of knowledge and the implementation of programmes with a gender perspective is an ongoing challenge. At the heart of the Plan is the task of making the ILO's knowledge base, services and advocacy work truly reflect the realities of men's and women's experience and their strategic gender needs and so improve the quality of the ILO's work.
- **30.** The time-frame is approximately two years, although many items will carry on into the following biennium. The Plan will be evaluated on a six-monthly basis and revised. Sixmonthly detailed implementation plans will be drawn up, the first covering January to June

³ See Appendix II.

2000. The plans will indicate who will do what and in what time-frame. As many items involve various units, the lead unit will be identified. Progress will be measured by indicators to be established during this period. Indicators already elaborated for the 2000-01 programme of the Gender Bureau can serve as a guide, as much of the mandate of the Bureau includes supporting and coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan throughout the ILO.

Geneva, 11 February 2000.

Appendix I

Appendix II

Appendix I

B. ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO

Five key result areas

- 1. Policy statement on gender equality and gender mainstreaming
- 2. Gender mainstreaming in the structure of the International Labour Office
- 3. Capacity building for gender mainstreaming
- 4. Gender mainstreaming in the work of the ILO
- 5. Gender-sensitive human resource development

	<u>-</u> -		. -	Mai
implemented	The ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO is adopted and	Objective: A strong consensus is achiev	Key result area: Policy statement on a in the ILO	Main outputs
approved and disseminated	 1.1.1. A Policy statement and the Action Plan are formulated, circulated, discussed, revised, 	Objective: A strong consensus is achieved among all staff and constituents on the ILO's commitment to gender equality through gender mainstreaming	 Key result area: Policy statement on gender equality and gender mainstreaming – ILO Policy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the ILO 	Main activities
	 Director-General and Senior Management Bureau for Gender Equality 	's commitment to gender equality through gen	- ILO Policy and Action Plan on Gender Equ	Responsible units
	November 1999	der mainstreaming	ality and Mainstreaming	Time frame

Ņ Key result area: Gender mainstreaming in the structure of the International Labour Office

Objective: An enabling gender-sensitive and gender-responsive environment for gender mainstreaming is created

(b) Gender Team in each sector(c) Cross-sector Gender Advisory Team(d) Gender specialists and gender teams in	(a) Bureau for Gender Equality	headquarters and in the field, at different levels:	gender mainstreaming are set up at	2.1. Specific institutional arrangements on	
	Support a manon canning support	Office's capacity to coordinate, advocate and	headquarters and in the field to enhance the	2.1.1. Define roles and responsibilities at	
CODEVGender TeamsGender Bureau	Human Resources Development (HRD)	– IFPs – Denartments	 Regional Directors 	 Executive Directors 	
		December 2000 for the regions	for headquarters and to	December 1999 to June 2000	

the regions

	2.2.	Main
	2.2. New organizational changes are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive	Main outputs
2.2.2. Incorporate roles and responsibilities of managers and staff concerning gender in job descriptions, assignments and personal development plans	2.2.1. Improve gender balance in the new structure at headquarters and in the field	Main activities
Sectors/Gender TeamsField structure/Gender TeamsHRDGender Bureau	ManagementHRD	Responsible units
2000	From 1999 onwards	Time frame

3. Key result area: Capacity building for gender mainstreaming

Objective: The ILO as an institution, and ILO staff as individuals, are capable of mainstreaming gender issues and providing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive services to the constituents

		3.1. A comprehensive capacity-building programme on gender equality and gender mainstreaming for ILO staff and managers is designed and implemented
3.1.3. Organize annual gender consultation workshops for Gender Teams and Gender Specialists at headquarters and in the field, focusing on strategy review, implementation and skills	3.1.2. Update and develop training materials relevant to the technical areas of the four strategic objectives for both ILO staff and constituents	3.1.1. Identify needs and design, implement and evaluate a gender capacity-building programme for ILO staff at all levels, both at headquarters and in the field
Gender BureauGender TeamsHRDTurin	Gender TeamsRegional Gender TeamsGender BureauTurin	Gender Teams, Gender Advisory TeamRegional Gender TeamsGender BureauHRDTurin
Ongoing	November 1999 onwards	Ongoing

. Key result area: Gender mainstreaming in the work of the ILO

Objective: Gender is effectively mainstreamed and becomes a cross-cutting issue in the ILO's work

			4.1.	
	are developed	labour market analysis and policy formulation	4.1. New gender-sensitive frameworks for	
research, promotion of standards, technical cooperation and dissemination of information	evaluation of ILO programmes involving	design, planning, implementation and	4.1.1. Apply gender analysis systematically in the	•
Gender LeamsGender Bureau	- Gender Advisory Team	 InFocus Programmes 	 Sectors: headquarters and field 	
			January 2000 onwards	

Main outputs	4.2. Knowle relation employr and soci quality and advocace	4.3. Mechan concern program and eva headqua			4.4. Gender guidelir	
	Knowledge base on gender issues in relation to principles and rights at work, employment and incomes, social protection and social dialogue is expanded and the quality of ILO products, services and advocacy improved	Mechanisms are in place to ensure gender concerns are incorporated in planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ILO's work, at headquarters and in the field			Gender mainstreaming tools and guidelines are developed	
Main a	4.2.1.	4.3.1.	4.3.2.	4.3.3.	4.4.1	4.4.2.
Main activities	Develop further and make full use of knowledge base on gender equality issues in the world of work based on applied research, collection of good practices and lessons learned from technical cooperation	4.3.1. Gender issues are included as a standing item on the agenda of senior management meetings and regional directors' and programming meetings; gender specialists participate as appropriate	Introduce procedures, including gender impact analysis, to ensure that technical cooperation programmes and projects are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive, particularly in relation to identification of objectives, outputs, activities and indicators	Undertake biennial gender audits on ILO programmes and report results to the Governing Body	Increase knowledge production on gender mainstreaming in the world of work and design checklists on gender mainstreaming relevant to ILO areas of competence	Develop gender mainstreaming indicators for
Responsible units	Sectors: headquarters and fieldIFPsGender Advisory TeamGender TeamsGender Bureau	Senior ManagementRegional DirectorsCODEVGender Bureau/Specialists	Sectors/Gender TeamsField structure/Gender TeamsPROGRAMCODEVGender Bureau	 External consultant/Gender Bureau, Gender Advisory Team, PROGRAM, CODEV and Gender Teams involved) 	SectorsInFocus ProgrammesDepartmentsPROGRAMGender Bureau	- PROGRAM
Time frame	December 2000	November 1999 onwards	November 1999 onwards	2001	2000-01	January 2000 onwards

	5.1.		ပှာ				4.5.			Main
(UN set target of 50/50) within the Professional and Higher Categories are designed and implemented	A set of measures to reach gender balance	Objective: ILO's human resources policion	Key result area: Gender-sensitive human resource and staff policy			constituents is developed and functioning	A comprehensive information and communication programme encompassing headquarters, the field and			Main outputs
internal mobility and promotion 5.1.2. Design and implement positive action measures to increase the number of women in management positions	5.1.1. Set appropriate targets by grade for recruitment,	Objective: ILO's human resources policies are gender-sensitive and gender-balanced	nan resource and staff policy	4.5.4. Organize round tables and panel discussions on gender issues with in-house and external keynote speakers	4.5.3. Ensure that all major ILO documents and publications distributed or sold to constituents and the public reflect a gender perspective	4.5.2. Collect and disseminate, on an annual basis, information on women's and men's participation in ILO meetings, including the establishment of a database	4.5.1. Develop further and regularly update a comprehensive ILO gender website and issue a regular newsletter	4.4.4. Publish guidelines on the use of gendersensitive language	4.4.3. (a) Ensure that all ILO databases, including those on technical cooperation projects, are gender-sensitive(b) Generate, collect and disseminate data disaggregated by sex	Main activities
Sector/Programme DirectorsHRD	- HRD			 Gender Bureau in collaboration with sectors at headquarters and the field 	Sectors: headquarters and fieldGender TeamsPUBLRELCONF	RELCONFSectors: headquarters and fieldGender BureauTurin	Gender BureauSectors: headquarters and fieldCODEV	Gender BureauRELCONFGender Advisory TeamConsultant	 CODEV STAT PROGRAM Sectors Field Structure BIBL Gender Advisory Team Gender Bureau 	Responsible units
2000	2000			November 1999 onwards	2000	Ongoing	Ongoing	By December 2000	By December 2000	Time frame

Main	Main outputs	Main activities	Responsible units	Time frame
		5.1.3. Assess the gender implications of the mobility policy and design and implement measures to facilitate mobility for both men and women	– HRD – Staff Union	2000-01
5.2.	Mechanisms and plans introduced to facilitate equality of treatment between men and women in career development	5.2.1. Assess and adapt training programmes to promote equality of opportunity in men's and women's career paths	– HRD – Gender Bureau	2000
		5.2.2. Review and adapt selection, job classification and performance appraisal procedures and develop an incentive system to ensure gender equity	- HRD	2000
5.3.	Full-time staff equality officer position in the HRD department established	5.3.1. Appoint an equality officer and define terms of reference	Director-GeneralHRD	2000
5.4.	Gender-sensitive and family-friendly working conditions established and operational	5.4.1. Revise provisions and practices regarding childcare assistance and maternity, paternity, parental and family care leave	– HRD – Staff Union	By September 2000
		5.4.2. Revise the existing circular on sexual harassment, introduce special procedures for complaints and provide training and counselling	– HRD – JUR – Staff Union	By June 2000