Inter-Agency Network on
Women and Gender Equality

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English Only

Report of the Sixth Session of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) New York, 21 to 22 February 2007

Contents

I.   Introduction

1.   The Sixth Session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) was held on 20-22 February 2007 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The session comprised two days of regular meetings and one day devoted to a workshop on monitoring and measuring progress towards gender equality.

2.   The session was chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. She opened the meeting with a tribute to Ms. Angela King, her predecessor, who had passed away on 5 February 2007. Members of the Network paid tribute to Ms. King's accomplishments, in particular her strong support for gender balance in the UN system, her contribution to the processes that led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and her many other efforts to ensure that the UN system delivered on gender equality.

3.   The chairperson drew attention to the Secretary General's commitment to UN reform and to gender equality. She noted that UN reform including the re-structuring of the UN gender architecture recommended by the Secretary General's <u>High Level Panel on UN system-wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment</u> was meant to enable the UN system to deliver tangible results at the country level. She underscored the importance of supporting countries to cope with the multiple challenges in development, humanitarian and peace-keeping areas as they attempt to close the gap between policies and practices. These challenges need to be addressed at all levels including the policy, normative and operational levels.

4.   The IANWGE adopted the agenda containted in Annex I.

II.   Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.

A. Preparations for ECOSOC Coordination Segment 2007

5.   The Network discussed the <u>Report of the Secretary General on assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of the United Nations System focusing on training and capacity development</u> to be presented to ECOSOC on 6 – 10 July 2007 in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 2006/36 and resolution 2006/9 prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). In the process of completing the questionnaire, sent out by OSAGI, it became evident that besides gender units, other units within entities such as human resources, strategic planning, resources mobilization and training also play a key role in ensuring successful gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes. In this respect it was recognized that the information collected from the questionnaire would be useful in the implementation of the UN system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming.

B. Operationalization   of   the   UN-system-wide   policy   and   strategy   on   gender mainstreaming

6.   The Network discussed the development of a system-wide Action Plan as a follow-up to the policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming endorsed by the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) at its meeting in October 2006. The main task would be to translate the policy and strategy into concrete measures under a UN system-wide action plan that would establish, inter alia, commitment,

leadership and accountability. OSAGI, as the coordinator of the policy and strategy, urged the Network to maintain the high level of consultation which had been established thus far on the designing of the Action Plan for the implementation of the policy and strategy.

7.   Participants were unanimous that the action plan should promote greater coherence and coordination within the system by identifying areas for common and individual efforts. The Action plan should specify in detail the actions for the implementation of all six main elements of the strategy with a timeframe, indicators, allocation of responsibilities, accountability mechanisms and resources. Participants also hoped that the action plan would reflect a system-wide understanding of concepts, norms, standards and indicators and would be built on lessons learnt and achievements of each individual entity. The implementation of the Action plan would strengthen the UN system's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, both at the system-wide and at each individual entity levels.

8.   Accountability, one of the six main elements, was underscored by all UN entities. They shared their experience regarding the establishment of accountability procedures. It was specifically emphasized that accountability processes and mechanisms should be strengthened or developed in a coherent, coordinated and consistent manner, in order to make it possible to assess progress and gaps at all levels of UN work on gender mainstreaming, both in policy and operational areas. Taking into account existing ones that have proved effective. It was also underscored that a coherent system-wide accountability mechanism would not obviate the ability of individual UN entities to enhance their internal accountability processes taking into account their specific mandates and roles.

9.   The Network confirmed that gender training is fundamental for the UN to achieve its gender equality goals. It was emphasized that gender training should become obligatory throughout the whole system. Web-based mandatory training such as the one developed on security was considered timely and essential. In addition, the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) was considered well situated to provide training to senior UN staff. Members of the network expressed a willingness to provide technical inputs in the development of specific modules. Concrete steps under the leadership of the senior management should therefore be taken to fast track system-wide initiatives on capacity development for gender mainstreaming.

10.   The Network created an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Action Plan for the UN system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming consisting of the following entities: World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA). OSAGI would act as secretary to the group. The working group would review, in particular performance indicators and outcomes, financial and human resources, accountability framework, key concepts and gender training issues. The first step would be to take an inventory of existing frameworks. The Ad Hoc working group aimed at submitting a draft Action Plan to the inter-sessional meeting of the IANWGE in July 2007.

III. Follow-up to inter-sessional activities

A. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/143 on "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women".

11.   The Network was informed that following a discussion of the Secretary General's in-depth study on violence against women in December 2006, the General Assembly adopted a comprehensive resolution 61/143 on "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" . The resolution highlighted the role of the IANWGE supported by the Task Force on Violence against Women, which the Network created in February 2006. The Task Force was co-convened by Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

12.   The Co-conveners of the Task Force on Violence against Women briefed the meeting on the resolution and its implications for the work of the UN entities. They noted that resolution 61/143 offered a new opportunity not just for scaling up work on combating violence against women, but also for collaboration and for working with member countries to establish monitoring mechanisms in the implementation of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls. The role of the Task Force would be to ensure a coordinated follow-up to the resolution and the implementation of recommendations of the study. This would entail information-sharing, joint programming and resource mobilization. The task force would prepare a work plan for 2007-2008 with concrete outputs and would report to the Network at its next inter-sessional meeting.

13.   It was noted that many actors were working on different initiatives aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls. Under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on humanitarian issues, guidelines for intervention to prevent gender based violence in humanitarian settings had been issued. Attention was also drawn to the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. The World Bank (WB) informed the Network that they were undertaking a study in collaboration with UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on impact analysis of the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The sharing of information regarding these initiatives was recommended.

14.   Participants noted existing challenges to to scaling up work on combating violence against women including resources, strengthening coordination among already ongoing initiatives focusing on violence against women, both at Headquarters and in the field and between development and humanitarian actors. Minimizing the conceptual distinction between on the one hand programming for gender equality and on the other programming on violence against women, broadening the range of stakeholders especially at the country level to include such actors as local governments, and promoting new research and data, including on costs of violence also continued to present challenges.

B. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325

15.   The Network was briefed on the outcome of the open debate of the Security Council in October 2006 on the review of the UN system-wide action plan on implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. That review which covered only eight months of the biennium would be followed by a further review for the remainder of the Action Plan.

16.   The 2006 review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 showed that while significant progress had been achieved in many areas of the current action plan, challenges such as inadequate gender mainstreaming capacity and lack of accountability, uneven leadership and commitment, inadequate coordination and lack of coherence and insufficient resources had constrained effective implementation of the plan. In particular, a more robust reporting, monitoring and accountability system was called for. The need to revise the current action plan and develop it into a more strategic instrument was stressed.

17.   In 2007, the Task Force on Women, Peace and Security would provide support and guidance in the follow-up to the system-wide action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325. .

18.   The Task Force on Women, Peace and Security informed the Network that a framework for accountability and monitoring would be included in the revised Action Plan.   It would contain indicators for measuring progress in implementation and collect good practices and lessons learned. National level implementation of resolution 1325 would also be a key area for the coming year's work. The engagement of a broader spectrum of Member States including the G77 and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other regional actors, in addition to the Security Council, is also essential if country level implementation is to be realized.   In order to break new ground in implementing Security Council resolution 1325, senior managers in UN entities needed to be more engaged.   In particular, overlaps between different mandates, processes and reporting requirements for example on gender mainstreaming, violence against women and resolution 1325 should be addressed.

C. The Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

19.   The Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities informed the Network that on 13 December 2006, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 61/106 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol.   The final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities on its eighth session was available as document A/61/611.

20.   The Convention, the first to be negotiated with the full participation of civil society, aimed at halting discrimination against persons with disabilities and enabling countries to adopt the necessary legal frameworks to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities.   It was noted that most disability legislation and policies were based on the assumption that persons with disabilities were not able to exercise the same rights as non-disabled ones.   Changes in the perception and concepts of disability would require both changes in values and increased understanding of disability at all levels of society.   It would entail removing social and cultural norms that perpetuate erroneous and inappropriate myths about disability.

21.   The Network's attention was drawn to Article 6 that addresses the specific rights of women with disabilities.   Howevre, it was advised that it would be a mistake to isolate this Article from the others if women with disabilities were to benefit of the entire Convention.

22.   Although it was noted that the implementation of the Convention would be a challenging task, the Network underscored the opportunities it created to address the rights of women with disabilities. The lack of statistics and data on women with disabilities was identified by members of the Network as one of the challenges to promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls with disabilities within the policies and programmes of the United Nations. .   At present, disability was defined in connection with attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other non-disabled persons.   The lack of a clear or widely accepted definition of disability presented further challenges

23.   The secretariat was advised to study other inter-agency processes, including the response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.   Attention was also drawn to the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) implementation handbook on the Rights of the Child. It was suggested that a mapping exercise could be undertaken to identify processes and actors doing work on disability.   It was also suggested that consideration should be given to establishing priorities and organizing a discussion on the difficulties

and opportunities for combining or linking the rights based approach with a social development approach in implementation of the Convention and other inter-agency initiatives.

24.   A system-wide strategy to advance implementation of the Convention was to be developed, including establishing an inter-agency group to guide that work. The need for training and capacity-building, awareness raising, collection of good practices, monitoring and knowledge management was stressed. Close collaboration among entities and inter-agency processes was deemed important.

25.   The Network was invited to make suggestions on the development of the system-wide strategy to advance implementation of the Convention; mainstreaming of the Convention into country plans; ratification and monitoring at the national level; integration of the implementation of the Convention into other processes; on how to improve data collection and ensure that data collected is disaggregated by disability; and inputs on how the links between a rights based approach and a social development approach could be strengthened.

D. Summary reports of inter-sessional activities of Task Forces of IANWGE

26.   Oral reports were provided by the managers of the following task forces: Gender and Water – Division for Sustainable Development (DSD); WomenWatch – DAW; Gender Mainstreaming in Evaluation, Monitoring and Programme Reporting – International Labour Office (ILO) / Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)); Gender and Trade – UNCTAD; Gender Equality and the Millennium Delvelopment Goals (MDG) – WB / United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and Indigenous Women – Secretariat for of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues (SPFII). The main challenge experienced by the task forces was one of lack of resources. In particular the Task Force on WomenWatch, which maintains the WomenWatch website, now considered a best practice in the UN system, is need of regular and predictable resources. The Network noted that since the work of the task forces contributed to mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work of the United Nations in various sectors, a strategy of how task forces could be better supported should be explored. More detailed reports were submitted in writing.

27.   The Network concluded as follows:

   (i)   The Task Force on Indigenous Women's proposal to complete its work by the end of 2007 and then disband was accepted.

   (ii)   All other task forces would continue to function during 2007 and undertake a review of their Terms of Reference and work plans to ensure that the goals and objectives remained realistic and achievable within a set time-frame. In addition, OSAGI would undertake a review of the work of the task forces and the methods of work.

   (iii)   In view of the commencement of work on the system-wide Action Plan on gender mainstreaming, the Task Force on gender equality and MDGs was to revise its terms of reference to reflect the following four points: work on indicators, work on statistics, monitoring of MDGs and funding for promotion of gender equality in the context of MDGs. The task force should also liaise with relevant actors within the UN system with a view to avoid overlap and duplication.

   (iv)   The Task Force on Gender and Trade should convene a meeting to discuss preparations for UNCTAD XII.

IV. Matters related to the Commission on the Status of Women

28.   The Network was informed that beginning in 2007 the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) had changed its working methods. It was now structured to allow for more interaction, a greater focus on national implementation and a discussion of only one, rather than two, themes. The focus on one theme allows for more in-depth discussion and the negotiation of agreed conclusions in one area rather than two. Review of implementation of the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission would take place after two to three years. The priority theme for 2007 was "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The relevance and importance of this theme was underscored by the fact that over 4,800 NGOs had pre-registered to participate. Over two hundred parallel-events were planned. The theme for 2008 would be "Financing for Gender Equality".

29.   Further discussion focused on the follow-up by UN entities to the outputs of the Commission. In paragraph 19 of ECOSOC Resolution 2006/9 on <u>Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women</u>, the Secretary General was requested to undertake an assessment of the impact of the Commission's input to discussions within the United Nations systems and report to the ECOSOC and the General Assembly. The Network acknowledged the importance of following closely the discussions in the Commission and to use the outcome of its deliberations to strengthen their policies and programmes. The hope was expressed that with the new working methods of the Commission the interaction between all relevant UN entities and the Commission would be strengthened.

30.   Participants were informed that the best way to contribute to the agreed conclusions of the CSW was to work closely with member states. UN entities were encouraged to also participate in the preparation of the Expert Group Meetings held prior to the Commission's annual meeting.

31.   The Network noted that the NGO community had started advocating for the convening of Beijing+15. However the Commission decided in 2006 to consider this issue at its 53rd session in 2009.

V. Matters related to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

32.   Participants were informed that the transfer of servicing of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) from DAW to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) would take place in 2008 to coincide with the 2008-2009 biennium. OHCHR had strengthened attention to women's rights by establishing a gender unit to focus, inter alia, on legal standard setting on women's rights issues including the prosecution of sexual violence and the promotion and protection of women's socio-economic rights in post-conflict situations. A gender advisor position had also been established at the OHCHR liaison office in New York.

33.   For the first time in 2007, several United Nations entities submitted in closed sessions joint reports on several of the reporting countries. These reports were produced by the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) under the coordination of UNDP. Participating entities had developed guidelines to facilitate preparation of these joint submissions. The Network considered this an emerging good practice that should be strengthened. However it was noted that UNCTs needed capacity building in order to provide information that was most pertinent to the work of the Committee. Entities present in a reporting country were encouraged to participate in the joint report in the spirit of the UN system delivering as one. The Committee has emphasized the usefulness of the information

from the UN entities and the desireability of having such information as early as possible preferably at the time of the Committee's pre-session working group meetings.

34.   The Network was informed that the Committee had invited four countries, namely Dominica, Guinea Bissau, Haiti and Liberia that had not submitted reports for over twenty years to do so. The UN system was urged to provide assistance to those countries. It was further recommended that countries whose reporting was ten years overdue should also receive assistance from the UN entities. Those were Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, Bahamas, Grenada, Chad, Central African Republic, Seychelles and Comoros.

VI. Workshop on monitoring and measuring progress on gender equality

35.   The annual workshop of the Network focused on monitoring and measuring progress towards gender equality. Three presentations were made: one by UNFPA and UNIFEM as the co-managers of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Task Force on Gender Equality; another by the Statistics Division in the UN Department of Social and Economic Development (DESA); and the third by the WomanStats Project based at Brigham Young University in Utah.

36.   The UNDG Task Force on Gender Equality informed the Network of the efforts being undertaken through UN country teams to support more consistent and coherent action among UNDG members to mainstream gender equality and promote women's empowerment at the country level. The focus was on ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment were fully reflected in all the wide range of tools and processes that emerged from the UNDG for use by the UNCTs. A score card had been developed for that purpose.

37.   The initial lessons learned were that accountability for results was elusive throughout the UN system. Accountability was mainly for processes and not for results and even then it was weak. The task force concluded that it was essential to go beyond "checklists" to incentives and consequences. Actionable models of UNCT holistic, rights-based programmes of support for gender equality and women's empowerment were needed.

38.   The Network noted that at the country level it was important to both empower rights holders and to monitor progress in implementation. It was therefore suggested to build civil society capacity into the scorecard mechanism. Moreover, the extension of the scorecard beyond the internal processes of the UNDG so as to include government, would also capture official measures such as legislative change which was a key measurement of progress towards gender equality. Additionally, it was essential to understand the rationale behind UNCT's choice of particular activities. A roster for various types of gender experts, including for monitoring and evaluation, would be shared in order to support UNCTs that might need access to one.

39.   The Statistics Division informed the Network that improvements in gender statistics had been slow, and progress had been uneven across countries and regions, important lessons were available from the different initiatives that had been undertaken over the years in this field. With more coordinated support and proper management and sharing of the accumulated knowledge countries could draw on the experiences of others to advance their own programmers. Several areas to be tackled and gaps to be bridged, in the immediate future, include leveraging the collective knowledge and achievements of the last three decades.

40.   In this regard a new initiative, a Global Gender Statistics Programme (GGSP) to explore ways of strengthening collaboration and promoting partnerships among stakeholders in the development of gender statistics, including the identification of data needs and indicators for emerging policy goals, is to be launched.   The GGSP would promote effective sharing of tools and materials; exchange of information on good practices and strategies; and collaborative programming for capacity building and addressing gaps under the leadership of the UN Statistics Division.

41.   The Network welcomed this new initiative noting that gender statistics were necessary to support programming for gender equality.   Furthermore it was essential to promote greater awareness of different initiatives collecting data on women in the UN system and to bring together existing statistics for use by entities.   Statisticians also needed to promote and give guidance on the use of statistics to measure impact and identify areas where it was critically important that statistics be collected e.g. violence against women, particularly rural women.   Data sets such as the Demographic Health Surveys could be used by governments to substitute for serious lack of data. Greater efforts should be put in promoting public use samples as a means of overcoming insuffiient analytical capacity in the public sector.   However, training was required by both the usersas well as producers of statistics.

42.   The WomanStats Project presented an overview of their data base.   The WomanStats Project began in 2001 with the aim of investigating the link between the security and behavior of states and the situation and security of the women in those countries.   Overtime the Project developed several other interrelated goals that included the most comprehensive data base on the situation and status of women in the world; innovative indices and measures to describe the situation and status of women, which will allow for empirical analysis, assessment, monitoring, and evaluation activities; and providing the capacity to perform empirical and spatial analysis of the relationship between the situation and status of women in the world with the behavior and security of states.

43.   The data base for the WomanStats Project was already sixty-five per cent complete.   When finished it would cover over 240 variables for 172 nations with populations greater than 200,000 persons.   Variables included those relating to nine aspects of women's situation and security namely women's physical security; women's economic security; women's legal security; women's security in the community; women's security in the family; security for maternity; women's security through voice; security through societal investment in women; and women's security in the State.   The data base, for example, contained all the 17,000 official and shadow reports of the CEDAW codified for easy use.

44.   The constellation of information provided in the WomanStats should provide policymakers with a very strong empirical foundation for implementing and tracking initiatives to improve the status of women.   The data base, which would be made available free on the internet when eighty per cent complete, had a web-based interface that allowed credentialed experts at the country level to directly enter data online.   Because the fate of nations was integrally tied to the status of women in society, the WomanStats Project had the potential to profoundly affect every society's understanding of itself and the most important determinants of national and international security and their current and future transformation.

45.   The Network commended the initiative noting that it filled a major gap in the availability of data on women.   While welcoming collaboration with WomanStats Project, participants raised issues related to how the data was coded, the verification processes and the credibility of the data sources, especially non-government sources.   It was noted that all data was referenced for the benefit of users.   At the same time, it was indicated that all the data in the WomanStats Project data base was in the public domain already and any researcher could find them.   The WomanStats Project enabled finding

and using the data easier. The Network asked the Task Force on Gender Equality and the MDG's to continue the engagement with the WomanStats Project and to advise how best the Network could benefit from that Project.

VII. Human resources and status of women in the UN system

46.   The Network discussed the key findings and recommendations of the <u>Report of the Secretary General on the improvement of the status of women in the UN system</u> (A/61/318) which was based on the mandated study under General Assembly resolution 57/180, Para 5 (i) on <u>Probable causes of the slow advance in the improvement of the status of women in the UN system</u>. The report highlighted the slow pace of reaching gender balance, a topic that engaged the Network's great interest and deep concern and one that the meeting indicated should be addressed and solutions found urgently. While participants welcomed the achievement of gender parity at the P2 level, they noted that at the proposed incremental rate, and using simple projections gender balance would be reached in 2114 and 2130 at the P5 and D1 levels respectively. In some agencies the glass ceiling for women is at the P-4 level.

47.   Entities underscored the importance of the UN system-wide data on improvement of status of women produced by the Office of the Focal Point for Women noting it as a best practice and a very effective spring board for their own advocacy and monitoring efforts. The data provided were however two years old and efforts should be made to ensure the CEB receives and transmits data that are up to date. An appeal was made to the Human Resources units of entities to do so. OSAGI was requested to continue efforts to obtain and analyze exit survey data to ascertain the cause of the high level of separations of women, and to compare years in grade before promotions for both men and women.

48.   The impact of phantom vacancy postings of apparently already pre-assigned positions might be affecting women negatively and needed to be closely examined. Likewise, in those entities where there was heavy reliance on temporary, very short term assignments and consultants, it would be useful to analyze data by sex as well. Many of those opportunities served as entry points to the UN system and might serve as sources from which to draw candidates for more regular pools. Also the remuneration structure in those temporary posts needed to be examined to guard against bias on the basis of sex.

49.   The Network discussed the challenge of moving from rhetoric to action in reaching mandated gender balance. It was suggested that entities pool resources, for example, to develop scorecards to monitor progress towards gender balance. Other strategies entailed finding champions and new partners including men. Implementation of special measures as mandated in November 1999 needed to be reinstated. It was observed that there had been a correlation between the decline in progress towards gender balance and the suspension of those measures. Yet, temporary special measures were fully within the human rights framework and Article 4 of CEDAW. Good practices in reaching gender parity or near-parity in professional positions such as in UNFPA and UNICEF should be systematically documented in order to distil lessons that could be replicated by other entities. Information should be shared on lessons learned in identifying and working with allies.

50.   The centrality of work-life balance was repeatedly noted in its relation to the retention and recruitment of women as well as to the changing demands of both the younger and more middle-aged workforce. An emerging trend was the demand for work life balance by male staff who is increasingly exercising their rights for flexible working arrangements. It was emphasized that senior managers who were committed to gender balance and work life policies could make the most significant difference. They should set the tone, "Walk the Talk", for credibility to be restored. Leadership training for women was identified as an important strategy. The Women in Leadership Programme in Sweden was

recommended as one that more women should be given the opportunity to undertake to prepare themselves for senior positions.

51.   The need for change in work culture was strongly emphasized. Studies conducted by some entities such as the Secretariat, UN System and UNICEF indicated that change in the organizational culture was a prerequisite for gender balance. While many entities had work life policies, many were not implemented and staff felt stigmatized by requesting them. Other entities including WFP were working to correlate gender and marital status over a five year period and also working to dispel the myth that women did not want to go to hardship duty stations. Some entities were also examining why women were leaving and as well as looking at the prevalence of sexual harassment and its consequences.

52.   In light of the recommendations contained in the <u>Report of the Secretary-General on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the UN system</u>, the Network resolved to increase its efforts by promoting the adoption of specific strategies to enable entities that had not already done so to reach the 50/50 gender balance. OSAGI was requested to take the lead in coordinating communities of interest in areas such as gender balance score cards, work-life issues and accountability. Participants commended the newsletter, the "Network". They cited the Report and the Newsletter as being important tools for monitoring and harmonization and for learning about women in leadership in the UN system. Due to the strong interest in and the importance of this topic, the Network would allot more time to the subject matter at future IANWGE meetings where the chair of the Human Resources network would be invited.

53.   The Network recognized that though the gender balance and the gender mainstreaming functions within entities were structurally different and should remain so, they were conceptually linked and reinforced each other. They constituted the twin pillars for achieving gender equality. It was therefore recommended that entities identify gender balance or diversity focal points in addition to gender mainstreaming focal points. Some entities had already taken this initiative and others had undertaken studies to make the business case for diversity.

VIII.   Other matters

A. International Women's Day 2007

54.   At the inter-sessional meeting, the IANWGE agreed that the theme for International Women's Day 2007 would be "Ending Impunity for Violence against Women". A panel discussion on this topic would mark the United Nations official observance of International Women's Day on 8 March 2007. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council would participate in the opening session which would be followed an interactive high level panel discussion. The panel discussion would focus on good practices and specific examples on elimination of violence and ending impunity from the global to the local levels. Another panel would take place during the lunch time with private sector participants focusing on "Breaking Barriers: Achieving Balance in Numbers and Work-Life". In the evening there would be a film screening of the documentary "Women in an Insecure World" followed by an interactive dialogue.

55.   There was a discussion on the use of celebrities for high-level events and advocacy related to gender issues. It was noted that many of the agencies already used celebrities to draw attention to key issues, including as goodwill ambassadors. UNESCO, for example, had engaged tennis star Ms. Venus Williams as a global promoter of gender equality with great success.

B. International Women's Day 2008

56.   The Network discussed possible themes for International Women's Day 2008. It was agreed that henceforth the theme for the International Women's Day for the United Nations system would be decided one year in advance. Furthermore, the theme would be related to that of the Commission on the Status of Women. Next year's theme would therefore focus on an aspect of Financing for Gender Equality. The specific theme would be announced mid-April 2007.

C. Other upcoming events

57.   Members of the Network exchanged information on forthcoming events of mutual interest. The following were highlighted:

(i)   The President of Liberia and the President of Finland planned to host an international symposium on women's leadership in Liberia in January 2008. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has been providing technical support for the preparations of the meeting.

(ii)   The UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict situations would launch the initiative on 5 March. A high-level panel would be organized.

(iii)   The Tenth Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean organized by ECLAC would be held in Quito, Ecuador in August 2007. The Conference would focus on women's unpaid work and women and political participation.

(iv)   The Women International Democratic Federation (WIDF) would hold its XIV International Congress from 16 to 20 April 2007 in Caracas, Venezuela. WIDF extended a invitation to the United Nations to participate and to display publications and other resources.

(v)   WHO planned to organize a workshop in Salzburg, Austria in April 2007 on building capacity for gender mainstreaming. Two or three participants from the IANWGE network would be welcome to take part in the workshop.

(vi)   UNESCO drew attention to Europe Day, 10 May 2007, which would focus on migration. A section on women's contribution to economic development would be included.

(vii)   The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) informed the Network about a training to be held in Geneva 27 May – 2 June for the Gender Advisory Roster pool which would be used to kick-off the Handbook *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs - Equal Opportunities.* The handbook was a sector-by-sector guide on how to ensure gender equality programming in humanitarian situations.

IX. Closing session, key recommendations and dates for the next session

58.   At the closing of the session, the chairperson noted that the meeting had made important decisions and recommendations to support gender mainstreaming within the policies and programmes

of the United Nations system, enhance coordination and strengthen coherence. Among the key outcomes and recommendations were the following:

(i)   The Network formed an Ad Hoc Working Group to develop an Action Plan on the UN system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming. The Ad Hoc Working group comprising the following entities: WHO, WFP, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, FAO and DDA with OSAGI acting as secretary to the group. A draft Action Plan was planned for submission to the inter-sessional meeting of the IANWGE in July 2007.

(ii)   The Network underscored the importance of capacity development for gender mainstreaming. In the context of UN reform and in the interests of promoting coherence, it recommended that concrete steps be taken to facilitate commencement of training at the UNSSC to develop competencies for gender mainstreaming for senior cadres of staff throughout the UN system. Members of the Network expressed the willingness to provide technical input in the development of specific modules.

(iii)   In order to scale-up and accelerate gender mainstreaming, it was further recommended that UN system-wide web-based mandatory training on gender mainstreaming (similar to one on security) for all staff be initiated with an elaboration of clear consequences for staff.

(iv)   The Network welcomed the work already initiated by the Task Force on Violence against Women to spearhead within the UN system a collective approach on combating violence against women in response to General Assembly resolution 61/143.

(v)   In light of the recommendations contained in the <u>Report of the Secretary-General on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the UN system</u>, the Network resolved to increase its efforts by promoting the adoption of specific strategies to enable entities that had not already done so to reach the 50/50 gender balance. OSAGI was requested to take the lead in coordinating communities of interest in areas such as gender balance score cards, work-life issues and accountability. Entities were encouraged to provide data to the CEB Secretariat in a timely manner to ensure that the report remained current.

(vi)   Although the Network recognized that the gender balance and gender mainstreaming functions within entities were structurally different and should remain so, they were nonetheless conceptually linked and reinforced each other. It recommended that entities identify gender balance or diversity focal points in addition to the gender mainstreaming ones. Some entities had already done so.

(vii)   The Network welcomed the submission by UN entities present in the reporting country of a joint report to the CEDAW. It considered such coordinated efforts a further enhancement of capacity for a strong follow up to the CEDAW concluding comments in both the normative and operational work of the UN in promoting the rights of women. It was noted that these reports had been compiled by the UNCT under the overall coordination of UNDP. The Network recommended that capacity building to support UNCTs in preparing reports to CEDAW be undertaken.

(viii)   The Network acknowledged the need for a closer working relationship with CSW. It recommended exploring new ways of interacting with CSW, as well as increased participation in CSW-related expert group meetings.

(ix)   The Network agreed that henceforth the theme for the International Women's Day for the United Nations would be decided a year in advance to allow for adequate preparatory time. Furthermore, in order to build on the momentum created at the country level, the theme would be related to that selected by the Commission on the Status of Women. Next year's theme for International Women's Day would focus on an aspect of Financing for Gender Equality. The specific theme would be announced by mid-April 2007.

(x)   The Network resolved to continue exploring ways of collaborating with the WomanStats Project. The Task Force on Gender Equality and the MDGs was asked to engage the principals of the WomanStats Project to identify how the IANWGE could take advantage of the data base for the WomanStats Project given the wide range of data, including from non-government sources contained therein.

(xi)   The Network decided to hold its next session on 19-21 February 2008.

Annex 1
Agenda

(i)   Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

(ii)   Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

    (a)   Preparation for ECOSOC Coordination Segment 2007

    (b)   Operationalization of the system-wide policy and strategy on gender mainstreaming

(iii)   Follow-up to inter-sessional activities

    (a)   Implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/143 preventing violence against women

    (b)   Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325

    (c)   Summary reports from Task Force Managers

    (d)   Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

(iv)   Matters related to the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

(v)   Matters related to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

(vi)   Workshop on monitoring and measuring progress towards gender equality

(vii)   Human resources and the status of women in the UN system

(viii) Other matters including the International Women's Day theme for 2008

(ix)   Conclusion and dates for the next session

Annex 2
List of Participants

Chairperson:

Ms. Rachel Mayanja
DESA/Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

Secretary:

Ms. Wariara Mbugua
DESA/ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

Assistant Secretary:

Ms. Marilyn Dawson
DESA/ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

Ms. Katarina Salmela
DESA/ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

United Nations and its entities and programmes:

Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)	Ms. Agnes Marcaillou
Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)	Ms. Carina Van Vliet
Department of Economic and Social Affairs/	
Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)	Ms. Christine Brautigam
	Ms. Sylvie I. Cohen
	Ms. Carolyn Hannan
Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)	Ms. Kenza Robinson
Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)	Ms. Aparna Mehrotra
	Ms. Natalia Zakharova
Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD)	Ms. Victoria Beria
Division for Social Policy and Development, Secretariat of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous People (SPFII)	Ms. Mirian Masaquiza

	Ms. Elissavet Stamatopoulou
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)	Ms. Grace Bediako
	Ms. Elisa Munoz Franco
Department of Political Affairs (DPA)	Ms. Kanchan Paser
Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)	Ms. Comfort Lamptey
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	Ms. Ewa Ruminska-Zimny
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	Ms. Sonia Montano
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Ms. Marcela Villarreal
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	Ms. Diana Wall
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Ms. Maria Hartl
International Training Centre (ILO)	Ms. Adrienne Cruz
	Ms. Evy Messell
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)	Ms. Carmen Moreno
	Ms. Kristen Timothy
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Ms. Amy Muedin
	Ms. Anke Strauss
International Trade Centre (ITC) (UNCTAD/WTO)	Ms. Sabine Meitzel
International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC/ILO)	Ms. Benedetta Magri-Short
	Ms. Blerina Vila
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Ms. Kate Burns
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	Ms. Dutima Bhagwandin
	Ms. Inger Brodal
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)	Ms. Sabine Becker
	Ms. Christa Lex
Regional Commissions, New York Office	Ms. Nritya Subramaniam

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)   Ms. Marine Davtyan

                                                        Ms. Susan Timberlake

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)   Ms. Nuria Castells, Ph.D.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)   Ms. Patricia Thomas

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)   Ms. Saniye Gülser Corat

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)   Ms. Aminata Toure

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)   Ms. Lucia Kiwala

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)   Ms. Liv Elin Indreiten

                                                        Mr. Daniel Seymour

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)   Ms. Ingrid Arnò

                                                        Ms. Joanne Sandler

World Bank (WB)   Ms. A. Waafas Ofosu-Amaah

World Food Programme (WFP)   Ms. Isatou Jallow

World Health Organization (WHO)   Ms. Adepeju Olukoya

World Intellectual Property Organziation (WIPO)   Ms. Helen Lom

Invited Resource Persons:

Brigham Young University   Prof. Valerie Hudson

                             Mr. Matthew Stearmer