

Terms of references

IANWGE Task Force on WomenWatch

Implementing the terms of reference depends on securing adequate and sustained funding for WomenWatch. As of April 2007, funding is only available for a web manager until end of June 07.

Introduction

WomenWatch (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>), a collaborative online project of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), is the UN Internet Gateway on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. WomenWatch provides a portal to the online gender resources and websites of the UN system and access to information on the work of United Nations entities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. WomenWatch is utilized by Governments, NGOs, United Nations entities, global and regional organizations, academics, women's groups and networks, and interested individuals.

The proposed Terms of Reference are based on the recommendations of the 2007 annual meeting of the WomenWatch Policy Advisory Group, and the annual report of the WomenWatch Task Manager to the IANWGE in February 2007.

Goal:

Promoting gender equality via a collaborative internet-based environment in which United Nations entities with complementary mandates work together to facilitate access, inside and outside the UN system, to United Nations policy outcomes, flagship publications, technical materials and events, by providing a unique "one-stop" space for knowledge sharing on the work of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Overall Objectives:

- Renewed interest for, and commitment to, the global gender equality, women's rights and empowerment agenda emerging from the Fourth World Conference on Women, and other United Nations conferences and meetings.
- Increased system-wide coherence by making the work of the United Nations system on the promotion of gender equality more centrally accessible to a broader range of stakeholders.
- Strengthened opportunities for, and capacities of civil society, women's organization and networks, social movements and women and men from all regions, to participate in the assessment of progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and other gender-related recommendations of United Nations global conferences; and inclusive policy-making around the promotion of gender equality, through: information on

implementation of recommendations and online sharing of views, which can be fed into intergovernmental and national processes, as appropriate.

Project Specific Objectives:

- Securing funding through collaborative fund-raising for WomenWatch as a prerequisite for maintaining the portal and for the sustained expansion of WomenWatch;
- Enhanced timeliness, comprehensiveness and relevance of WomenWatch content on the work of the United Nations on gender equality;
- Introduction of multilingual features;
- Further development of the portal “special features” section to ensure greater coverage of specific thematic emerging issues areas such as globalization, rural development, ICT, migration, ageing; and regional information;
- Upgrade and incorporation of user-friendly technical tools and new information dissemination strategies to reach out to more United Nations constituencies (for instance, through RSS news feeds, women’s organizations and governments would be able to receive automatic alert messages whenever new resources have been added to WomenWatch, instead of having to check the website for additions);
- Introduction of new technologies in online publishing such as online video, web accessibility, mobile browsing, etc, to better serve WomenWatch stakeholders.
- Development of on-going monitoring and evaluation system for WomenWatch.

Activities

1. Periodic updating of resources and linkages in the database-driven directory of resources, the calendar, and selected UN gender highlights/news on the portal home page.
2. Prepare special feature pages on emerging issues for which there is great public interest, in collaboration with UN entities, including regional commissions.
3. Oversee and process translations for multilingual WomenWatch sections, and design and implement a multilingual user interface.
4. Provide an interactive online discussion platform and technical / administrative support to IANWGE members by hosting online discussions on WomenWatch.
5. Maintain and expand the WomenWatch RSS news feed, a popular WomenWatch online service introduced in 2006; and launch the UN-Wide Gender Equality News Feed service.

6. Expand the informal network of IANWGE web managers.
7. Showcase WomenWatch at meetings and conferences, including gender & development knowledge networks organized by UN agencies, NGOs, and governments (such as the UN-organized "web4dev"- community and the "Development Gateway").
8. Produce and distribute WomenWatch promotional materials such as brochures, flyers, and digital banner-sets.
9. Collect and process user feedback, including by referring to resources and contacts in other UN entities, and collecting suggestions for improving WomenWatch
10. Monitor search engine rankings of WomenWatch pages, and submission of new pages to major search engines.
11. Undertake fundraising as a critical measure to secure a full-time web manager position, to complete the multilingual sections on WomenWatch, further expand the directory of resources; and possibly, for the addition of a substantive information assistant position as well as for ongoing updates of multilingual sections.

Membership and Method of Work

WomenWatch is managed by a Task Force of the Inter-Agency Network, led by the Division for the Advancement of Women.

A Policy Advisory Group (currently comprised of the Gender Focal Points in DPI, FAO, ILO, ITU, Regional Commissions— ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, and Regional Commissions New York liaison Office – UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, INSTRAW and DAW) meets once a year in conjunction with the annual IANWGE meeting to provide overall policy and management advice, coordination and support.

Meetings at working level are held in New York as needed, with participation of Liaison Offices of entities based outside New York.

An informal network of web managers of IANWGE members has been formed to: increase communication and knowledge sharing through meetings and online collaboration; discuss technical issues; facilitate the improvement of WomenWatch; support individual webmasters throughout the system as necessary; and share information on websites. An online platform has been set up to accommodate remote participants as well, including password-protected areas and online discussion groups / mailing lists. Concrete outcomes of this collaboration include the definition of a common format for UN-wide gender-related RSS news feed as well as a considerable increase in additions to the WomenWatch directory of resources.

Funding for the website is provided by members of IANWGE as well as external donors. The need to secure sustained funding has been identified as a priority of the Task Force.