



2013 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION GENERAL SEGMENT

Panel: Making the UN system accountable for gender equality and women's empowerment: progress, gaps and challenges

Wednesday, 24 July, 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and context

In 2012, the United Nations Chief Executives Board approved a landmark System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) to be applied throughout the UN system. For the first time, the UN has a set of common measures with which to measure progress in its gender-related work, including the mainstreaming of the gender perspective across all its operations.

With its agreed set of 15 Performance standards/indicators clustered in six broad and common functional areas, the UN-SWAP has established a new model for accountability, allowing simultaneously a snapshot of the state of work and an aspirational set of standards to which to aspire and adhere to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, the UN SWAP provides a monitoring framework that is expected to motivate action and investments to meet these standards.

The UN-SWAP framework captures performance and progress through a five step self-rating system: not applicable; missing; approaches requirements; meets requirements; exceeds requirements. "Meets requirements" is the minimum the UN system should achieve, based on inter-governmental mandate.

Objective and proposed focus of the panel

It is proposed that a panel discussion be held during the 2013 General Segment of ECOSOC to take stock of efforts undertaken by the United Nations system since the approval of the UN-SWAP. It would provide an opportunity to discuss progress made to date on implementation of the UN-SWAP, highlight the gaps and challenges that remain and suggest the way forward to strengthen the UN system's accountability for gender equality and empowerment of women. Possible questions to be addressed could include:

- How have the entities of the United Nations system contributed so far to the implementation of UN-SWAP?

- What are the experiences to date? How are individual entities taking the UN-SWAP and embedding it into their own work? What have been the greatest challenges to the implementation of the UN-SWAP?
- How can accountability processes and mechanisms continue to be strengthened and developed within the United Nations system in a coherent, coordinated and consistent manner so as to assess progress and gaps at all levels of the system's efforts to mainstream gender perspectives at policy level as well as in operational activities?
- How can the UN system effectively draw on its combined strengths to support the implementation of accountability mechanisms such as UN-SWAP and where can coordination be better streamlined in order to accelerate progress in implementation of the UN-SWAP, including for funding purposes?

Proposed format

The panel will be chaired by the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council and moderated by the Acting Head of UN Women, Ms. Lakshmi Puri. After brief remarks by the Moderator to set the stage for the discussion, there will be an interactive discussion with 2-3 panelists (representatives of UN entities - TBC) based on Q and A posed to them by the Moderator. Following this, the floor will be open for a dialogue with the Council, and representatives of UN entities.