

**51st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
26 February to 9 March 2007**

**Interactive expert panel
Capacity-building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development,
implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the
elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child**

27 February 2007

Moderator's Summary

1. At its fourth meeting, on 27 February 2007, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive panel discussion on “Capacity-building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child”.
2. The panel, moderated by Dicky Komar (Indonesia), Vice-Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, was composed of the following experts: Amaryllis Tiglao-Torres (Philippines), National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women; Esther Oduraa Ofei-Aboagye (Ghana), Institute of Local Government Studies; Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children’s Fund; Moushira Khattab Vice Chairperson, Committee on the Rights of the Child; and Shanthi Dairiam (Malaysia), International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific and member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
3. Participants noted that the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals required greater efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in policies and programmes. Similarly, adherence to and implementation of international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and their Optional Protocols, as well as relevant ILO Conventions, also required full attention to gender perspectives. National constitutions and legal frameworks mandated the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child and the achievement of equality for girls. Taken together, these commitments and obligations formed the basis for mainstreaming attention to the girl child at all levels.

4. Notwithstanding these commitments, participants noted that significant gaps in implementation and continued inequalities between girls and boys remained in many areas. Such persistent inequalities and violations of the rights of girls were often grounded in complex sets of factors and root causes, all of which had to be taken into account in developing effective responses. Since many of these factors were specific to the local and community level, it was important to undertake comprehensive assessments that included the local level.

5. While many measures had been taken, further efforts were necessary to strengthen capacity for effective mainstreaming attention to the girl child in all policies and programmes. Participants noted that capacity-building for mainstreaming was a long-term and ongoing process. Measures had been taken to create or strengthen the requisite base of knowledge and skills, as well as to increase awareness about the need for the effective use of the gender mainstreaming strategy in relation to the girl child.

6. Participants noted that successful gender mainstreaming required not only technical skills, but also political will to advance the policy objectives. Participants suggested that an integrated and cross-sectoral approach should be used in gender mainstreaming that involves Government institutions at the national and local level. In addition, it was necessary to cooperate with a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to achieve specific goals in eliminating discrimination and violence against girls. Emphasis was placed on the need for effective and ongoing coordination among different stakeholders so that policy objectives could be successfully and effectively pursued. Participants provided examples of institutional mechanisms that had been established or strengthened to support gender mainstreaming, and to coordinate the use of the mainstreaming strategy across all levels of government, as well as with other stakeholders, for the benefit of girls. Some mechanisms were also charged with carrying out the research and data collection required to support implementation of the mainstreaming strategy and enhance knowledge about the situation of girls. It was pointed out that adequate human and financial resources, authority and capacity were necessary for carrying out this responsibility.

7. Participants discussed different areas and examples where attention to the girl child had been mainstreamed. While in some cases, mainstreaming efforts had been undertaken in specific sectors, such as for example education or child labour, in other cases the mainstreaming strategy had been implemented across many different policy areas. Challenges, such as the persistence of child marriage, required use of comprehensive situation analysis to develop effective policy responses.

8. Participants emphasized the importance of including gender equality goals in all policy areas, for example agriculture or macro-economic planning, as well as the need to integrate gender perspectives from the outset in all policy development processes. Participants also emphasized the importance of clearly reflecting gender equality outcomes, including for girls, in overall national development strategies.

9. Participants discussed different measures necessary to support the effective integration of gender perspectives and attention to the girl child in policy development. Baseline surveys, situation analysis and needs assessments had been undertaken to provide the requisite knowledge base and enhance capacity for targeted policy development in response to the specific situation of girls. Other steps, such as comparative studies and vulnerability assessments had also been

used. For example, a study on child trafficking had served as basis for identifying gender-specific actions to address and eliminate this challenge.

10. A minimum set of statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, in the areas covered by the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child was considered to be necessary for effective gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes and attention to the girl child. Participants also noted the need for indicators to enhance capacity for mainstreaming in policy and programme development, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. For example, enhanced data collection on child marriage had contributed to strengthened capacity to monitor and track this harmful practice, and to improve policy responses.

11. Participants also noted the need to strengthen capacity for undertaking gender analysis and gender-sensitive planning which identifies and addresses the specific situations of girls. Participants discussed different steps needed at different levels to enhance such capacity, such as training. Examples of regional and national workshops were provided that had contributed to increased capacity for carrying out gender analysis in different sectors, including in relation to the girl child. Such activities had sometimes effectively involved different stakeholder groups, including traditional leaders and communities. In some instances, the training of trainers had also shown good results.

12. Participants noted that manuals and handbooks on the mainstreaming strategy were also instrumental in strengthening capacity for gender mainstreaming and attention to the girl child in all planning processes. In some instances, checklists had been used to ensure the incorporation of gender perspectives into policy and programmes in different policy areas. Gender impact assessments or gender implication statements were other tools that supported the consistent use of the strategy. Participants also noted the use of gender-sensitive budgeting processes to enhance attention to gender perspectives and the situation of girls in policy and programme development, as well as of gender audits. These could also contribute to enhanced resource allocations for gender-sensitive programming in particular sectors, or across all sectors.

13. Awareness raising, networking and advocacy could also contribute to enhancing capacity for mainstreaming, as they increased understanding of persistent violations of the rights of girls and strengthened political commitment. Advocacy efforts had, for example, contributed to a strengthened approach to combating child labour. They had also resulted in greater awareness about the importance of, and support for, girls' education at the local level.

14. Participants emphasized the need to strengthen capacity for monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming and the situation of girls. While there was also a growing focus on accountability for results of gender mainstreaming, ways to ensure accountability for results had to be further developed.

15. Participants noted that despite existing legislative frameworks, many challenges remained for effective and consistent use of the mainstreaming strategy in policies and programmes to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. Lack of capacity to undertake the necessary data collection and analysis, to coordinate a comprehensive approach, and to effectively monitor and evaluate policies and programmes persisted. There was also a need to improve the evidence of the effectiveness of certain measures, such as training, and to enhance the measurement of results achieved. Lack of resources limited opportunities for capacity building for gender mainstreaming, as well as for implementation of gender-sensitive policies to

eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. It was suggested that the international community should provide enhanced support aimed at capacity building for mainstreaming attention to the girl child. Partnerships with the private sector could also lead to increased resources for implementation of specific policies. Technical cooperation programmes by the United Nations system could strengthen capacity for implementation of gender mainstreaming and for increased attention to the situation of the girl child.