

**PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS
ORGANIZED BY
THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)**

1. The use of expert group meetings as part of the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women in implementing the United Nations programme for the advancement of women is guided by the mandate of the Economic and Social Council set out in its resolution 1987/24 on the long-term work programme of the Commission, which reads (para.4):

Recommends, as part of the regular programme of work of the United Nations Secretariat in areas related to the advancement of women, in particular that of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, when regular budgetary or extrabudgetary resources are available, the convening of Expert Group Meetings, as required by the Commission, to assist in the preparation of the work of the Commission on priority themes; the Expert groups should be composed of an appropriate number of specialists, taking into account equitable geographic distribution and the involvement of non-governmental organizations, in the field or fields of study addressed under specific priority themes in order to prepare an analysis and preliminary proposals to assist the Commission in making informed, practical and action-oriented policy recommendations; each Expert Group Meetings should be structured like the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family, held at Vienna from 8 to 12 December 1986, and should be timed so as to permit the results of the meeting to be made available to Member States in advance of sessions of the Commission;

2. The objective of the expert group meeting is to provide inputs that will assist the Secretary-General, through the Division for the Advancement of Women, in making recommendations to the Commission on the Status of Women.
3. In conformity with this mandate, the experts participating in these meetings are selected by the Secretary-General on the basis of their ability to provide information and ideas that can lead to findings that reflect the current state of knowledge about a given issue and propose practical and action-oriented policy and programmatic measures to best address the issue. In addition, observers from governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations of civil society, including the private sector, may participate in the expert group meeting.

4. Expert group meetings are purely advisory to the Secretary-General and, as such, have no decision-making power nor can they bind anyone other than the experts themselves. The way in which discussions proceed is very much shaped by the main purpose of the meeting, which is to put forward a wide variety of ideas, experiences, lessons learned and good practices and to develop a set of concise and action-oriented recommendations. Approaches to achieving this goal can vary.
5. The Division for the Advancement of Women has taken its orientation in guiding some 40 expert group meetings organized since 1986 from the practices of the intergovernmental body which it services, the Commission on the Status of Women. The procedures followed in expert group meetings are as follows:
 - The experts elect their own officers: a Chairperson, a Vice- or Co-Chairperson, and a Rapporteur who take responsibility for the organization of the meeting;
 - The experts determine themselves which issues need to be addressed in order to implement their mandate;
 - The process of discussion is organized in a manner which allows the experts to hear the views of observers, whenever the experts believe this will contribute to the discussion and outcome;
 - The experts are responsible for the report of the expert group meeting. The report of the expert group meeting, including its conclusions and recommendations, should be adopted by consensus at the conclusion of the meeting.
6. The organization of the Expert Group Meeting is facilitated by the Secretariat of the Division for the Advancement of Women. Whenever procedural difficulties are encountered in a meeting, an effort is made to find a solution that will satisfy all of the participants.