

A Quick Guide to the

**Gender Management
System**



Commonwealth Secretariat

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Gender Management System



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GENDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SERIES

Gender Management System Handbook
Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender Mainstreaming in Development Planning: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender Mainstreaming in Finance: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
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Gender Mainstreaming in Information and Communications: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender and Equal Employment Opportunities: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders

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Marlborough House
Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX,
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June 1999

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Designed and published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
Printed in the United Kingdom by Abacus Direct.

Wherever possible, the Commonwealth Secretariat uses paper sourced from sustainable forests or from sources that minimise a destructive impact on the environment.

Copies of this publication can be ordered direct from:

Vale Packaging Ltd,
420 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent
TN9 1TD, United Kingdom

Tel: + 44 (0)1732 359387

Fax: +44 (0) 1732 770620

e-mail: vale@vale-ltd.co.uk

ISBN: 0-85092-591-6

Web sites:

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender>

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

<http://www.youngcommonwealth.org>

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Preface

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development presents a vision of:

“a world in which women and men have equal rights and opportunities at all stages of their lives to express their creativity in all fields of human endeavour, and in which women are respected and valued as equal and able partners in establishing values of social justice, equity, democracy and respect for human rights. Within such a framework of values, women and men will work in collaboration and partnership to ensure people-centred sustainable development for all nations”.

Commonwealth
Secretariat, 1995d

In order to assist Commonwealth governments in realising this vision, Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs mandated the Secretariat to develop the concept and method of the Gender Management System (GMS), a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes for bringing a gender perspective to bear on all government policies, programmes and projects. Its success depends upon a broad-based partnership in society in which government consults and acts co-operatively with other key stakeholders, who include civil society and the private sector.

This *Quick Guide to the Gender Management System* presents the essential points of the *Gender Management System Handbook*, which has been produced to assist member governments in meeting their commitment to implementing the Plan of Action. It is hoped that the quick guide and the full-length handbook will be used by development policy-makers, planners, field staff and others, in conjunction with other publications in the Gender Management System Series. The handbook is designed to be sufficiently flexible to allow users to adopt those elements of the GMS that are most appropriate to national circumstances and adapt others to their countries' specific needs.

The development of the *Gender Management System Handbook* and the *Quick Guide to the Gender Management System* has been a

collective effort between the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender and Youth Affairs Division and many individuals and groups. Their contributions to the thinking behind the GMS are gratefully acknowledged. In particular, I would like to thank the following: Meetings of Women's Affairs Ministers which supported the development of the GMS and encouraged us to move the project forward; participants at the first GMS meeting in Britain in February 1997 and at the GMS Workshop in Malta in April 1998, who provided valuable input and feedback; and the Steering Committee on the Plan of Action (SCOPA). I am also most grateful to: the various consultants who drafted, contributed inputs and edited the handbook in collaboration with the staff of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division, including Daniel Woolford, Consultant Editor for the GMS publications, Audrey Ingram Roberts, and Carol Miller; and the staff of the Gender Affairs Department, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, particularly Ms Eleni Stamiris, former Director of the Division, who took the lead in formulating the GMS concept and mobilising the various stakeholders in its development, Dr Judith May-Parker who provided substantive editorial input, and Dr Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Project Co-ordinator of the Gender Management System Series, who guided the project through to publication.

We hope that this resource series will be of genuine use to you in your efforts to mainstream gender.

Nancy Spence
Director
Gender and Youth Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat

1

Introduction and Overview

Gender Mainstreaming

Despite considerable progress in some areas of women's lives since the UN named 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women, gender inequality/inequity persists. The 1995 UN Human Development Report indicated that no country treats its women as well as its men, and in almost all countries of the world women are over-represented among the unemployed and those living in absolute poverty. The gaps between women and men have closed over the last 20 years in terms of educational enrolment, literacy and life expectancy. But women still lag behind in terms of political and economic participation. And gender inequality under the law and violence against women are stark indicators of "the low status accorded women in societies everywhere" (UNDP, 1995).

The proportion of women in decision-making positions in governments worldwide, although it has increased in some countries, still falls far short of the 53 per cent that would represent the female proportion of the world's population, and indeed the target of 30 per cent endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government and by the UN Economic and Social Council. In 1995, the proportion of women MPs in parliaments globally was estimated at 11.6 per cent (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997: 3), and in the Commonwealth the proportion was even lower – just 7.2 per cent (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995a: Appendix 9). Decisions on issues that affect women's lives, sometimes quite drastically, are still for the most part taken by men, without consultation with the women who often pay the price of such decisions through reduced economic circumstances, limited access to education, health and other services, inadequate access to resources, or infringements of their human rights.

The Commonwealth is committed to taking action to bring about gender equality. The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development sets out a series of strategies and

measures for governments to work towards gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is one of the key strategies advanced in the Plan of Action. Gender mainstreaming involves a number of activities:

- ◆ forging and strengthening the political will to achieve gender equality and equity, at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- ◆ incorporating a gender perspective into the planning processes of all ministries and departments of government, particularly those concerned with macroeconomic and development planning, personnel policies and management, and legal affairs;
- ◆ integrating a gender perspective into all phases of sectoral planning cycles, including the analysis, development, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;
- ◆ using sex-disaggregated data (see Appendix) in statistical analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men;
- ◆ increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in government and the private and public sectors;
- ◆ providing tools and training in gender awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision-makers, senior managers and other key personnel; and
- ◆ forging linkages between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure a co-ordination of efforts and resources.

Because gender mainstreaming is a broad-spectrum strategy that cuts across government sectors and other social partners, it requires strong leadership and co-ordination. The Commonwealth approach to providing this is through the Gender Management System (GMS), which is designed to facilitate all aspects of gender mainstreaming.

Purpose and Scope of this Guide

This guide provides an overview of the essential steps in the establishment of a Gender Management System (GMS). It is primarily intended for use by governments at the national level, but may also be used by inter-governmental agencies, provincial and local governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions, professional associations and the private sector. It is designed to be flexible, presenting a menu of options

that can be adapted to suit national circumstances.

National Women's Machineries

Strong leadership in gender mainstreaming should be provided by National Women's Machineries (NWMs), which are the structures set up by governments to promote the status of women. These can take the form of a Ministry of Gender or Women's Affairs, a Women's Bureau, or other ministry, department or agency within government. The NWM is usually the Lead Agency in the setting up and running of a Gender Management System.

Definition of a Gender Management System

A Gender Management System (GMS) is a network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place within an existing organisational framework, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development. A GMS may be established at any level of government, or in institutions such as universities, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations or trade unions.

Mission, goal and objectives

The mission of a Gender Management System is to advance gender equality and equity, through promoting political will; forging a partnership of stakeholders including government, private sector and civil society; building capacity; and sharing good practice.

The goal of a Gender Management System is the mainstreaming of gender into all government policies, programmes and activities.

The objectives of a Gender Management System include the following:

- ◆ to assist government and non-state actors in implementing the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development;
- ◆ to strengthen National Women's Machineries (NWMs);
- ◆ to strengthen the capacity of NWMs, core and sectoral

- government ministries, development NGOs, the private sector and other non-state actors in civil society, to make gender-aware development policies, plans and programmes at all levels, and to facilitate partnership-building among these actors so as to create a broad-based national constituency committed to effecting gender equality and equity; and
- ◆ to create an enabling environment which enhances the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-aware plans and programmes.

The GMS approach to mainstreaming

The GMS adopts a stakeholder approach, based on the recognition that the state is not the only player in efforts to achieve gender equality and equity, and must work in partnership with other social partners or stakeholders. The key stakeholders in a GMS are the National Women's Machinery, other government ministries and departments, inter-governmental organisations and donor agencies, NGOs, the media, academic institutions, professional associations, and women and men in the broader civil society. Within this framework, the GMS is based on three broad principles: empowerment, integration and accountability.

Empowerment

Empowerment means having control over the decisions and issues that affect one's life. In particular, it means having representation in decision-making bodies and control over the distribution of resources. Where women are underrepresented in decision-making fora, the GMS recommends action to redress the imbalance. Participation in planning and decision-making processes has the additional benefit of increasing a sense of commitment to and ownership of the plan's objectives.

Integration

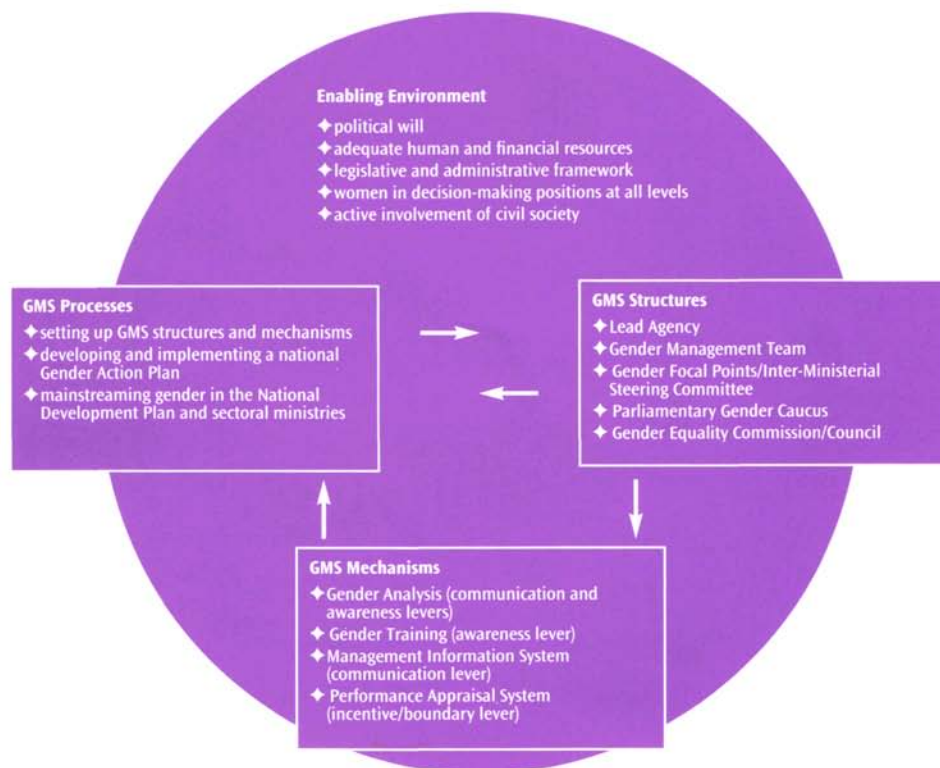
The GMS adopts a systemic, holistic approach to mainstreaming, aiming not merely at piecemeal interventions, but at the transformation of the structures that create and perpetuate gender inequalities. This entails a high degree of analysis, co-ordination and integration of effort. The GMS is structured to operate in a co-ordinated way at different levels and in different sectors of government and society. Such integration is necessary if the GMS

is to reflect the diversity in society; ‘women’ and ‘men’ are not homogeneous categories, but include other constructs such as race/ethnicity, class/caste and age. Gender inequalities cannot be addressed adequately unless the inequalities arising from these other variables are also addressed.

Accountability

Creating change within an organisation and within society requires action to motivate people to effect the necessary changes. The systems that motivate change can be of two kinds: incentive systems, which provide rewards for the achievement of specific goals; and boundary systems, which define what behaviour is unacceptable, set minimum standards of achievement and impose sanctions if these standards are not attained.

Figure 1 The Gender Management System



What Does a GMS Achieve?

A Gender Management System can have the following beneficial impacts:

- ◆ development policies and programmes that work because they take into account the realities of more than half of the world's population;
- ◆ a fair and equitable distribution of power, resources and decision-making between women and men;
- ◆ government ministries that are able to respond to the needs of both women and men within their respective sectors;
- ◆ staff who are trained and experienced in addressing issues from a gender perspective; and
- ◆ an efficient and effective mechanism for meeting reporting requirements under international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

2

Conceptual Background

From Women in Development to Gender and Development

Gender mainstreaming, as a strategy, has developed out of a major shift in the focus of efforts to promote gender equality and equity in recent years. This shift has been away from the women in development (WID) approach, towards the gender and development (GAD) approach.

The WID approach focused on how women could be better integrated into existing development initiatives. Targeting women's productive work to the exclusion of their reproductive work, this approach was characterised by income-generating projects for women which failed to address the systemic causes of gender inequality. It tended to view women as passive recipients of development assistance, rather than as active agents in transforming their own economic, social, political and cultural realities. A key outcome was that women's concerns were viewed in isolation, as separate issues, leading to their marginalisation in the state system and other social structures.

Barriers to equality are socially constructed and maintained by a complex array of historical, ideological, cultural, economic and religious influences which are difficult but not impossible to change. Gender roles, relations and inequalities vary across cultures and through different times in human development; thus they are amenable to change.

A GAD framework is more likely to result in:

- ◆ the recognition that women and men have different and special needs;
- ◆ the recognition that women cannot be effectively treated as a homogeneous group because race/ethnicity, class, age, disability and sexual orientation, among other factors, create differences among women and between women and men;

The Commonwealth Plan of Action summarises the shift of focus from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) as follows:

“WID policies aim to integrate women into existing structures and address women’s specific needs and concerns. The focus is on how women must change to fit into an essentially ‘man-made’ world ... GAD, on the other hand, seeks to integrate gender awareness and competence into mainstream development to account for the different life courses and different impacts of development policies on women and men. It emphasises that development activities may affect women and men differently and calls for appropriate ‘gender planning’ to address them. It also calls attention to ‘outcomes’, and the need to take the necessary steps to ensure that the resulting conditions and outcomes are equitable, rather than being preoccupied with giving only identical treatment. In summary, the GAD approach focuses not only on the differences between men and women but on the inequalities that emanate from these differences: women and their allotted roles have been historically undervalued and continue to be so up to the present time”.

Commonwealth Secretariat,
1995a: 14

- ◆ the recognition that women tend to be disadvantaged relative to men in terms of their welfare and their access to and control over the means of production;
- ◆ the recognition of the systemic and structural nature of inequality;
- ◆ the commitment to a process whereby development interventions work towards women’s and men’s increased empowerment and equality (Longwe, 1991: 150); and
- ◆ the recognition that gender differences can also result in men being disadvantaged. For example, the issue of male under-achievement in Caribbean education systems is beyond the scope of the WID approach, but can be addressed through GAD. Tracking gender equality in sector-specific data makes it possible to examine the comparative positions of women and men in relation to, for example, health, education, family structures, the labour market and earnings/income. ‘Gender equality tracking’ is thus a type of gender analysis that is useful in enabling appropriate policy interventions to be made in a timely manner to promote gender equality and equity in either direction.

Some Useful Concepts in Gender Analysis

Practical and strategic gender needs

Because men and women have different roles and responsibilities, they also have different needs – gender needs. These can be further divided into practical and strategic gender needs.

Practical gender needs emanate from the actual conditions women experience due to the roles ascribed to them by society. Often, these needs are related to women's roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. Projects can meet the practical gender needs of both men and women without necessarily changing their relative position in society.

Strategic gender needs are what is required to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society and relate to women's empowerment. Such needs vary according to the economic, political, social and cultural context. Most governments now acknowledge the need to create opportunities which enable women to address their strategic needs.

Gender-sensitive policies

Government policies may fall into one of three possible types: gender-neutral, gender-specific or gender-aware/redistributive/transformative. These can be distinguished as follows :

- ◆ **Gender-neutral policies** are those that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom if ever have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Policies which may appear to be gender-neutral are often in fact gender-blind, and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests.
- ◆ **Gender-specific policies** take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of roles and resources intact.
- ◆ **Gender-aware/redistributive/transformative policies** seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies are the most politically challenging, because

they involve altering the existing balance of power between men and women, but they also go the furthest towards addressing both practical gender needs and strategic gender interests (adapted from Kabeer, 1994).

3

The Enabling Environment

The establishment and operation of a GMS requires an enabling environment. When the enabling environment is weak, a major task of the GMS is to strengthen it. There are a number of interrelated factors that determine the degree to which the environment in which the GMS is being set up does or does not enable effective gender mainstreaming:

- ◆ political will and commitment to gender equality and equity at the highest levels; commitment to such global and regional mandates as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development;
- ◆ a constitutional and legislative framework conducive to advancing gender equality;
- ◆ the presence of a critical mass of women in decision-making positions in the political, public and private sectors;
- ◆ a well-developed and autonomous civil society and the role it can play in advancing gender equality; and
- ◆ adequate human and financial resources, including donor aid and technical assistance.

Political Commitment

Political commitment at the highest levels among governments is an essential element of a strong enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and the setting up of a Gender Management System. Political commitment is manifested in a number of ways:

- ◆ implementation of globally and regionally agreed principles, frameworks and strategies for achieving gender equality (e.g., Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality);
- ◆ adequate resourcing of the National Women's Machinery and of programmes to promote gender equality; and
- ◆ the placement of the NWM in a central location with a high

level of political status and influence on policy and decision-making.

Where governments lack political will, the following tendencies can result:

- ◆ placing the entire responsibility for change on women themselves;
- ◆ treating the NWM as a token of good intentions rather than a serious element in the creation of gender-aware social justice and development;
- ◆ expecting the NWM to be a programme delivery agency for 50 per cent of the population, despite meagre human and financial resources;
- ◆ requiring the NWM to raise external funds to operate (Ashworth, 1994: 5); and
- ◆ significant disparities between women and men in such sectors as politics, law, finance, education, health, agriculture, trade, industry, information and communications, and others.

Where political will is lacking, it becomes the task of the NWM to promote and strengthen political will through lobbying, advocacy, and gender training and awareness-raising. In these activities it should seek the collaboration of like-minded officials within government and of NGOs, the academic community and other stakeholders in civil society.

Lobbying and advocacy of this kind are greatly assisted by the availability of sex-disaggregated data that can form the basis of a gender analysis of existing conditions within the country. Lobbying is effective when it includes a clear statement of the problem, backed up by sound statistical data. This is one reason why the GMS emphasises gender analysis as a key mechanism.

The GMS is not a rigid system; it is designed to be adapted to suit national circumstances. Where the overall environment is not particularly favourable for gender mainstreaming, a GMS may be established in a particular ministry, department, or group of ministries which have a strategic advantage in terms of the enabling environment they offer. Identifying the best strategic entry points for the GMS is one of the tasks of the feasibility study and stakeholder analysis which begins the process of setting up a GMS (see Section 5).

Global, Regional and National Mandates

Commonwealth member states are parties and signatories to a number of international agreements that bear upon the issue of gender equality. One role of Gender Management Systems is to ensure, at the national level, the implementation of the gender equality components of these frameworks.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing provided a renewed global commitment to achieving gender equality and equity. The final clause of the Beijing Declaration states, “We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programmes.” In the post-Beijing period, many governments are receptive to gender mainstreaming and the concept of a GMS as a strategy for accelerating the attainment of gender equality. In effect, a GMS both helps to create enabling conditions for gender mainstreaming and enhances an enabling environment where it already exists.

Resources

The effective implementation and monitoring of a Gender Management System requires resources. It should not be seen as primarily the responsibility of the National Women’s Machinery to

Box 2

International Agreements Pertaining to Gender Equality and Equity

- ◆ the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Regional Platforms for Action;
- ◆ the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development;
- ◆ the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies;
- ◆ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- ◆ UNCED’s Agenda 21 (Environment);
- ◆ the Vienna Declaration (Human Rights);
- ◆ the Cairo Programme of Action (Population and Development);
- ◆ the Copenhagen Plan of Action (Social Development); and
- ◆ the Istanbul Plan of Action (Housing and Settlements).

provide these resources. A GMS should be funded by the national government, guided by the Lead Agency in co-operation with the Gender Management Team and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (see Section 4).

As with other aspects of the GMS, defining and securing resources require planning. In planning resource needs, it is important to determine what are the gaps between requirements and availability, how those gaps will be filled and what it will cost to fill them. The main categories of necessary resources are human and financial, and secondary resources which include supplies, services, facilities and equipment.

Human resources

Key among the activities of a Gender Management System with implications for the use of human resources and other complementary resources are:

- ◆ **administration** – the planning, co-ordination, evaluation and management of the system. As a GMS will make different and additional demands on people's time, it is critical to put adequate administrative support in place.
- ◆ **training** – from gender-sensitivity training through to more specialised gender training programmes, e.g., Gender and Macroeconomic Planning, Training for Policy-Makers, or Gender and Health training will require a range of gender expertise and training materials, facilities, equipment and supplies. A Training Needs Analysis is crucial to the establishment of an appropriate programme to build capacity. So as to develop local resources and build sustainability, training of trainers should be carried out. This will enable wide coverage of all sectors of the population in gender awareness.
- ◆ **research data/information** – the collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of information for planning and advocacy will require personnel with the appropriate skills. In some situations, redeployment may be a workable approach.

The Lead Agency requires basic office equipment and technology such as computers, a fax machine, a photocopier, telephone lines and storage of information. Access to a meeting room should also be ensured.

These resources may be procured from government and from arrangements with international development agencies. The GMS may play a catalytic role in attracting funding or technical inputs from other international agencies. When the services of outside experts are required, an important aspect of the experts' work should include local counterpart training to build a residential capacity. The Lead Agency will also utilise resources of other ministries and departments, such as the Statistics Office, tertiary educational/training institutions and other organisations.

Financial resources

A budget should be allocated to the Lead Agency. Extra-budgetary funding sources external to government may be secured from international sources. Line ministries should also make provisions from their own budgets for gender-awareness training and to cover the additional responsibilities of Gender Focal Points. Ideally, financial resources should be sufficient to ensure that gender training can be undertaken for a wide range of sectors within the population, including parliamentarians, public sector personnel, young people, women and as many group and organisational leaders as possible.

Legislative Framework

An enabling environment includes the existence of a legislative framework which contains no unfair gender-discriminatory provisions. In some countries, the task of a GMS will include putting in place the desired legislative framework for the promotion of gender equality, including equal employment opportunities Acts, anti-sex discrimination laws which include provision of day-care facilities and other support services, laws on violence against women, ownership of land and property, inheritance, etc.

Legal and statutory frameworks can empower NWMs to function legitimately and to stake a claim to budgetary resources. They also underscore the fact that political, economic, social and cultural arrangements are entwined with public policy. A Gender Management System has the task of placing gender analysis within the legislative and policy process and, by so doing, enabling not only the NWM but all agencies of government to address gender

needs and interests, and ensure that gender-sensitive public policies are developed.

Critical Mass of Women in Decision-Making Positions

The position of women in decision-making at the highest levels in political institutions, government and the public sector is another critical factor that can impact on the functioning of a Gender Management System. Where institutions are heavily male-dominated, it is more difficult to create the culture needed to advance gender equality.

By the year 2005, at least 30 per cent of those in decision-making roles in the political, public and private sectors should be women. That target, recommended by Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers in 1996, was endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1997, and is consistent with the target set by the UN Economic and Social Council.

An important task of a Gender Management System is to help increase the participation of women in decision-making. The Gender Management System should address the question of women's relative lack of power in the public sphere, and their low representation in the highest institutions of political power and decision-making, i.e., national, provincial or state, and local government.

Civil Society

The changes that the Gender Management System is designed to bring about affect not only the government but every element of the broader civil society. For example, women's rights to choice and decision-making in the private sphere are indivisible from women's rights in the public sphere. A woman's status within the family and her right to personal choice will determine her economic, political and social participation in the public sphere.

The GMS therefore does not exist in isolation. It seeks to build a partnership between government and a wide range of stakeholders in civil society, including academic institutions (such as women's studies or gender and development departments), NGOs and

professional associations, and the media. Many of these stakeholders will be represented in the National Gender Equality Commission/Council or similar body, which plays a key role in advocacy and monitoring on the progress of advancing gender equality, and should where possible have a representative on the Gender Management Team.

The extent to which gender equality is accepted within civil society and the influence and credibility enjoyed by women's groups are key factors that determine how easy it will be to set up and operate a GMS. At the same time, civil society contributes to the operation of the GMS through the National Gender Equality Commission/Council and partnerships between the government and non-state stakeholders at the sectoral level.

The Role of the Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat has an important role to play in creating the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming, through its consultative mechanisms and processes, including:

- ◆ consensus building on gender equality/equity at meetings at the highest level of the Commonwealth;
- ◆ institutionalising new structures and mechanisms within the Secretariat in order to mainstream gender into the programmes and activities of all divisions;
- ◆ co-operation between Secretariat Divisions and their counterparts in Commonwealth government ministries; and
- ◆ developing and piloting new methodologies and hosting regional and international symposia on a number of cutting edge issues, e.g., engendering national budgets, promoting the human rights of women, engendering local and national politics, and conflict prevention and resolution.

As gender mainstreaming is a long-term strategy which requires long-range planning and expertise, it is advisable that National Women's Machineries without the necessary capacity seek outside technical assistance, from the Commonwealth Secretariat or from UN agencies and bilateral funding bodies.

4

Gender Management System Structures and Mechanisms

The structure of a Gender Management System is a network of various bodies and their interrelationships. The mechanisms of a GMS consist of the various roles, responsibilities and functioning of these bodies. These structure and mechanisms are sometimes collectively referred to as institutional arrangements. They are intended not as a rigid prescription, but rather as a flexible model which governments can adapt to particular national circumstances. The actual structures set up by governments implementing a GMS will reflect those circumstances and the strengths and opportunities that exist at the national level. In some countries, structures similar to these may already exist and be amenable to adaptation along the lines of the GMS.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders in a Gender Management System are groups, organisations and institutions which have a stake or interest in or are affected by the National Gender Action Plan. The key stakeholders are responsible for, or can significantly influence, the successful implementation of the Plan. The GMS should ensure that stakeholders are identified and consulted on an ongoing basis.

Key state and non-state stakeholders include:

- ◆ the National Women's Machinery;
- ◆ all government ministries and departments, including but not limited to Finance, Development Planning, Public Service, Agriculture, Health, Education, Energy, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Legal Affairs, and Trade and Industry;
- ◆ development NGOs representing women's interests;
- ◆ university-based gender and development departments;
- ◆ inter-governmental organisations and donor agencies; and
- ◆ women, men and young people in the broader civil society.

Other stakeholders may include politicians, the judiciary, the media, law enforcement officials, trade unions, the private sector, professional organisations, religious organisations; and youth organisations.

The Gender Management System recognises the strategic importance of building partnerships with social actors at all levels. Key stakeholders should be allowed to articulate their perceptions, needs and priorities; gender balance in interest representation should be sought, taking into consideration that women and men may have unequal access to and control over appropriate resources to participate in decision-making structures.

Consultation with key stakeholders should take place not only at the project level, but also in connection with national level dialogues on government policies and programmes. Such partnerships are necessary to ensure the co-ordination of the various stakeholders' approaches to gender concerns, and the widest possible participation; to share skills, experience, expertise, responsibility and accountability; and to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. Partnerships increase the outreach of the Gender Action Plan, and capture the diversity that exists within society.

In addition to consultation with state and non-state actors within the country and Commonwealth contexts, co-operation and co-ordination with bilateral agencies, the UN system, and financial institutions should be increased. Such actors are potentially important partners in the support and promotion of gender equality, and efforts should be made to ensure that all collaborative initiatives are informed by gender analysis.

Further, partnerships and teamwork instil a shared commitment to change and ownership of outcomes among government, international organisations and non-state partners. Commonwealth governments need to inform development partners about the Gender Action Plan and the GMS and to update themselves on the policies and programmes of other agencies. There should be complementarity between the various partners at every stage of the policy development, planning and implementation process in order to co-ordinate efforts, expand resources, increase influence, and avoid duplication.

Lead Agency

Success in setting up and implementing a Gender Management System is contingent upon having an influential Lead Agency which can initiate dialogue with the key stakeholders on the need for a gender mainstreaming strategy to accelerate the achievement of gender equality. In most governments, gender issues fall within the purview of a National Women's Machinery (NWM). This can take the form of a ministry, a department, a bureau, a desk, or an individual. Whatever the case, the NWM is almost certain to be best placed to lead the setting up and operating of a Gender Management System.

Functions

The Lead Agency initiates and strengthens the institutional arrangements of the Gender Management System and is responsible for the overall co-ordination and monitoring of the GMS. It advocates for change and works to impact upon policy decision. It plays a strategic and catalytic role, introducing critical gender concerns into the policies, plans and programmes of the core and sectoral government agencies, ensuring that key targets and indicators on the status of women are agreed upon and met, managing the flow of information on gender issues and communicating policy changes and results.

The NWM is also best placed to spearhead programmes and activities at the cutting edge of the gender and development field, for example, increasing women's participation in political decision-making; exploring issues of democracy, human rights and sustainable development; holding government accountable for the implementation of international commitments; and monitoring the impact of these measures.

A strong National Women's Machinery is important for gender mainstreaming because it must be able to function as a strategic and co-ordinating unit with the required experience and expertise in the areas of gender integration, gender planning and project management. A strong and effective NWM will have personnel with technical expertise in gender issues, skilled in administration/co-ordination, project management, training, research, information management and dissemination, and evaluation. It will have a clear and achievable mandate, with sufficient scope and flexibility to address a broad range of issues. And it will have explicit political legitimacy, management scope and

authority, and a central and stable position within the structure of government such that it participates directly in mainstream policy and decision-making processes, and the allocation of resources. It will also have a broad internal structure, with strong linkages with other ministries (Ashworth, 1994: 5).

National Women's Machineries within the Commonwealth take a range of different forms and reflect varying levels of strength or weakness. The first step in setting up the institutional arrangements of a Gender Management System is therefore to assess the institutional capacity of the NWM. The second step may be the strengthening of the NWM, if necessary. The strengthening process focuses on analysing internal development and structure, and the scope for forming partnerships with other branches of government and with civil society.

Gender Management Team

The core government ministries which are of strategic importance to achieving gender equality and equity are the Executive Office of the President or Prime Minister and the ministries of finance, planning, public service, and legal affairs. Their strategic importance justifies their membership on the Gender Management Team. Sectoral ministries that are of particular importance in the national context, or that are strategically placed to effect change, may also be included on the GMS team for the same reason.

The Gender Management Team could therefore comprise the Permanent Secretaries of the National Women's Machinery and the ministries of finance, planning, public service, justice/legal affairs, and any other ministries that are considered to be of key strategic importance. The Team should also include a representative of civil society, such as the Chair of the National Gender Equality Commission or similar body.

The identification of individuals to serve on the Gender Management Team needs to be done strategically. Where possible individuals should be selected who:

- ◆ believe in and care about the advancement of gender equality and equity;
- ◆ understand the power and gender dynamics within society and within government;

- ◆ have access to sound, high-quality empirical data; and
- ◆ have sufficient political clout and influence to produce real change.

Members of the Gender Management Team should receive training in gender sensitivity, analysis and planning as appropriate.

Functions

The Gender Management Team's responsibilities include developing the GMS concept in the national context, thus providing the Gender Management System with broad operational policies, indicators of effectiveness and timeframes for implementation. The Team should seek to expand the scope of gender mainstreaming throughout the various sectors of government. Consensus regarding conflict resolution and problem-solving procedures, mechanisms and ethics should also be determined by the Team.

Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee comprises senior staff from the National Women's Machinery and the Gender Focal Points (see below) of all other ministries. Chaired by a representative of the core government ministries, the committee reports to the Gender Management Team. This committee represents a broad-based, second level management team.

Functions

The role of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee is to ensure that the goal of gender equality and equity is taken up in all ministerial programmes. Its responsibilities include setting sector goals and reviewing sector performance regarding gender mainstreaming. All sectoral ministries should be represented on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee.

Gender Focal Points

Gender Focal Points are designated senior members of staff within each ministry/department, who are directly involved in or able to influence their sector's planning process.

Functions

The responsibilities of Gender Focal Points include the following:

- ◆ sitting on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee ;
- ◆ provide support for the development of gender-sensitive policies and programmes;
- ◆ serve as in-house gender experts or resource persons, sharing information, advocating the implementation of the Gender Action Plan within their ministry/department;
- ◆ conduct sector-specific analyses of gender disparities;
- ◆ collect and disseminate information and best practices;
- ◆ support the functioning of the Management Information System; and
- ◆ in collaboration with the Gender Management Team, assist in monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

The Gender Focal Point is often the main agent for facilitating gender mainstreaming on a day-to-day basis. Supported by the structures and mechanisms of the GMS, and the political commitment to gender equality represented by the Gender Action Plan, the Gender Focal Point plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the GMS. In order to strengthen the capacity of the Gender Focal Points, efforts need to be made to:

- ◆ ensure that Gender Focal Points in all ministries/departments are senior staff;
- ◆ provide Gender Focal Points with gender training to increase their competence in gender analysis and to provide the analytical tools necessary to engender their ministry/department's policy and planning processes and programme implementation;
- ◆ provide Gender Focal Points with expertise in the area of monitoring and evaluation;
- ◆ support Gender Focal Points by either employing additional gender experts with sector-specific skills or engaging qualified external gender experts; and
- ◆ ensure that the work of Gender Focal Points is written into their terms of reference (job descriptions) and reflected in resource allocation.

An important aspect of the work of Gender Focal Points is the socialisation of gender knowledge and experience, which should be

seen not as static but continually advancing. It should therefore be communicated through regular meetings and other means such as newsletters as part of the ongoing process of promoting gender awareness. Thus a key feature of the methodology of training and development of Gender Focal Points is the sharing and documentation of experiences.

In some countries, it may be appropriate to group Gender Focal Points in the larger ministries into a Gender Unit for that ministry. For example, the Ministry of Public Works in a particular government may consist of several thousand staff members. The process of mainstreaming gender in such a ministry and addressing the gender needs of its staff cannot be achieved by one individual alone, but requires the resources of a fully staffed Gender Unit.

Gender Caucus in National Parliament and Local Government

A Gender Caucus is a useful structure if a good number of gender-sensitive women and men are in parliament or local government. In parliament, the Caucus serves to introduce a gender perspective on issues being debated. Members of the Caucus can lobby support among their colleagues, articulate issues in parliamentary debates and generate public support through the media, political parties, NGOs and other entities.

The Caucus may act as a catalyst for affirmative action in the political arena by: reviewing laws that discriminate against women or that are insensitive to gender interests; lobbying to bring about action on specific issues of concern to female constituents; and campaigning to have 'safe' seats allocated to women.

At the local government level, the Caucus may consider such steps as: undertaking gender audits of local government structures and programmes; promoting mentoring programmes for women who are active in the political arena; and ensuring a gender balance in committees and community meetings.

Gender Equality Commission/Council

The building of effective partnerships between the National Women's Machinery and non-state actors in civil society is essential

to the functioning of a Gender Management System. This partnership with civil society's key stakeholders can take a number of forms, one of the most useful of which is a national Gender Equality Commission or Council.

The Gender Equality Council provides a direct link between the National Women's Machinery and the constituency representing the interests of gender equality in the wider civil society, through its representative on the Gender Management Team.

The Council should include representatives of a cross-section of organisations which support the goals of the Gender Management System:

- ◆ development NGOs representing women's/gender interests;
- ◆ university-based gender and development centres;
- ◆ labour unions and professional associations;
- ◆ political parties and groups;
- ◆ national private sector organisations, (e.g., Chambers of Commerce); the media (including the government information service);
- ◆ other key organisations within civil society; and
- ◆ inter-governmental organisations.

This membership reflects the need for critical advisory support for the GMS, the exchange of experiences and the sharing of skills, expertise and other resources in order to facilitate the process of mainstreaming. It will also help promote the interests of non-state actors in the policies, plans and programmes of government ministries.

GMS Mechanisms

The Lead Agency, the Gender Management Team and the Gender Focal Points are responsible for ensuring that the GMS applies the appropriate mechanisms to achieve its goals.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is the process by which the differential impact on women and men of development policies can be discerned. It involves the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the different status, conditions, roles and responsibilities of

women and men. This data is fed into the policy process, to enable assessments of the impact of existing policies and programmes on gender inequalities. Gender analysis also involves assessing how gender-inequitable power relations may impact on the achievement of development goals including the goal of gender equality.

Gender analysis needs to be both quantitative and qualitative. The use of gender-sensitive indicators in such areas as demographics, patterns of human settlement, households and families, education, health, economic activity, access to land and credit, legal rights, gender-based violence, and macroeconomics can provide useful quantitative data which should be complemented by qualitative data including historical and socio-cultural analyses that help to clarify the 'why' as well as the 'what' of gender differences in a given society.

Gender training

Gender training is necessary in order to build capacity in gender analysis and gender planning, to raise levels of gender awareness and to increase gender sensitivity.

A number of measures should be taken to improve the quality and scope of gender training:

- ◆ capacity-building in gender awareness and gender analysis should be undertaken throughout government structures, not only in the social sectors;
- ◆ gender training should include both more general gender sensitisation exercises and substantive, sector-specific training exercises directly related to knowledge gaps identified by policy-makers themselves;
- ◆ gender training should be regular and ongoing;
- ◆ gender training should include briefing on the GMS, explaining its mainstreaming aim and its component parts; and
- ◆ since the promotion of gender awareness is a cumulative process, gender training should not be seen as a 'one-off' exercise but should be provided at regular intervals in an ongoing programme.

Management Information System

The Management Information System is the repository and clearing house for all information relating to the establishment and

functioning of the GMS. Its function is to gather, synthesise and disseminate information on the goals, activities and achievements of the GMS and on other topics relating to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of gender equality and equity.

The Management Information System is normally the responsibility of the National Women's Machinery, which sets it up and maintains it in collaboration with the Gender Focal Points. However, in cases where the NWM is not strong enough to develop and maintain a Management Information System, support should be provided from the Gender Management Team. The Management Information System works closely with the government statistical agency or census bureau. It promotes and develops the use of sex-disaggregated data based on gender-sensitive indicators to provide material for gender impact analysis, policy appraisal, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Management Information System also works closely with the government information agency and with media contacts to disseminate information regarding gender mainstreaming and the GMS. This may be achieved through a periodical information sheet, bulletin or newsletter. Information that should be made available includes:

- ◆ relevant gender analysis methodologies;
- ◆ gender checklists and tools;
- ◆ best practices and relevant research findings;
- ◆ gender training materials;
- ◆ information and guidelines on gender-sensitive indicators and data collection;
- ◆ sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data;
- ◆ information on project management and monitoring; and
- ◆ regularly updated information on staff arrangements for and functioning of the GMS.

Performance Appraisal System

In collaboration with the government's central personnel office (Ministry of Public Service or Public Service Commission) and sectoral ministries, a gender-sensitive performance appraisal system should be set up to measure changes in individual and departmental standards of achievement of the goals of the Gender Management System. In particular, it should measure the extent to which individual staff members have acquired gender awareness

(e.g., through training) and have applied such awareness in their work (e.g., through the achievement of gender goals or the institution of gender-specific programmes). This information should form part of the criteria for career advancement.

Incentives do not necessarily have to be financial; for example, gender awareness awards of merit, publicised through the Management Information System, could help transform the institutional culture to one that is more gender-aware and supportive of gender equity goals.

5

Gender Management System Processes

This section sets out three interrelated processes in a Gender Management System:

- ◆ establishing a GMS;
- ◆ developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan; and
- ◆ gender mainstreaming and engendering the National Development Plan.

These processes are interdependent and overlapping. Since each country has its own gender priorities, needs and circumstances, the GMS does not prescribe a single procedure to be used in all countries. The processes described in this section are designed to be adapted according to individual country circumstances.

Establishing a GMS

The process of setting up a GMS is normally initiated by the National Women's Machinery. The main steps in the process are shown in Table 1.

Feasibility study and stakeholder analysis

The first step in setting up a Gender Management System is to carry out a feasibility study. This may be carried out by the Lead Agency or by a technical expert hired on a consultancy basis or provided through an international donor agency.

The feasibility study should include an analysis of the situation regarding gender equality and equity in all sectors. It should review government decision-making structures, mechanisms and planning processes and identify the major links between government and non-state actors. It should identify what elements of the enabling environment for a GMS are present, and in what strengths. In particular, it should examine the resources available to determine

Table 1 Establishing a GMS

Important Interventions	
1	Feasibility Study/Stakeholder analysis, including assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the enabling environment
2	Feasibility Study Report tabled in Cabinet
3	Review of National Gender Action Plan – integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into the Plan in consultation with key stakeholders, and seek approval at Cabinet level through the NWM
4	Engendering of the National Development Plan through the implementation of mechanisms defined in the National Gender Action Plan (refer to Taylor, 1999)
5	Setting up of GMS Structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gender Management Team ◆ Gender Focal Points/Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee ◆ Gender Caucus in Parliament ◆ Gender Equality Commission/Council ◆ Management Information System
6	Strengthening of the National Women's Machinery to act as Lead Agency in implementing the GMS
7	Development of a gender mainstreaming training programme in collaboration with higher education/training institution(s) at the national or regional level
8	Building of gender analysis/planning expertise in the different sectors in government, towards engendering their sector plans
9	Establishment/strengthening of linkages between the NWM and other state and non-state stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ parliamentarians ◆ NGOs, academic institutions, media, etc.
10	Establishment of monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
11	Development of a programme of public awareness through the media
12	Networking with donor agencies (inter-governmental, other multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the private sector), to find resources for the GMS and gender mainstreaming

the degree to which establishing a GMS is feasible in the particular national context. If the enabling environment is not strong enough to support a complete GMS across all ministries and sectors, the feasibility study should attempt to identify specific ministries/sectors that could provide strategic entry points for gender mainstreaming.

A stakeholder analysis provides valuable information for the feasibility study and for the ongoing functioning of a GMS. A list of stakeholders and their interests should be drawn up, to identify who should take part in ongoing consultation processes throughout the GMS. A stakeholder analysis will determine the extent to which there are gender-aware decision-makers and the gender balance of groups represented in the GMS structure. It will also help ensure that the GMS process includes a representative group of state and non-state actors.

The following checklist of questions can help identify and clarify stakeholders' interests:

- ◆ What do the stakeholders expect of the Gender Management System?
- ◆ What benefits are there likely to be for stakeholders?
- ◆ What resources will the stakeholder wish to commit or avoid committing to the GMS?
- ◆ What other interests does the stakeholder have which complement or conflict with the GMS?
- ◆ What is the relationship between the stakeholder and the other GMS stakeholders?

The sustained success of a GMS depends, in part, on the capacity of its stakeholders to acknowledge and accommodate the various objectives to be met in the process of mainstreaming gender without losing sight of the mission and the goal of gender equality. Hence, a stakeholder analysis will help to define the most appropriate strategy for implementing a GMS.

Prioritising goals

The pursuit of gender equality objectives is a dynamic process beginning from existing circumstances and moving towards the ideal. A Gender Management System seeks to remove the problem of gender inequities by altering the environment in which such inequities are created and sustained. Past experience has shown that piecemeal solutions to gender inequality are not sufficient; therefore, the GMS seeks to place gender on the agenda at all levels, attacking gender-based discrimination and injustice on all fronts simultaneously.

However, the systemic and structural change sought by the GMS will not be achieved overnight. It is necessary to prioritise goals

carefully, and to aim for what is achievable. The accomplishment of a relatively modest goal will yield greater results than the failure to achieve a goal that was set unrealistically high.

The task of prioritising goals will be made considerably easier by the use of a stakeholder analysis and by analysis of the comparative status of women and men in all aspects of the life of the country. Decisions can then be taken as to the strategic points of entry for gender mainstreaming where success is most likely to be achieved.

An examination should be made of the GMS structures, mechanisms and processes as described in this guide to determine which are the most useful and appropriate in the national context, and the easiest to establish, or to adapt from existing structures. This will inform the decisions as to which structures and mechanisms to prioritise in establishing the GMS. A simple approach is a SWOT analysis – identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats inherent in each area where the GMS is expected to have an impact, and prioritising the areas accordingly.

A similar analysis, based on the findings of the feasibility study, stakeholder analysis, and other information about gender differences within the national population in all sectors, should be applied to conditions in the broader civil society, so as to determine what are the most critical problems that need to be addressed in order to advance gender equality and equity. For example, two critical problems might be discrimination against women in the legal framework and constitution, and women's lack of political participation. Both of these would ultimately need to be addressed through the GMS, but it might be considered that, for example, the latter problem is easier to address than the former. It should therefore take the higher priority in the Gender Action Plan.

A further example is that of a country in which there is a high level of resistance to gender mainstreaming in government because of a general lack of awareness of the nature and extent of gender inequalities within the country. In that case, gender analysis and gender training would be priority mechanisms for bringing about the required change in awareness.

Points of entry for gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming should ideally be undertaken in all government ministries and departments. However, where political will or resource availability does not permit this, it may be possible to target specific ministries or sectors, according to strategic priorities.

For example, the Commonwealth Secretariat is assisting a national government in the mainstreaming of gender in the health sector, in a case where health was considered to be of particular strategic importance for the advancement of gender equity. Another strategic point of entry may be finance and macroeconomic planning.

Regardless of specific national priorities, the National Development Plan is normally a key strategic point of entry for gender mainstreaming. Since the Plan informs sectoral planning and decision-making, it can, if made gender-aware and responsive to differing gender needs, be of cross-cutting influence in promoting gender mainstreaming within the various sectors.

Setting up or strengthening GMS structures

Setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms include the following steps:

- ◆ institutionalising the GMS through identification of the Lead Agency; making appointments to the Gender Management Team and designing its work schedule; ensuring that sectoral ministries nominate their Gender Focal Points and determining the meetings schedule of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee;
- ◆ liaising with the Gender Equality Commission (or establishing such a body if none exists) to identify their representative for the Gender Management Team;
- ◆ ensuring that stakeholders represented in GMS structures meet regularly (i.e., not just in the policy developing and planning stage but also throughout the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and in its monitoring and evaluation;)
- ◆ setting and meeting targets for women in decision-making roles in the political, public and private sectors;
- ◆ ensuring that all the members of the GMS structures (particularly the Gender Management Team and the Gender Focal Points) receive gender training.

The Gender Action Plan

The structures, mechanisms, and processes of a GMS should be seen as an integrated network. The Gender Action Plan is a central component of this network. In countries where a national Gender Action Plan exists, the GMS should help to ensure that the plan is effectively implemented; this may involve revising and further developing the plan to promote a gender mainstreaming approach. In countries that are in the process of developing a national Gender Action Plan, the GMS may be equally helpful as a means of giving shape to the plan using the mainstreaming approach.

The Gender Action Plan is designed to ensure that concrete measures are taken to achieve the goals set in the policy development process. The Gender Action Plan should act as a complement to the National Development Plan and to other ongoing initiatives to make government decision-making processes more equitable including, for example, efforts to integrate gender into national budgetary processes. The Gender Action Plan should also include provisions for the engendering of the National Development Plan.

Gender analysis

The starting point for the Gender Action Plan is gender analysis. The feasibility study and stakeholder analysis carried out at the beginning of the process of establishing a GMS should include much of the significant analysis that is necessary for the formulation of the Gender Action Plan, which should include:

- ◆ a policy statement and sectoral plans to mainstream gender in all policies, plans and programmes in all sectors of government;
- ◆ a policy statement with clear goals and objectives, including sectoral targets, which reflect national priorities in relation to international mandates and which include such critical areas as women's economic empowerment, the participation of women in political decision-making, and women's rights as human rights;
- ◆ a strategy and timetable for the revision of existing policies and administrative procedures to bring them in line with the goals of the Plan. This may include legislative instructions from the highest political authority and accountability measures to promote effective participation at all levels in the Plan's implementation;
- ◆ guidelines on engendering macro-economic and sectoral government policies and programmes;

- ◆ a strategy and timeframe for the review of national legislation and practices to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, and to adopt necessary legislation for promoting and protecting women's human rights; and
- ◆ a strategy for the mobilisation of human and budgetary resources to support the Plan.

More specifically, the Gender Action Plan should provide clear guidelines on measures to be taken in each of the following areas:

- ◆ setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms;
- ◆ engendering the work plans of all government ministries;
- ◆ timeframe for implementation; and
- ◆ indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Implementing the Gender Action Plan

The following initiatives are important for the successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the Gender Management System:

- ◆ securing political and administrative commitment at the highest level, including that of the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet, individual ministers or equivalent office holders, and senior managers;
- ◆ putting in place appropriate structures, mechanisms and administrative procedures, including accountability measures, to implement the Plan;
- ◆ securing partnership and collaboration among the key stakeholders;
- ◆ developing an effective monitoring and evaluation process.

Other initiatives in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan include:

- ◆ designing and implementing a programme of training which combines gender analysis with briefings on the management of change through the GMS;
- ◆ research and information dissemination through the Management Information System; and
- ◆ an effective communication strategy to raise public awareness about and support for the Gender Action Plan, particularly through partnerships with the media.

The timeframe for the Gender Action Plan should be flexible, with

phased targets and deadlines, preferably to coincide with the national sectoral development planning process.

Promoting the Plan

Raising the public's awareness to the level of acceptance of the principle of equality and equity between women and men requires communications planning. This is critical to the success of the GMS because the first step to awareness is visibility. Promoting gender integration as a national agenda to which government is actively committed sends a powerful message. It is only through effectively publicising the work of a GMS that successes can be made visible, problem areas identified, effective strategies shared and replicated, and negative responses to the programme openly acknowledged and addressed.

The Management Information System will assist in developing a communications strategy to promote the objectives and goals of the Gender Action Plan and convey the mission of the GMS to the media. The media are a stakeholder in the Plan's development, and have a special role in promoting it. The communication strategy should seek to:

- ◆ inform public opinion of the need for gender mainstreaming;
- ◆ build and promote the advocacy efforts of a Gender Management System;
- ◆ keep women's concerns high on the national agenda and bring more women's voices into the national policy-making process;
- ◆ create opportunities to address national priorities in the context of international and Commonwealth plans of action by sponsoring roundtables, workshops, strategy meetings and news bulletins to coincide with such events as International Women's Day; and
- ◆ build a partnership with the media that will engender media sensitivity and ensure sustainable access by women's groups, Commonwealth Broadcasting Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs to the media and their technology. Long-term media programmes which consistently raise awareness of gender issues are preferable to short-term, sporadic interventions.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Action Plan

The Gender Action Plan includes clear and measurable goals for gender equality, including sectoral targets, as well as concrete strategies to reach these goals. Once the plan has been developed, it can serve as a benchmark in tracking the country's success in achieving the goals identified. Monitoring and evaluation require the use of impact indicators to measure the outputs and performance of all government ministries and departments, and track the allocation of resources.

The Gender Management Team, in collaboration with the National Women's Machinery, should play a primary role in monitoring and evaluation. This will enable the range of representative GMS stakeholders to remain involved in the process and to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan on an ongoing basis.

The National Women's Machinery, as the institutional home for the Management Information System, will be responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of data on key gender-sensitive indicators which, in the first instance, should be reported quarterly to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, and annually to Parliament.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming involves the following areas:

- ◆ re-evaluating the structures and functions of the Gender Management System;
- ◆ reviewing key gender-sensitive indicators in all sectors, especially in the areas of macroeconomics, political decision-making, and the legal and social status of women in the national context, as well as health, education, agriculture and other key sectors;
- ◆ fulfilling reporting obligations under CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development; and
- ◆ feeding findings into the next planning cycle.

The information requirements for monitoring and evaluation should be met by the full range of stakeholders in the GMS: the National Women's Machinery, the Gender Management Team, Gender Focal Points, government ministries and non-state organisations. The Management Information System's role is to co-ordinate the necessary information flows, to enable the Gender

Management Team to collate and synthesise the results into an evaluation of the progress of the GMS, of gender mainstreaming within government, and of the advance towards gender equality and equity in the national context.

Evaluating the GMS

This is largely the responsibility of the Gender Management Team. Questions that need to be asked include:

- ◆ Are all the GMS structures in place and functioning correctly?
- ◆ How often do they meet?
- ◆ Are the desired results being achieved and do they satisfy the indicators of effectiveness?
- ◆ To what extent are these results furthering the long-term goals of the GMS?

The information should be collected by the team leader and reviewed with the team. If progress falls short of what was planned, corrective actions should be taken.

During the setting up of the GMS, provision should be made for external evaluation. This should be repeated at regular intervals, perhaps every three to five years, in line with the national development planning cycle. Evaluation should deal with all aspects of programme preparation, design, background, objectives and results, assumptions and risks, implementation, operation and impact. Recommendations should be made concerning either the programme itself or similar programmes in future.

Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Plan and Sectoral Ministries

The following schema provides guidelines on methods to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in each stage of the planning cycle. The guidelines can be applied to planning cycles in all sectors, and should be applied in particular to the National Development Plan.

Planning cycles can generally be seen as having five stages, as shown in Figure 2. The inclusion of a gender perspective in the different stages of each planning cycle will help to create gender-aware policies, plans, programmes and projects.

Using gender analysis

The GMS emphasises the importance of gender analysis in government decision-making, procedures and actions. This involves analysis of the differential impact on women and men of the National Development Plan and other government policies, plans and programmes.

In the first instance, gender analysis should be undertaken by the National Women's Machinery and by Gender Focal Points in all ministries and departments. Their findings will be reported to the GMS Management Information System and acted upon by the Gender Management Team on an ongoing basis.

Through its various resource materials, the Gender Management System Series of publications provides a set of guidelines for gender analysis and mainstreaming within specific government ministries and sectors. These resource materials are underpinned by an understanding of the potentially differential effects of government policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that are often obscured by the assumption that policies are gender neutral. Effective policy development, planning, implementation and evaluation is based on accurate information and incisive analysis of the heterogeneity of the people involved in and affected by government policy.

Particular emphasis is placed on gender analysis of:

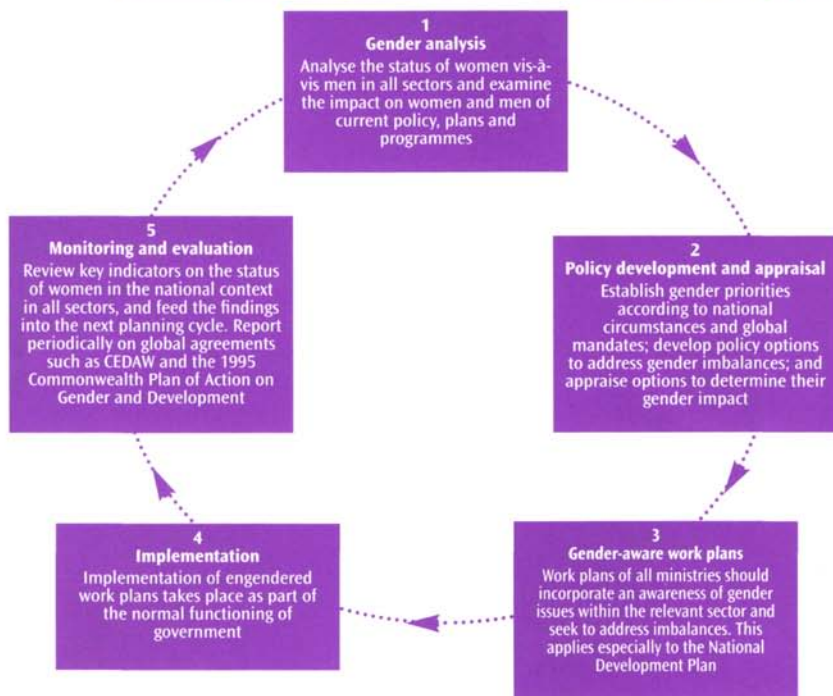
- ◆ macroeconomic policy and national budgetary processes;
- ◆ development planning;
- ◆ constitutional and legal provisions;
- ◆ public sector reform and public service personnel management; and
- ◆ sectoral policies.

Using GMS structures for policy development

The challenge of the GMS is to help close the gap between commitments to gender equality articulated in gender policy statements and the full attainment of these goals. An overall framework for gender-aware policy development is provided by the commitments, obligations, and guidelines of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. The Management Information

System seeks to ensure that government policy, programmes and legislation reflect the commitments embodied in these international agreements. Information about globally and regionally agreed principles, frameworks and strategies for achieving gender equality will therefore be a central resource of the GMS.

Figure 3 Promoting Gender-Awareness at Each Stage of the Planning Cycle



The ongoing participation and input of representative stakeholders is a key element in the making of gender-sensitive policy. It is through partnerships nurtured by the GMS structures that ownership can be developed and political commitment maintained and translated into resource allocation or other administrative decisions, including securing the accountability of key stakeholders. If policy is not formulated through a participatory process involving key decision-makers and social actors within and

across sectors, there may be insufficient commitment to its implementation and goal attainment.

One of the key roles of the Gender Management Team is to guide policy development. The development of a gender-aware National Development Plan and a Gender Action Plan should be undertaken with the full consultation of all stakeholders, particularly those in the Ministries of Planning and Finance.

The GMS also provides a means of integrating gender concerns into sectoral policy-making processes, an essential component of any serious attempt at gender mainstreaming. The members of the Gender Management Team, assisted by their respective Gender Focal Points, should strive to ensure that policy-makers in sectoral line ministries are gender-aware and, if necessary, receive gender training.

The national development plan sets the overall macro-economic objectives, sectoral emphases and budgetary allocations for the country. Gender planning should not be seen as a separate, parallel process to mainstream development planning, but should be designed to reorient development planning such that it addresses the needs of women and poor people generally through an economically, physically, environmentally and socially sustainable process in a progressive manner (Taylor, 1999).

Box 3

Stakeholder Involvement in Policy Development

Special efforts should be made to include minority or marginalised groups in policy consultations. In many countries, grassroots women and their organisations form the backbone of the productive sector but are frequently and easily overlooked in the formulation of such plans. Steps to involve them should include:

- ✦ workshops at the community level, such that women's situations and time constraints are taken into consideration;
- ✦ support to women's organisations and local NGOs in the form of resources, capacity development and advocacy skills;
- ✦ use of local languages;
- ✦ use of participatory processes and networking; and
- ✦ ongoing collaboration with NGOs active at the local level.

Gender-aware work plans

The GMS structures and mechanisms are designed to facilitate an integrative approach to gender planning. Through the Gender Management Team and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, key decision-makers and stakeholders in the development of the National Development Plan and macro-economic and sectoral policies and plans will be brought together on a regular basis. One outcome of the implementation of the GMS should be that the National Development Plan and the individual work plans of all government ministries should be gender-aware and work to redress gender imbalances.

Monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral work plans

The monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral plans should incorporate a gender perspective. This requires the use of gender-sensitive indicators to compare actual achievements at various levels against the objectives, as well as qualitative analysis of the gender impact of plans, programmes and projects, on both practical and strategic gender needs. The findings of such monitoring and evaluation exercises should be made available to the Management Information System, to enable cross-sectoral analysis.

Feeding findings into next planning cycle

Monitoring and evaluation should not be seen as isolated activities that exist solely for the purpose of determining how successful a policy, programme or project has been. The findings of monitoring and evaluation exercises should feed back into the policy analysis and development phase of the next cycle. The Gender Management System, by virtue of its network of participants connecting the National Women's Machinery to other government ministries, provides links by which such feedback can be established.

Reporting on CEDAW and the Commonwealth Plan of Action

International agreements such as CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development include mechanisms for governments to report to the respective intergovernmental organisations on a range of gender-related indicators. This process helps governments to retain a focus on the

gender issue and maintain the thrust towards gender equality. The fulfilment of reporting requirements under CEDAW provides an opportunity for governments to examine progress in such areas as empowerment and political decision-making, violence against women and women's human rights, and legal and cultural matters.

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Appendix *Glossary of terms*

Gender

Gender can be defined as the set of characteristics, roles and behaviour patterns that distinguish women from men which are constructed not biologically but socially and culturally. The sex of an individual is biologically determined, whereas gender characteristics are socially constructed, a product of nurturing, conditioning, and socio-cultural norms and expectations. These characteristics change over time and from one culture to another. Gender also refers to the web of cultural symbols, normative concepts, institutional structures and internalised self-images which, through a process of social construction, define masculine and feminine roles and articulate these roles within power relationships.

Gender analysis

Quantitative gender analysis is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the differential impact of development activities on women and men, and the effect gender roles and responsibilities have on development efforts. Qualitative gender analysis is the tracing of historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces in order to clarify how and why these differential impacts, roles and responsibilities have come about.

Gender-aware/redistributive/transformational policies

Gender-aware/redistributive/transformational policies seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies involve altering the existing balance of power between men and women, addressing not only practical gender needs but strategic gender interests as well.

Gender-inclusive language

This is language which challenges the assumption/tradition that masculine nouns, pronouns and adjectives include both male and female. Examples of gender-inclusive language are 'staff-hours' (rather than 'man-hours'), 'he or she' (rather than 'he'), and 'his or her' (rather than 'his'). Gender-exclusive language, by subsuming the female in the male, acts as both a cause and an effect of the invisibility of women's contribution.

Gender mainstreaming

This is a strategy in which a gender perspective is integrated in all government policies, plans, programmes and projects. Mainstreaming also means agenda setting, i.e., transforming the existing development agenda using a gender perspective.

Gender-neutral policies

These are policies that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom if ever have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Thus policies which may appear to be gender-neutral are often in fact gender-blind, and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests.

Gender perspective

Gender perspective is a way of (a) analysing and interpreting situations from a viewpoint that takes into consideration the gender constructions in society (for women and men) and (b) searching for solutions to overcome the gaps.

Gender-sensitive indicators

An indicator is statistical measurements that show the change in a particular context over a given period of time. A gender-sensitive indicator is therefore a measurement of gender-related change over time. For example, a gender-sensitive indicator could show the change in the status of women in a particular area, relative to men and over a period of, say, a decade. Gender-sensitive indicators can therefore be used to measure the effectiveness or success of a GMS.

Gender-specific policies

These policies take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact.

Gender training

Gender training is a systematic approach to sharing information and experiences on gender issues and gender analysis, aimed at increasing understanding of the structures of inequality and the relative position of

men and women in society. This goes beyond awareness building to actually providing people with the knowledge and skills that they need in order to change personal behaviour and societal structures.

National Women's Machinery

This is a single body or complex organised system of bodies, often under different authorities, but recognised by the government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women.

Practical gender needs

These emanate from the actual conditions women and men experience due to the roles ascribed to them by society. Often, women's practical gender needs are related to roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. Meeting the practical gender needs of women and men does not necessarily change their relative position in society.

Sex-disaggregated data

This is data that includes separate information on women and men, revealing their differential status, conditions, roles and responsibilities. Such data is essential to assess the differential impacts of development policies on women and on men.

Strategic gender needs

These relate to women's empowerment and to what is required to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society. Such needs vary according to the economic, political, social and cultural context. Most governments now acknowledge the need to create opportunities which enable women to address their strategic needs.

Women's triple roles

Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid and unpaid labour they undertake. These roles can be described as: the *productive* role: this refers to market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income; the *reproductive* role: this refers to the child-bearing and child rearing responsibilities borne by women – which are essential to the reproduction of the workforce; and the *community management* role: this refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14).

Gender Management System

Gender mainstreaming is the current international approach to promoting equality between women and men.

It is based on the recognition that gender inequality operates at all levels and in all sectors of society, and thus needs to be addressed in the mainstream. It aims to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from all that society has to offer, and are equally empowered to affect its governance and decisions.

The Gender Management System (GMS) is a holistic and system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming developed by the Commonwealth, for the use of governments in partnership with other stakeholders including civil society and the private sector. The GMS is a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes to enable governments and other organisations to contribute to gender equality through all policy-making, planning and activities.

This Quick Guide has been produced to assist governments and other stakeholders in mainstreaming gender using a GMS. It is an abridged version of the GMS publication *Gender Management System Handbook*.

Other topics covered by publications in the GMS Series include:

- Using gender-sensitive indicators
- Development planning
- Finance
- The public service
- Education
- Trade and industry
- Agriculture and rural development
- Information and communications
- Equal employment opportunities policy



Commonwealth Secretariat

ISBN 978-1-84859-679-5



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